PRE-HEALTH (NON-DEGREE)

Description
The pre-health areas of study described below are advising categories used to identify students advancing toward a health-related career goal. Students cannot declare a major or earn a degree in pre-health areas. Some students declare a UNL major while working toward their health professional school requirements and earn a degree from UNL before entering professional school. Other health professional programs allow students to apply after completing prerequisite requirements and without earning an undergraduate degree. In either case, students may designate a course of study in any of the following pre-health categories while they are preparing for professional school and/or deciding on a major and degree. Students may select any UNL academic major while pursuing pre-health areas of study and can temporarily select a major of “Pre-Health” through the Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center (Explore Center) while they are exploring and deciding which academic major to declare.

Students pursuing pre-health areas of study can receive guidance and advice from the Explore Center by declaring their pre-health category with their college advising office. Students who do not know which career path they might pursue are encouraged to explore the many options available by using the ExploreHealthCareers website (https://explorehealthcareers.org) and resources.

Pre-Chiropractic
Chiropractic is a branch of health care that focuses on manipulation as the best mode of care and treatment of many injuries and illnesses. It emphasizes the inter-relatedness of the body parts as a whole set, but especially as they relate to the function of the nervous system. Since the majority of the body’s organs are innervated by nerves which enter or leave the spine, a major emphasis is on the correct structure and function of the spine and the body joints.

Pre-Clinical Perfusion Science
Perfusionists are skilled allied health professionals, who deal with all phases of regulating and controlling blood flow outside the body, called extracorporeal circulation. The perfusionist operates extracorporeal equipment during any medical situation where it is necessary to support, or temporarily replace, the patient’s circulatory or respiratory function. The perfusionist has diverse responsibilities which include the mechanical support of a patient’s circulation and pulmonary function during open heart surgery and is an integral member of the cardiovascular surgery team involved in infant and adult cardiac surgery.

Pre-Cytotechnology
Cytotechnology is an allied health specialty which offers possibilities for those who want a career in science and a significant role in health care. Working with a microscope, cytotechnologists study specimens from all body sites. Using subtle clues in the cells themselves, cytotechnologists can solve the mystery of disease by identifying cancer, precancerous lesions, benign tumors, infectious agents, and inflammatory processes. Cytotechnologists help discover certain diseases early when treatment is most effective.

Pre-Dental Hygiene
A dental hygienist is a preventive oral health professional licensed in dental hygiene to provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services supporting total health through the promotion of optimal oral health. The dental hygienist is responsible for providing treatment that helps to prevent oral diseases such as dental caries (cavities) and periodontal disease (gum disease) and for educating the patient to maintain optimal oral health.

Pre-Dentistry
Dentistry is devoted to maintaining the health of teeth and gums, as well as other hard and soft tissues of the mouth. Early detection of oral cancer and systemic conditions that manifest themselves through the mouth are necessary for the maintenance of general health. The dentist is, in fact, a person dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all oral diseases and conditions. In addition to general dentistry careers, dental school graduates can pursue additional studies in one of the following dental specialties: dental public health, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial procedures, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics.

Pre-Medical Laboratory Science
Medical Laboratory Science (also known as Medical Technology or Clinical Lab Science) is the allied health profession concerned with performing laboratory tests that are used in the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of disease and in the maintenance of health. The clinical lab specialist performs a full range of laboratory tests, from simple pre-marital blood tests to more complex tests to uncover diseases, such as AIDS, diabetes, and cancer. The clinical lab specialist is also responsible for confirming the accuracy of test results and reporting laboratory findings to the pathologist and other doctors.

Pre-Medicine
The medical profession (alopathic, osteopathic, or pediatric) offers a wide variety of career options and specialties. On most medical teams, the physician serves as the primary diagnostician, healer, and patient advocate remains central to the provision of health care in our country. Although most physicians provide direct patient care, some medical degree recipients concentrate on basic or applied research, become teachers or administrators, or combine various elements of these activities.

Pre-Mortuary Science
Completion of a professional program in mortuary science leads to licensure as a funeral director/embalmer. Morticians deal with funeral planning, death registration, embalming, and the grief and bereavement issues of families and friends of the deceased.

