

# PREPROFESSIONAL STUDY

Requirements for admission to most professional academic programs can be met by study at Iowa State University. These requirements may be met in the course of obtaining a bachelor's degree from Iowa State or at a level below that of a degree, depending on the intended field of study. The specific courses taken in a preprofessional program will depend primarily upon the admission requirements of the professional schools to which a student wants to apply. In some programs requiring three years of preprofessional work, a student may, by careful planning, complete requirements for the bachelor's degree upon transferring to Iowa State up to 32 semester credits of professional coursework. Generally these credits will be counted as electives, but a maximum of 24 may be used as major credits in interdisciplinary studies and a smaller number as major credits in appropriate departments.

Students who have not declared a major upon entry should enter as preprofessional students, i.e., premedical, prelaw, PHP (preprofessional health programs), or GENPV (General Undergraduate Studies Pre Vet), until they choose a major or transfer to a professional school. All students, whether they have selected a major or not, are encouraged to identify their interest in a professional career by designating it on their application.

Information about preprofessional program admissions requirements and career opportunities in human health or law may be obtained in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Advising Center. Information about veterinary medicine admissions requirements and career opportunities may be obtained from the coordinator of the preveterinary program in the Office of the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

## Clinical Laboratory Science/Medical Technology

Clinical laboratory scientists, still commonly referred to as medical technologists, are important members of health-care teams. They perform the chemical, microscopic, radio-assay, and microbiological tests that are necessary in disease diagnosis, and they type and cross-match blood samples to facilitate blood transfusions. They usually work under the supervision of a physician in a hospital or clinic laboratory, but may also be employed by a pharmaceutical company or by manufacturers of analytical instruments. The professional training requires 12 months in a hospital-based CLS/MT program following at least 3 years of college study that emphasizes chemistry and the biological sciences. Students may earn a bachelor's degree in specific ISU majors, by completing the admissions requirements of the CLS/MT program and most of the degree requirements in 3 years on campus, then spending their fourth year in one of the hospital programs that are affiliated with Iowa State University. Before beginning the off-campus studies, students must earn at least 88 credits; the 32 most recent credits must have been earned in residence at

ISU. A maximum of 32 semester credits earned in professional CLS/MT school can be used to partially fulfill the requirements for the bachelor's degree. Students who complete all degree requirements in residence at the university may apply to any school of medical technology for which the admission requirements have been met.

## Dentistry

Dentists diagnose, treat, and try to prevent diseases and injuries of the teeth, jaws, and mouth. Usually a general practitioner will have spent 3 or 4 years taking preprofessional courses at the undergraduate level and 4 years in dental school earning the degree of doctor of dental surgery (D.D.S.) or doctor of dental medicine (D.M.D.). Learning a specialty requires at least 2 more years. The courses necessary for admission to most dental schools include English, biology, general and organic chemistry, and physics. Students may earn a degree in any major that Iowa State University offers as they meet the admission requirements; they should choose their major to reflect their own interests and abilities. Highly qualified students may be accepted into dental school after 3 years of preprofessional study without earning a baccalaureate degree..

## Health Information Management

Health information managers serve as supervisors of medical records departments in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other healthcare institutions. Certified registered record administrators (R.R.A.) must have completed a program leading to a bachelor's degree in medical record administration. Most professional programs are 2 years in length and follow 2 years of college study in chemistry, biology, the humanities, social sciences, languages, and philosophy. Students may take the preprofessional courses at Iowa State University and then transfer to a university offering the professional program or they may earn a bachelor's degree at Iowa State University before entering a health information management program.

## Hospital and Health Administration

Administrators of health care organizations manage and guide the varied activities in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and mental health facilities. The professional requirement may be for a master's degree or a bachelor's degree, depending upon the size of the institution and whether an upper or middle entry-level position is desired. Students at Iowa State may take general education courses for two or more years and then transfer to a university offering a bachelor's degree in health administration, or they may spend four years earning a bachelor's degree in any department before entering a master's degree program at the University of Iowa or other university. Courses required for admission to master's degree programs in hospital and health administration vary, but may include introductory accounting, management, statistics, and economics.

