



Health Careers Center, University of Minnesota • MMC 502  
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 visit us at: [www.healthcareers.umn.edu](http://www.healthcareers.umn.edu)

## “Major Decision”



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As a career counselor, I often hear students ask what they can do with a major in... Much time and nervous energy is devoted to plotting this decision and deciding the merits of one major over the other.

As someone planning on, or investigating a career in health care, when it comes time to pick your college major, it may seem as though your choices are limited to just the sciences. Happily or not, many students do choose to major in the biological sciences because the requirements for a biology degree are very similar to the admission pre-requisite requirements for many of the health

professional programs. While the need to be strong academically in your science coursework is very important, choosing these disciplines as your primary undergraduate study isn't the only possible path.

So, if your goal is entry into a career in medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or any other health professional school programs, what major will best prepare you for entry into the health care professional school program of your choice?

The answer is: there is no best major

### Choose a Major you Enjoy

Choose a major because you enjoy the subject matter. Choose a major that you find most interesting, challenging, and satisfying. You should study subjects that you really enjoy, and avoid choosing a major because it might “look good” on your application. No points are given for the major that you choose, however, you will probably perform better in a major that captures your interests.

## The Statistics

If you truly enjoy studying material outside of the sciences, i.e. humanities, social sciences, ethnic studies, foreign languages, etc., college will be the best time for you to study these subjects. If you decide to pursue a non-science major, then your strong performance in the prerequisite science and math requirements will be crucial. An example of the diversity of majors one can choose to pursue even if they are pursuing a career in health care is evident here at our own Medical School. The 165 students in the U of M's Medical School class of 2005 come from 53 different undergraduate majors. Furthermore, according to the *2006 Pfizer Medical School Manual*, the acceptance rate for liberal arts majors roughly mirrored the overall acceptance rate.

## Stay Alert

Stay alert to changes in pre-requisite requirements for the professional degree programs in which you are interested. Requirements have been known to change. It is important to regularly monitor the web pages of the professional school programs for

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which you plan to apply.

One helpful tool at your disposal is printing off your own APAS report (Academic Progress Audit Report). APAS is a computerized report which provides helpful information about your degree and course requirements. It helps determine how your courses satisfy those requirements. Visit the U of MN's One Stop web site <http://onestop.umn.edu/> and print off your personalized report.

### The Well Rounded Applicant

Strong interpersonal skills are increasingly important in all health care fields. Relating well to colleagues, patients, and their families is critical to providing the highest level of care. Developing your writing and oral presentation skills through non-science coursework will make you a more competitive applicant. ■

<b>March is:</b> <b>National Colorectal Cancer Month</b> <a href="http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal">www.preventcancer.org/colorectal</a>	<b>March 6-10 is National School Breakfast Week</b> <a href="http://www.schoolnutrition.org">www.schoolnutrition.org</a>
<b>National Eye Donor Month</b> <a href="http://www.restoreight.org">www.restoreight.org</a>	<b>March 13-19 is Brain Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.dana.org/brainweek">www.dana.org/brainweek</a>
<b>National Kidney Month</b> <a href="http://www.kidney.org">www.kidney.org</a>	<b>March 13-17 is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.nationalmssociety.org">www.nationalmssociety.org</a>
<b>National Nutrition Month®</b> <a href="http://www.eatright.org">www.eatright.org</a>	<b>March 19-25 is National Inhalants &amp; Poisons Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.inhalants.org">www.inhalants.org</a>
<b>Workplace Eye Health &amp; Safety</b> <a href="http://www.preventblindness.org">www.preventblindness.org</a>	<b>March 19-25 is National Poison Prevention Week</b> <a href="http://www.poisonprevention.org">www.poisonprevention.org</a>
<b>Save Your Vision Month</b> <a href="http://www.aoa.org">www.aoa.org</a>	<b>March 19-25 is National Sleep Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.sleepfoundation.org">www.sleepfoundation.org</a>
<b>National Brain Injury Awareness Month</b> <a href="http://www.biausa.org">www.biausa.org</a>	<b>March 24th is World Tuberculosis Day 2006</b> <a href="http://www.who.int/gtb/index.htm">www.who.int/gtb/index.htm</a>
<b>National Multiple Sclerosis Education &amp; Awareness Month</b> <a href="http://www.msfocus.org">www.msfocus.org</a>	<b>March 27-April 2 is National Sleep Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.sleepfoundation.org">www.sleepfoundation.org</a>
<b>March 5-11 is National Patient Safety Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.npsf.org">www.npsf.org</a>	<b>March 28th is American Diabetes Alert Day</b> <a href="http://www.diabetes.org/communityprograms-and-localevents/americanidiabetesalert.jsp">www.diabetes.org/communityprograms-and-localevents/americanidiabetesalert.jsp</a>
<b>March 6-12 is National Problem Gambling Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.npgaw.org">www.npgaw.org</a>	■

### Spring Event Schedule *Register for an event by visiting [www.hccevents.umn.edu](http://www.hccevents.umn.edu)*

#### Writing a Personal Statement

Tuesday March 7 at 3:00PM

#### Pharmacy Admissions Session

Tuesday March 7 at 10:00AM  
Thursday March 23 at 1:00PM  
Tuesday April 4 at 9:30AM  
Tuesday May 2 at 10:00AM  
Thursday April 20 at 12:30PM

#### Interviewing for Health School

Wednesday March 8 12:30PM

#### Pre Med I

Tuesday March 21 at 3:00PM  
Wednesday April 19 at 9:00AM

#### Nursing Session (BSN)

Tuesday March 21 at 12:30PM  
Thursday April 27 at 9:00AM  
Tuesday May 16 at 2:00PM

#### Medical Technology Session

Wednesday March 22 at 1:30PM  
Monday April 17 at 1:30PM

#### Scientific & Tech. Communication

Thursday March 23 at 11:00AM  
Tuesday April 11 at 3:30PM  
Wednesday May 3 at 9:00AM

#### Pre-Med II

Tuesday March 28 at 3:00PM  
Wednesday April 26 at 9:00AM

#### Resume Writing

Tuesday April 4 at 2:00PM

#### Experiential Opps in Health Care

Thursday April 13 at 9:00AM

#### Interviewing for Health School

Thursday April 20 at 9:00AM

#### Applying to Medical School

Monday April 24 at 3:00PM  
Thursday May 18 at 3:00PM ■