



DIVISION OF STUDENT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106-2085
(805) 893-2038 or (805) 893-3201

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Health Professions

Preparing for Careers in the Health Professions at UC Santa Barbara

UC Santa Barbara has an excellent reputation for preparing its students for professional or graduate schools in the health sciences. These include medical, dental, veterinary, pharmacy, and physical therapy schools as well as graduate programs in public health, biochemistry, molecular biology, and other biological sciences.

Choice of Major

Medical and other professional schools do not require that students complete a specific major. Students may complete the major of their choice while taking the specific courses required for admission to medical school and/or other professional programs. Students should, however, major in a field which engages them, in which they can perform well, and which might lead to an alternate career should they decide not continue their education in medicine. Many students do choose a science major as there is a great deal of overlap between the courses required for the major and those required for medical and/or other professional schools. It is important to keep in mind that medical schools prefer students with overall academic breadth. However, a solid understanding of the core sciences is also vital.

Health Professions Advising

Maria Elena Bouregy, an academic advisor in the College of Letters and Science, is UCSB's health professions advisor. She helps the students plan their undergraduate programs and in making choices about professional schools; assists them in obtaining internships in health-related fields; and, works with them during the application/interview process. New transfer students should make an appointment with Maria Elena during the first quarter to develop an academic plan.

Maria Elena also trains and supervises two Pre-Health Peer advisors, Matt Dailey and Daria Thompson. It is recommended that students interested in pursuing a career in medicine make an appointment with either of these two peers during their first year at UCSB as the pre-medical courses are structured, offered only during specific times in the academic year.

Health Professions Association

The Health Professions Associations are student-run groups that sponsor speakers and plan events to support the career aspirations of their members. Pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-pharmacy and pre-veterinary students each have their own associations. Upper-division students act as mentors for lower-division students and share information about courses, internships, and research opportunities.

Obtaining Practical Experience

An unusually high percentage of UCSB students engage in faculty-sponsored undergraduate research projects. Most pre-medical students participate in internship programs at local hospitals and medical clinics.

Courses are available that are relevant to gaining experience in the medical field, and students can also shadow physicians, work in hospitals and clinics, work as peer health educators, and earn EMT certification. The curriculum also includes courses on writing for the health professions, medical ethics, and current issues in health-care delivery.

Health Professions Conference

Each year the students organize a health professions conference. At this conference, health professionals (many of them are UCSB graduates) talk about their careers, former UCSB students who are currently medical students and residents talk about their experiences, and medical school admissions officers share invaluable information about what medical schools are looking for. Representatives of professional schools also provide information regarding the various education programs available.