## Human Medicine

Physicians study, diagnoses, and treat illness and injury. They may work in offices, clinics, hospitals, or laboratories, in private practice or for government or industry. Their professional training usually consists of 4 years of study in a college of medicine to earn the doctor of medicine (M.D.) degree, and then 3 or more years in hospital residency learning a specialty such as family medicine, pediatrics, surgery, obstetrics, or psychiatry. A degree of doctor of osteopathy (D.O.) is awarded to those students who complete 4 years in a college of osteopathic medicine before their residency. All medical schools recommend a broad preprofessional education that includes courses in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, English, the social sciences, arts and humanities. The degree of a premedical student can be from any college and in any curriculum or major offered by the university. The major should reflect the student's interests and provide appropriate preparation for an alternative career.

## Law

An attorney offers assistance, often where a third-party neutral arbiter is required to resolve conflicts. Many attorneys work in private practice, but others secure positions in the public sector, e.g., federal or state governmental agencies. A minimum of three years from an American Bar Approved (ABA) law school is required to earn a Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) degree. A bachelor's degree is required for admission to all accredited law schools. A student planning to enter law school may pursue an undergraduate degree in any discipline. The choice of the bachelor's degree should reflect a student's passion and personal interests and not be perceived as being the best degree to help them be admitted into law school. Appropriate courses should be completed that will enhance a student's development of critical thinking skills, including analytical written and oral skills. An understanding of business, social sciences, and humanities is necessary to comprehend the pluralistic society within and outside of the United States. These courses should include accounting, management, political science, psychology, criminal justice, economics, philosophy, English literature, and history. The completion of these courses will provide students with a knowledge base and skill sets that will assist them with their preparation for law school. Courses in mathematics and statistics are also helpful in developing analytical skills. Advanced writing courses and speech communication courses will also serve students well. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences participates in a 3+3 program with the Law Schools at Drake University and at the University of Iowa. Visit the Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Academic Services office for details.

## Library and Information Science

Librarians and information science specialists select, organize, preserve and promote information resources as well as advocate and teach information literacy skills. Professional opportunities include work for

libraries in academic institutions, public education, city and county municipalities, medical facilities, government agencies, and corporate settings. They also have work opportunities in the publishing and information technology professions. Master's degree programs in library and information science provide the professional preparation. Iowa State students may earn a bachelor's degree in any department before entering a professional master's degree program. They may choose majors that reflect their interests and provide a foundation for working in the library and information science field.

## Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists provide purposeful activities to help those who have been disabled by physical illness or injury, birth defects, emotional disorder, aging, drug abuse, or other problems to learn to cope with everyday living. Therapists treat patients in hospitals, school systems, and rehabilitation centers. Students may complete a bachelor's degree in any major at Iowa State University, and then enter a master's or doctoral degree program at another university.

## Optometry

Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases of the visual system, the eye and associated structures. Treatment may include corrective glasses or contacts, vision therapy and therapeutic drugs. Optometrists usually set up their own offices or work in group practice. Professional study requires 4 years in a school or college of optometry and leads to the doctor of optometry (O.D.) degree. All optometry schools require at least 90 semester credits of preprofessional courses, including biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and English. Certain optometry schools require a bachelor's degree. Students wishing to earn the bachelor's degree from Iowa State University may choose any major and take the courses required for graduation with that major as they take the courses required for admission to a professional optometry program.

## Pharmacy

Pharmacists prepare and dispense therapeutic drugs; educate health care professionals, patients and the general public about the appropriate use of drugs; conduct pharmaceutical research and work in industrial settings which involve the manufacture, marketing and advertising of pharmaceutical. Students may complete prepharmacy courses at Iowa State University. Many schools do not require a bachelor's degree for admission, however most students complete at least 3 years of college before admission to pharmacy schools. Upon admission, the student will then transfer to a Pharm. D. program of study which will entail four years of study.

## Physical Therapy

Physical therapists work with people who have been disabled by injury, illness, or birth defects. They assist in evaluating the physical problems and administer therapeutic agents such as massage and exercise,

heat, baths, ultrasonics, and electricity; they work in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, schools, rehabilitation centers, and private practice. Usually, students earn a bachelor's degree at ISU before entering professional school to earn a doctoral degree. The bachelor's degree from ISU may be earned in any department, provided that the physical therapy prerequisites are completed. Courses required for admission to a professional program include biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, mathematics, and statistics.

