

SDSM&T Pre-Health Student Timeline

Use this timeline to help you plan your pre-health pathway.

Freshman Year

- Get into the habit of regularly checking your SDSM&T e-mail
- Meet your [Academic Advisor](#)
 - Select appropriate courses for your pre-health pathway
 - Develop a long-term plan for academic success
- Meet your [Pre-Health Pathways Advisor](#) (Dr. J)
 - Ask about the admissions exam required for your pathway
 - Which entrance exam should you take? When will you take the exam?
 - How should you begin preparing for the exam?
 - Ask about shadowing, volunteering, & preparing for health professions
 - Start keeping a journal of your healthcare experiences to help you write admissions essays and prepare for interviews in the future
 - Be reflective of your experiences
 - Record exact dates of your experiences
 - List at least one contact person & their information for each experience
 - Plan to do some service or clinical work over the summer
 - Ask about the process of applying to professional programs
 - What are schools looking for in applicants?
 - Where can I apply? How do I apply?
- Meet your course instructors
 - Read your syllabi carefully
 - Attend office hours to ask questions and clarify concepts covered in class
 - Develop meaningful academic relationships with your instructors
 - Remember that you will need letters of recommendation later down the road!
- Connect with other students interested in pre-health
 - Join the [Future Health Science Professionals Club](#)
 - Attend meetings & participate in club-sponsored events
 - Join the [Pre-Health mailing list](#) to get information on resources & upcoming events
 - Subscribe to our pre-health blog (Yay! you are here!)
- Build your skills for studying and time management
 - Attend events held by the [Student Success Center](#) (We are here to help!)
 - Find study resources to help you be successful in your courses
 - [Student Resources Contact List](#)
- Start a resume/CV
 - Plan to update this regularly...adding new experiences, skills, etc. as you go
- Get familiar with the library and read, read, read!
 - Professional programs are looking for life-long learners, so stay current on the topics of health policies and scientific developments in your pathway. You should also read essays, articles, and even novels that help you to be intellectually well-rounded.
- Make thoughtful decisions
 - Remember that convictions for breaking the law (including underage drinking) can negatively affect your application to professional school.

Sophomore Year

- Check in with your academic and pre-health pathways advisors (keep everyone up-to-date!)
 - Remember that building those relationships is vital for getting good letters of recommendation and finding opportunities to strengthen your application.
- Find ways to enhance your professional program application beyond academics
 - Consider becoming a mentor or tutor
 - This can also help to reinforce content that you've already learned
 - Consider taking on leadership roles in student organizations (such as FHSP)
 - Do some volunteering for the community
 - Keep pursuing new and different shadowing opportunities
 - Explore research opportunities
 - Look into professional certifications/training/occupations that might be relevant to your pathway
 - First aid/CPR/AED certification
 - EMS/EMT certification
 - Pharmacy technician
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
 - Medical scribe
 - Emergency & wilderness medical training
- Start preparing for your pathway's admissions exam
 - Check out study preparation materials from the library
 - Use available digital resources (talk to Dr. J)
 - Investigate registration dates and logistics for your exam
- Start narrowing down the schools/programs to which you want to apply
 - Read about different programs and look for good fits with your skills/goals
 - Make a list ranking your top program picks
 - Review program websites for specific admissions requirements
 - Plan to complete all of the required classes before you graduate
 - Touch base with your academic advisor and stay on track
 - Gauge where you are with your healthcare experiences requirements
 - Ask for help in getting experiences you are lacking (see Dr. J)
- Keep adding to your experiences journal
 - Track your experiences with exact dates & contact information
 - Reflect on what you have done well
 - Reflect on what needs improvement
 - Use your resources (advisors, library, study tools, etc.) to help you develop a plan for improvement
 - Think about the pathway that you have chosen
 - Are you excelling academically? Do you need some help to excel?
 - What do you like about your pathway?
 - What goals do you have for next year?
 - Do you want to stay in this pathway?
 - Do you want to explore other pre-health pathways?
- Plan to do service or clinical work over the summer
 - Consider studying/volunteering abroad for part of the summer
- Update your resume/CV with all of your new skills, experiences, etc.

Junior Year

- Check in with your academic and pre-health pathways advisors (keep everyone up-to-date!)
 - Remember that building those relationships is vital for getting good letters of recommendation and finding opportunities to strengthen your application.
- Continue to strengthen your professional program application beyond academics
 - Stay involved with campus organizations & take on leadership roles
 - Keep volunteering and getting more shadowing experience
 - Keep looking into/working on/wrapping up research experiences
 - Present your work at a conference if you can!
- Update your resume/CV
 - Add in all of your new skills, experiences, etc.
- Write your personal statement
 - Use your experiences journal to help you recall specifics & craft your narrative
 - Take advantage of personal statement writing resources available (see Dr. J)
 - Have several people read and give you feedback on your statement
- Select the schools to which you plan to apply
 - Review program websites again & update your ranking list
 - Do a self-assessment to see where you have gaps in program requirements
 - Create a plan for addressing those gaps (Dr. J can help!)
- Keep preparing for your pathway's admissions exam(s)
 - Take practice exams
 - Online practice exams can be purchased
 - In print practice exams are on reserve at the library
 - Ask about mock exams
- Take your entrance exam (usually at the end of your junior year)
 - Find out when/where entrance exams are administered
 - Arrange logistics for taking your entrance exam
 - Students typically take exams after they finish their junior year
 - Some exams are not administered in Rapid City, so you may need to travel
 - Do not travel on the same day as your exam. Arrive a day early!
- Ask professors, advisors, healthcare professionals, and/or volunteer contacts for letters of recommendation
 - Provide them with copies of your personal statement and resume/CV
 - Tell them which schools you are applying to and who they should be addressing their letters to when they write them
 - Let them know if they should send a letter on their own or if they will be asked to provide a letter by the school or a third party
- After you finish your junior year, start submitting your application(s)
 - Be optimistic, but also realistic about your career plans. If you haven't already, be thinking about alternative career tracks in case you do not get accepted into your desired program
- Plan to do service or clinical work over the summer
 - Volunteer or get a summer job/internship in health care
 - Consider studying/volunteering abroad for part of the summer

Senior Year

- Continue with your volunteering/clinical experiences
- Wrap up any research experiences
 - Finish a paper/report/etc.
 - Present a poster or give a talk at a conference
 - Thank the people that let you work with them for the opportunity to do so
- Thank anyone who wrote you a letter of recommendation for your applications
- Pass the torch to others in campus organizations
 - Help new officers get set up to carry on your work for the organization
 - Continue to be active until you graduate
- Update your resume/CV
 - Add in all of your new skills, experiences, etc.
- Return any secondary applications in a timely fashion
 - Don't make any program wait long for you to get back to them!
- Set up mock interviews to practice for your professional interviews
 - You can do this before you ever even get an interview! (see Dr. J)
- Go on your actual interviews
 - Take advantage of pre-interview coaching with Dr. J
 - Do a mock interview (or two!)
 - Rock your interview(s)!
 - Ask admissions coordinators about follow-up protocols
 - Send thank you notes to the interview committees after interviews
- Be patient in waiting for letters of acceptance or rejection. Most will arrive by mid-March.
 - If not accepted, talk with admissions contacts about how to strengthen your next application. Then meet with your advisors and decide whether to reapply or pursue alternative options.
 - If accepted, celebrate! Let your advisors know so that they can celebrate with you!
- Complete financial aid forms and graduation paperwork, then GRADUATE!
 - Thank your mentors and advisors for their guidance
 - Celebrate graduation with friends and family!