



Understanding Competitive Admissions Overview

Document Overview:

This document will provide a brief overview of UWL's pre-health tracks, including job descriptions, duties, and admissions statistics that show how to be a competitive applicant. Information and data will vary based on availability; all information is provided by the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) in coordination with the respective national organizations that represent each profession, unless otherwise noted at the bottom of the document.

You can find additional information on each of these tracks on the [Healthcare Pathways page](#) of the Pre-Health Student Resource Center website, and in the linked headers below.

We suggest that students research each individual school and program of interest in order to learn about specific requirements and competitiveness of admission. Every effort will be made to maintain the accuracy of this document through yearly updates. If you have questions, feel free to reach out using the contact information in the footer.

Physical Therapy

Profession Overview:

Physical therapists are also called PTs and assist people who are injured and or ill. They work to improve movement and manage pain. PTs are a critical part of any rehabilitation process. They provide treatment and further prevention for patients who experience chronic conditions, illnesses, or injuries ("Physical Therapists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Physical therapists typically do the following ("Physical Therapists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Review patients' medical history and any referrals or notes from doctors, surgeons, or other healthcare workers
- Diagnose patients' functions and movements by observing them stand or walk and by listening to their concerns, among other methods
- Develop individualized plans of care for patients, outlining the patients' goals and the expected outcomes of the plans
- Use exercises, stretching maneuvers, hands-on therapy, and equipment to ease patients' pain, help them increase their mobility, prevent further pain or injury, and facilitate health and wellness
- Evaluate and record a patient's progress, modifying a plan of care and trying new treatments as needed
- Educate patients and their families about what to expect from the recovery process and how best to cope with challenges throughout the process

Admissions Statistics:

2016-2017 Cycle	
Total number of applicants	19,025 in PTCAS
Average number of applications per student	6.2 in PTCAS
Total number of students	31,380
Additional data	PTCAS Applicant Data Reports (GPA Data Available)

NAAHP (2019). 2019-PhysicalTherapy-NAAHP-APTA-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/physical-therapy>

Physician Assistant

Profession Overview:

Physician assistants, or *PAs*, work with other healthcare professionals including physicians, surgeons, and other healthcare workers, to examine, diagnose, and treat patients. PAs are supervised by a collaborating medical doctor. ("Physician Assistants: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Physician Assistants typically do the following ("Physician Assistants: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Take or review patients' medical histories
- Examine patients
- Order and interpret diagnostic tests, such as x rays or blood tests
- Diagnose a patient's injury or illness
- Give treatment, such as setting broken bones and immunizing patients
- Educate and counsel patients and their families—for example, answering questions about how to care for a child with asthma
- Prescribe medicine
- Assess and record a patient's progress
- Research the latest treatments to ensure the quality of patient care
- Conduct or participate in outreach programs, talking to groups about managing diseases and promoting wellness

Admissions Statistics:

- Total submitted applications in 2016: **26,953**
- Total matriculants: **8,762**
- Average # of applications per student: **7.25 designations**

Academic metrics for the 2017 application cycle

	Science GPA	Overall GPA	Healthcare Experience
Applicants	3.27	3.37	2,187 hours
Matriculants	3.51	3.57	

NAAHP (2019). 2019-PhysAsst-NAAHP-PAEA-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/physician-assistant>

Occupational Therapy

Profession Overview:

Occupational therapists, or OTs, use everyday therapeutic activities to treat patients who may be injured, ill, or disabled. Through treatment, patients will recover, improve, develop and maintain skills needed for daily tasks ("Occupational Therapists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Occupational therapists typically do the following ("Occupational Therapists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Review patients' medical history, ask the patients questions, and observe them doing tasks
- Evaluate a patient's condition and needs
- Develop a treatment plan for patients, identifying specific goals and the types of activities that will be used to help the patient work toward those goals
- Help people with disabilities perform various tasks, such as teaching a stroke victim how to get dressed
- Demonstrate exercises that can help relieve pain in people with chronic conditions
- Evaluate a patient's home or workplace and, on the basis of the patient's health needs, identify potential improvements, such as labeling kitchen cabinets for an older person with poor memory
- Educate a patient's family and employer about how to accommodate and care for the patient
- Recommend special equipment, such as wheelchairs and eating aids, and instruct on use of each
- Assess and record patients' activities and progress for patient evaluations, for billing, and for reporting to physicians and other healthcare providers

Admissions Statistics:

Most programs require a minimum and prerequisite GPA of 2.8-3.0, but average GPAs tend to be higher, below are links to some schools within the region that you can explore and learn more about admission requirements.