## Physician Assistant

A physician assistant provides medical services under the supervision of a licensed physician. PAs conduct physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory tests, make diagnostic and treatment decisions, and are allowed to prescribe medication in most states. Certification as a physician assistant requires at least 2 years in a professional program at the master's degree level. Applicants must have had health-care experience with direct patient contact experience. Students must have earned a bachelor's degree before entering a PA program. The degree can be in any area but the student must complete the pre-requisite courses for the PA program. These usually include courses in biology, chemistry, psychology, and statistics.

## Podiatry

Podiatrists diagnose, and treat diseases and disorders of the human foot and ankle. They treat patients in private and group practice, hospitals, and, increasingly, in industrial and sports-related positions. Professional training requires 4 years in a college of podiatric medicine and leads to the degree of doctor of podiatric medicine (D.P.M.). This is usually followed by 1 to 3 years in a hospital residency. All podiatric colleges require at least 3 years of preprofessional study, including courses in biology, general and organic chemistry, physics, and English. Most entrants have a bachelor's degree, which may be in any major. A few students may complete the admission requirements and most of the bachelor's degree requirements in 3 years. If so, a maximum of 32 semester credits may be transferred to Iowa State University from the first year in an accredited podiatric college in order to complete the requirements for the bachelor's degree.

## Theology or Religious Studies

The professional education of a student of religion can follow one of two paths. The path to a profession as a pastor, priest, rabbi or other leadership position in a religious tradition usually requires 3 years in a program leading to the master of divinity (M.Div.) offered at a school of divinity or of theology. The path to a profession as a teacher of religious studies at the college level requires 4-7 years in a program leading to the Ph.D. at a graduate school of Religious Studies. Both seminaries and graduate schools require a bachelor's degree for admission. The American Association of Theological Schools recommends the following areas of study as the best preparation for theological studies:

English language and literature; history, including non-Western culture; philosophy; natural sciences, social sciences, especially psychology, sociology and anthropology; the fine arts; Biblical and modern languages; and religion, both Western and Eastern. Although students in a variety of major fields may qualify for admission to a theological school, interested persons are advised to review their proposed programs with a representative of the Religious Studies Program in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

## Veterinary Medicine

About 75% of all veterinarians are engaged in private practice. In a mixed practice, they diagnose and treat health problems among a variety of animals. Others specialize in one species (e.g., feline, pet bird) and still others specialize in a specific discipline within veterinary medicine (e.g., cardiology, ophthalmology). Veterinarians may also choose public and corporate practice (e.g., public health, education, research, food safety, industry, laboratory animal medicine, aquatic animal medicine, poultry medicine, and military veterinary medicine).

The professional program requires four years at a college of veterinary medicine and leads to the doctor of veterinary medicine degree (D.V.M.). Admission to a veterinary college involves at least two years of preprofessional college education. Candidates must take courses in biology, chemistry, genetics, physics, English, humanities, social sciences, speech, anatomy and physiology, and biochemistry. (For Iowa State University see Veterinary Medicine, Admission Requirements; for most recent information, consult the College of Veterinary Medicine Web site: [www.vetmed.iastate.edu](http://www.vetmed.iastate.edu) (<http://www.vetmed.iastate.edu>).

Students may pursue their preveterinary preparation in any college at Iowa State University. A major (preveterinary medicine is not a major) should be selected that is allied to each student's vocational interests in veterinary medicine or that otherwise offers vocational satisfaction in the event that plans for entry into the College of Veterinary Medicine change. Students are encouraged to pursue a bachelor's degree; the most effective progress toward a bachelor's degree is made when a major is selected upon entry and no change occurs before graduation. However, students who have not even considered a career other than veterinary medicine may need some time to explore possibilities before selection of a major.

To assist students who have indicated interest in the preveterinary program for the College of Veterinary Medicine and are undecided about a major, an advising category is available known as GENPV (General Undergraduate Studies Pre Vet). Orientation and advising services for these students are designed to help students fulfill preveterinary course requirements, to introduce available majors and careers allied to veterinary medicine, and to introduce career options in veterinary medicine. GENPV students must select a major by the end of their second semester. Some Iowa State University majors allow, by careful

planning, the opportunity for a student to earn the bachelor's degree by combining credits from three years of preprofessional study and one year of professional study in the College of Veterinary Medicine.