Pre-Nursing
The nursing profession offers a wide variety of career opportunities. Nursing training programs range from associates to bachelors educational levels. Students who earn the BSN are prepared to assume staff nurse level positions in areas such as public health, gerontology, pediatrics, industrial settings, emergency medicine, psychiatric and mental health facilities, and acute care agencies. Students who desire advanced nursing degrees will find graduate programs leading to the masters and doctor of philosophy degrees in a variety of specialty areas.

Pre-Occupational Therapy
Occupational Therapy is a health care profession using purposeful activity (occupation) as a means of preventing, reducing, or overcoming physical, social, and emotional challenges in people of all ages. An occupational therapist works with individuals whose participation in daily activities has been impaired by physical injury/illness, developmental/learning disabilities, psychological/emotional problems or the aging
process. The occupational therapist carefully evaluates each person to determine physical and/or mental strengths and weaknesses, and, in conjunction with other health professionals, develops a program using purposeful activities and adaptive equipment to encourage the patient’s involvement in meaningful daily living.

**Pre-Optometry**

Optometry is the primary health profession dedicated to caring for vision. Through academic and clinical training, optometrists acquire the knowledge and skills needed to diagnose, treat, and prevent problems of the visual system. Providing health education, managing curative or preventive regimes, and supplying vision care to special groups of patients are all parts of an optometrist’s work.

**Pre-Pharmacy**

Pharmacists are responsible for drug therapy and drug distribution and must possess the scientific and technical knowledge necessary to evaluate drug therapy for each individual patient. They must develop skill in personal relations with patients and other health professionals. Above all, they must be able to make good use of acquired knowledge and experience in arriving at sound judgments and policy decisions.

**Pre-Physical Therapy**

Physical Therapists assess and treat disabilities and promote wellness to individuals of all ages. Their primary objective is to promote optimum human health and function. The physical therapist conducts physical evaluations to determine the patient’s potential for rehabilitation and lifestyle changes indicated, as well as educates the patient and family.

**Pre-Physician Assistant**

The physician assistant (PA) practices medicine with the supervision of a physician. As a result of extensive medical training, the PA can assume many tasks traditionally performed only by a medical doctor, thereby helping the physician to be more efficient. The PA diagnoses and treats a wide range of common medical problems, and assists the physician in the management of complex chronic illnesses. Many PAs make hospital and nursing home rounds and assist in surgery. A very important part of the PA’s role is to educate the patient and the community about illness, family planning, social services, health hazards, baby and child care, and other aspects of health promotion and disease prevention.

**Pre-Public Health**

Public health is the science and art of creating healthy communities through education, research, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. In public health, the focus is on health promotion and disease/injury prevention, in contrast to the medical model of care, which focuses more heavily upon diagnosing and treating illnesses and conditions after they occur.

**Pre-Radiation Science Technology**

Radiation science technology comprises several disciplines that utilize radiation for diagnosis or treatment, including but not limited to radiography, nuclear medicine, diagnostic medical sonography (ultrasound), or radiation therapy technology. Students should explore options in radiation science to see which field best fits their skills and interests. The career options available to students interested in radiation sciences continually expand as technology develops.

**High School Preparation**

Students planning to pursue advanced work in any of the pre-health programs should begin with a strong college preparatory course program in high school. In addition to meeting the University entrance requirements, it is recommended that pre-health students finish four years of the same foreign language in high school and take as many years of mathematics and science as possible. It is especially important for students to consult with their high school guidance counselor when choosing to earn college credit prior to graduating through options such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit options. Some health professional schools will not accept or will limit acceptance and applicability of prerequisite credit earned by examination (AB/IB or other).

**Admission**

**Program Admission**

Students who have met the overall University admission requirements established by the Board of Regents are eligible for admission to the Explore Center. The University admission requirements are outlined in detail on the Admissions website (http://admissions.unl.edu).

Some UNL colleges have admission requirements in addition to the overall University admission requirements, and pre-health students will be advised accordingly as they choose the majors they would like to pursue.