University/Program	Admissions Webpage
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse	https://www.uwlax.edu/grad/occupational-therapy/admission-requirements/
University of Wisconsin - Madison	https://kinesiology.education.wisc.edu/ot/admissions/
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee	https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/masters-occupational-therapy/
Concordia University Wisconsin	https://www.cuw.edu/academics/programs/occupational-therapy-masters/index.html
Carroll University	https://www.carrollu.edu/academics/health-sciences/master-of-occupational-therapy/admission
Mount Mary University	https://mtmary.edu/majors-programs/graduate/occupational-therapy/admission.html
University of Minnesota	https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/occupational-therapy-ot/prospective-students/academic-requirements-entry
College of St. Scholastica	http://www.css.edu/graduate/masters-doctoral-and-professional-programs/areas-of-study/ms-occupational-therapy/admissions-information.html
St. Catherine University	https://www.stkate.edu/admission-and-aid/gc/maot-application-instructions

Athletic Training

Profession Overview:

Athletic trainers, or ATs, prevent, diagnose, and treat muscle/bone injury/illness. They work with all ages and skill levels that can range from young children to professional athletes. Athletic trainers are typically the first healthcare professional to attend to injured athletes on the field. They will work under the direction of a physician or with other healthcare providers to discuss injuries, treatment options, patient evaluation and treatment ("Athletic Trainers: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Athletic trainers typically do the following ("Athletic Trainers: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Apply protective or injury-preventive devices, such as tape, bandages, and braces
- Recognize and evaluate injuries
- Provide first aid or emergency care
- Develop and carry out rehabilitation programs for injured athletes
- Plan and implement comprehensive programs to prevent injury and illness among athletes
- Perform administrative tasks, keeping records and writing reports on injuries and treatment programs

Admissions Statistics:

Most programs require a minimum and prerequisite GPA of 3.0; below are links to some schools within the region that you can explore and learn more about admission requirements.

University/College	Admissions Webpage
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse	https://www.uwlax.edu/grad/athletic-training/admission-requirements/
University of Wisconsin – Green Bay	https://www.uwgb.edu/athletic-training/apply/
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee	https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/masters-athletic-training/
Carroll University	https://www.carrollu.edu/academics/health-sciences/ms-athletic-training/requirements
Minnesota State University – Mankato	https://ahn.mnsu.edu/academic-programs/athletic-training/about-athletic-training/admission/admission-requirements/
University of Northern Iowa	https://coe.uni.edu/hrcs/athletic-training

Allopathic Medicine (M.D.)

Profession Overview:

Medical doctors diagnose and treat injuries and illnesses. Medical Doctors, or physicians, have a wide variety of responsibility, depending on specialty. They will examine patients, prescribe medication, record medical histories, order and perform diagnostic tests, and interpret and communicate test results to patients and family members. They will also cover topics such as: diet, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. Surgeons are medical doctors who operate on patients to treat medical conditions. Some examples may include repairing broken bones and removal of cancerous tumors ("Physicians and Surgeons: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Physicians and surgeons typically do the following ("Physicians and Surgeons: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Take a patient's medical history
- Update charts and patient information to show current findings and treatments
- Order tests for nurses or other healthcare staff to perform
- Review test results to identify any abnormal findings
- Recommend and design a plan of treatment
- Address concerns or answer questions that patients have about their health and well-being
- Help patients take care of their health by discussing topics such as proper nutrition and hygiene

Admissions Statistics:

	Applicants in 2017-2018	Matriculants
Total Applicants	51,658	21,326 Entering Students
Average Science GPA	3.45	3.64
Average Overall GPA	3.56	3.71
Average MCAT Score	505	510