**Admission Deficiencies/Removal of Deficiencies**

Because admission requirements establish the level of knowledge and skills which are needed for a student to succeed at UNL, students who are admitted with core course deficiencies in foreign language and geometry are expected to quickly remove them. Deficiencies must be removed before a student is eligible for graduation.

**Advising**

For most, but not all, health careers, pre-health students will need to choose an academic major in which to complete their undergraduate degree before attending a health profession school. Professional academic advisors in the Explore Center engage pre-health students in major exploration, degree planning, and academic course work selection processes. By working closely with all of the UNL colleges, Explore Center advisors can help students design a general academic plan for one or more semesters that will allow them to progress toward a degree, while also exploring the variety of opportunities offered by the University. Students are encouraged to enroll in exploratory courses to help identify majors of interest. Additionally, all UNL students are required to complete the Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) requirements (http://ace.unl.edu).

Pre-health students are encouraged to meet with a professional academic advisor in the Explore Center early in their first semester at UNL to discuss interest areas and to develop a plan for major exploration. Pre-health students should continue to meet with an Explore Center advisor at least once per semester and participate in Explore Center workshops until they have declared their major. Additional information concerning major exploration can be found on the Explore Center website (http://explorecenter.unl.edu/undecided-majors-careers).

Students are assigned to a professional academic advisor in the Explore Center but may see any advisor in the Center. Professional advisors in the Explore Center are available on an appointment and/or walk-in basis Monday through Friday in 127 Love (Library) South and can be reached at 402-472-3605 or explorecenter@unl.edu.
Academic Policies

Academic Load
Pre-health students may enroll in a maximum of 18 credits in the fall and spring semesters. Students should refer to the Office of the University Registrar’s website (http://registrar.unl.edu) to determine the number of credits they may enroll in for each of the summer sessions.

Grade Rules
Pass/No Pass
The Pass/No Pass grading option was designed to enable students to take courses in areas of interest where they may feel they have had minimal preparation without adversely affecting their grade point average. Grades of P (pass) are interpreted as a grade of C or better. Neither grade P or NP (no pass) contributes to the grade point average.

Pre-health students should always seek assistance from an Explore Center advisor in determining whether they should take a course through the Pass/No Pass option. Students may or may not be able to take courses Pass/No Pass depending on their intended majors and health profession interest areas.

Student Recognition
Pre-health students who complete at least 12 graded semester hours with a 3.60 GPA are eligible for the Explore Center List of Distinguished Students.

Transfer Credit Rules
The Explore Center does not offer a degree and advisors do not make transfer evaluation decisions. The determination of which transfer courses will meet graduation requirements in a specific college cannot be made until the student declares a specific major within one of the UNL undergraduate degree-granting colleges.

College Requirements

ACE Requirements
Consistent with the mission and values of the University, Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) is based on a shared set of four institutional objectives and 10 student learning outcomes. The ACE program was approved by faculty in all eight undergraduate colleges and endorsed by the Faculty Senate, the student government, and the Academic Planning Committee in January 2008 for implementation in the fall 2009. ACE aligns with current national initiatives in general education.

Key characteristics of ACE that demonstrate the benefits of the program to students:

• Students receive a broad education with exposure to multiple disciplines, critical life skills and important reasoning, inquiry, and civic capacities.
• ACE is simple and transparent for students, faculty and advisors. Students complete the equivalent of 3 credit hours for each of the ten student learning outcomes.
• Students connect and integrate their ACE experiences with their selected major.
• Students can transfer all ACE certified courses across colleges within the institution to meet the ACE requirement and any course from outside the institution that is directly equivalent to a UNL ACE-certified course. Courses from outside institutions without direct equivalents may be considered with appropriate documentation for ACE credit (see academic advisor).

ACE allows faculty to assess and improve their effectiveness and facilitate students’ learning.

ACE Institutional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
To meet the ACE program requirement, a student will complete the equivalent of 3 credit hours for each of the ten ACE Student Learning Outcomes (a total of 30 ACE credit hours). See the ACE website (http://ace.unl.edu) for the most current information and the most recently certified courses. Students should meet with an Explore Center advisor to discuss the planning and completion of ACE courses and requirements.