NAAHP (2019). 2019-AllopathicMed-NAAHP-AAMC-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/allopathic-medicine>

Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)

Profession Overview:

There are two types of physicians with similar degrees: M.D. (Medical Doctor) and D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine). Both use the same methods of treatment, including drugs and surgery, but D.O.s place additional emphasis on the body's musculoskeletal system, preventive medicine, and holistic (whole-person) patient care. D.O.s are most likely to be primary care physicians, although they can be found in all specialties. ("Physicians and Surgeons: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Physicians and surgeons typically do the following ("Physicians and Surgeons: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Take a patient's medical history
- Update charts and patient information to show current findings and treatments
- Order tests for nurses or other healthcare staff to perform
- Review test results to identify any abnormal findings
- Recommend and design a plan of treatment
- Address concerns or answer questions that patients have about their health and well-being
- Help patients take care of their health by discussing topics such as proper nutrition and hygiene

Admissions Statistics:

2018 Application Cycle

Total Applicants	20,981 for 7,467 seats
Average number of applications per student	8.7
Mean applicant age	24
Grade Point Averages for Entering Students	3.43 - Science 3.53 - Overall

MCAT Average Scores

MCAT Total Score	502.0
Bio & Biochemical	125.6
Chemical & Physical	125.3
Psychological, Social & Bio	126.0
Critical Analysis & Reasoning	125.0

NAAHP (2019). 2019-OsteopathicMed-NAAHP-AACOM-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/osteopathic-medicine>

Dentistry

Profession Overview:

Dentists diagnose and treat health concerns related to patients' teeth, gums, and other parts of the mouth. Dentists work to advise and instruct their patients on overall mouth, gum and teeth care. They will also address how diet choices can impact their oral health ("Dentists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Dentists typically do the following ("Dentists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Remove decay from teeth and fill cavities
- Repair or remove damaged teeth
- Place sealants or whitening agents on teeth
- Administer anesthetics to keep patients from feeling pain during procedures
- Prescribe antibiotics or other medications
- Examine x rays of teeth, gums, the jaw, and nearby areas in order to diagnose problems
- Make models and measurements for dental appliances, such as dentures
- Teach patients about diets, flossing, the use of fluoride, and other aspects of dental care

Admissions Statistics:

Applicants for 2017 entering class

- Applied: **11,873**
- First-time, first-year enrollees: **6,122 (51.6%)**

Average Metrics

	Cumulative GPA	Science GPA	DAT Academic Average	DAT Total Science	DAT Perceptual
Applicants	3.4	3.27	19.3	19.0	19.3
Enrollees	3.56	3.47	20.4	20.0	20.1

NAAHP (2019). 2019-Dental-NAAHP-ADEA-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/dental>

Optometry

Profession Overview:

Optometrists examine the eyes and visual system of patients. They can treat, diagnose, manage disease, injuries and any other eye disorders. Optometrists can prescribe prescription glasses and contact lenses as well. Optometrists who own their own practice will find themselves completing business tasks (e.g. ordering supplies, hiring, promoting/marketing ("Optometrists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Optometrists typically do the following ("Optometrists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Perform vision tests and analyze results
- Diagnose sight problems, such as nearsightedness or farsightedness, and eye diseases, such as glaucoma
- Prescribe eyeglasses, contact lenses, and other visual aids, and if state law permits, medications
- Perform minor surgical procedures to correct or treat visual or eye health issues
- Provide treatments such as vision therapy or low-vision rehabilitation
- Provide pre- and postoperative care to patients undergoing eye surgery
- Evaluate patients for the presence of other diseases and conditions, such as diabetes or hypertension, and refer patients to other healthcare providers as needed
- Promote eye and general health by counseling patients

Admissions Statistics:

Fall 2017 application cycle

- Total Applicants: **2,867**
- Average number of applications per student: **4.96**

Academic Metrics

	Cumulative GPA	OAT Academic Average
Applicants	3.33	312
Matriculants	3.43	328

NAAHP (2019). 2019-Optometry-NAAHP-ASCO-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/optometry>

Pharmacy

Profession Overview:

Pharmacists are experts in the safe use of prescription medications. They are also responsible for dispensing prescription medications for patients, as well as provide immunizations, health and wellness screenings, and advise on healthy life choices ("Pharmacists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Pharmacists typically do the following ("Pharmacists: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Fill prescriptions, verifying instructions from physicians on the proper amounts of medication
- Check whether prescriptions will interact negatively with other drugs that a patient is taking or any medical conditions the patient has
- Instruct patients on how and when to take a prescribed medicine and inform them about potential side effects from taking the medicine
- Give flu shots and, in most states, other vaccinations
- Advise patients about general health topics, such as diet, exercise, and managing stress, and on other issues, such as what equipment or supplies would be best to treat a health problem
- Work with insurance companies to ensure that patients get the medicines they need
- Oversee the work of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists in training (interns)
- Keep records and do other administrative tasks
- Teach other healthcare practitioners about proper medication therapies for patients

Admissions Statistics:

2017 Entering Class	
Total number of applicants	16,176 in PharmCAS
Average number of applications per student	3.9
Number of 1 st year students enrolled in pharmacy programs	13,795 in Fall 2016

2017 Entering Class	
Cumulative GPA	3.31
Science GPA	3.16
Non-Science GPA	3.55
Math GPA	3.24
PCAT Composite	59 th Percentile

NAAHP (2019). 2019-Pharmacy-NAAHP-AACP-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/pharmacy>

Chiropractic

Profession Overview:

Chiropractors work mainly with the neuromusculoskeletal system of their patients. They are dealing with a variety of nerves, bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons. Chiropractors will manipulate and adjust body parts to help manage health concerns and pain. ("Chiropractors: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019).

Chiropractors typically do the following ("Chiropractors: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Assess a patient's medical condition by reviewing the patient's medical history and concerns, and by performing a physical examination
- Analyze the patient's posture, spine, and reflexes
- Conduct tests, including evaluating a patient's posture and taking x rays
- Provide neuromusculoskeletal therapy, which often involves adjusting a patient's spinal column and other joints
- Give additional treatments, such as applying heat or cold to a patient's injured areas
- Advise patients on health and lifestyle issues, such as exercise, nutrition, and sleep habits
- Refer patients to other healthcare professionals if needed

Academic Requirements for Admission (varies by school)

- Complete a minimum of 90 credit hours of undergraduate study through an accredited university
 - Some states will require you to complete a bachelor's degree to obtain licensure
- 24 of 90 credits need to be in life and physical science course
- GPA Minimum: 3.0 on 4.0 scale
- Requirements vary by program, but most are flexible if students communicate in advance
 - Use the Discover Chiropractic page to help learn more about specific program requirements

NAAHP (2019). 2019-Chiropractic-NAAHP-ACC-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/chiropractic>

Veterinary Medicine

Profession Overview:

Veterinarians are doctors that work with the health and care of animals, ranging from house pets to livestock, and even exotic animals. They will diagnose injuries/illnesses, provide treatment in a variety of settings.

Veterinarians will also research different medical conditions within animals, and work to protect the public ("Veterinarians: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019)

Veterinarians typically do the following ("Veterinarians: Occupational Outlook Handbook", 2019):

- Examine animals to assess their health and diagnose problems
- Treat and dress wounds
- Perform surgery on animals
- Test for and vaccinate against diseases
- Operate medical equipment, such as x-ray machines
- Advise animal owners about general care, medical conditions, and treatments
- Prescribe medication
- Euthanize animals

Admissions Statistics:

Class of 2021 Metrics	
Total applicants / Total seats	7,507 applicants for 4,200 seats
Mean GPA: Overall / Science	3.6 Overall and 3.5 Science
Mean GRE: Verbal / Quantitative	64.8 percentile Verbal and 54.2 percentile Quantitative

NAAHP (2019). 2019-VeterinaryMed-NAAHP-AAVMC-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/veterinary-medicine>

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- NAAHP (2019). 2019-Dental-NAAHP-ADEA-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from
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<https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/chiropractic>
- NAAHP (2019). 2019-VeterinaryMed-NAAHP-AAVMC-Slides [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from
<https://www.naahp.org/naahpwwsite/professional-resources/naahp-sack/veterinary-medicine>