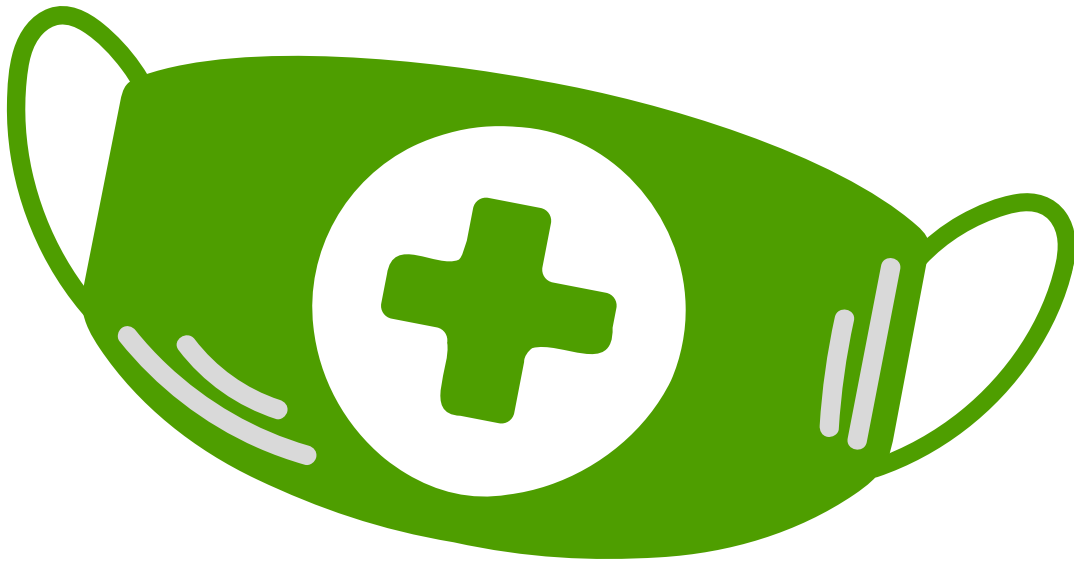


Shadowing & Service in a Pandemic Year:



Can you still gain experiences for a health profession track during COVID-19?



Grinnell College

Center for Careers, Life, and Service



As a prehealth student, you've probably heard that it's important for you to gain experience through activities like shadowing and community service. With COVID-19 putting restrictions on these types of activities, many prehealth students find themselves wondering how they will gain the experiences necessary to be admitted to a professional school program. The following resources will help you understand the expectations of professional schools, explore your options, and make a plan for the upcoming year. Remember that as the public health situation changes in your local area, more opportunities may open up to you. Continue to ask about options locally while following all health and safety protocols established by your local government and public health agencies.

Learning goals:

After working through the following activities, you will:

- know the competencies needed for medical school
- understand how med schools evaluate competencies - normally and during the pandemic
- be able to assess your competencies and identify areas for growth
- have an action plan to gain experiences and develop competencies

Demonstrating Competence in an Unconventional Application Year

AAMC webinar recording: <https://vimeo.com/425732285>

This webinar was aimed at students about to apply to medical school. Topics include:

- core competencies required for entering medical students
- ways to demonstrate competencies as an applicant
- how medical schools will assess competencies during the pandemic

Activity #1: Watch the recording, paying special attention to how medical schools will be evaluating students' activities that take place during the pandemic. What mindset and characteristics are they looking for during this time? What recommendations do they make for staying engaged?

Anatomy of an Applicant

AAMC website: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/anatomy-applicant/core-competencies-resources>

This site was developed to help premedical students understand the core competencies and assess their readiness to apply to medical school. Topics include:

- description of the core competencies
- real stories demonstrating various competencies
- self-assessment guide

Activity #2: Read the descriptions of the core competencies and answer the following questions: Why do you think these competencies were selected as being essential for medical students? What kinds of activities would allow a future applicant to strengthen these competencies? Brainstorm a list of non-academic, non-clinical activities that would develop these competencies (i.e., NOT research or shadowing!).

Activity #3: Download and complete the self-assessment guide, taking time to think of specific examples of when you demonstrated each competency. Which competencies do you still need to work on? Set a goal of developing one or two this year and brainstorm ways you might strengthen these competencies in a virtual environment (look at your list from Activity #2 if you need ideas).

Pre-Health Experiences During the COVID Pandemic

Health Pros Career Community GrinnellShare site:

<https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/Careers-Life-Service/SitePages/Remote-Virtual-Experiences.aspx>

These resources were gathered to help you think creatively about how you might continue to serve your local community and explore your chosen health profession without the risk of in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activity #4: After exploring the links provided, think about the following questions: Which of these activities might help you to learn more about the ethical, sociocultural, and economic issues in healthcare? Which might demonstrate the competencies of service orientation and cultural competence? Do any of these activities align with your competency goals from Activity #3?

Activity #5: What books, podcasts, documentaries, media sources, etc. look interesting for exploring healthcare issues in greater depth? How frequently do you think you should be checking news sites for current events related to medicine and healthcare? Realistically, how much time do you have available to invest this term/semester in reading/viewing related to your professional development goals?

Networking & Connecting with Alumni: Handouts & How-To Guides

CLS GrinnellShare site:

<https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/Careers-Life-Service/SitePages/Networking-with-Alumni.aspx>

Exploratory Advising Crash Course "Build Your Network:"

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/c8a16782-2a5c-47a4-9262-70fceb7396fb>

While job shadowing is curtailed, networking and informational interviews may be your next best option for exploring the profession. Although you will not be able to see practitioner-patient interactions or learn about the flow of a typical workday, you can still gain valuable insights by speaking with practitioners about their experiences.

Activity #6: Watch the networking Crash Course videos, then read the guide on informational interviews and, if necessary, the items on crafting an elevator pitch and using LinkedIn and Grinnell Connect. Using what you've learned, identify 2-3 practitioners and draft a list of questions to conduct informational interviews.

Creating an Action Plan

Now that you have explored resources, reflected, and set goals, it's time to create a plan!

Activity #7: Use your ideas and reflections from the previous sections to complete your personal action plan on the next page. This can be for the current term, the semester or the academic year, but remember to keep your goals and expectations reasonable and in line with your course load.

ACTION PLAN FOR GAINING HEALTH EXPERIENCES DURING THE PANDEMIC

BUILDING CORE COMPETENCIES (SEE ACTIVITIES 3 & 4)

Competency Goal 1: _____

Activities that strengthen this competency

Agencies/Organizations doing this work

Select at least one activity to develop this competency and make contact with an organization to identify ways to get involved.

Competency Goal 2: _____

Activities that strengthen this competency

Agencies/Organizations doing this work

Select at least one activity to develop this competency and make contact with an organization to identify ways to get involved.

EXPLORING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (SEE ACTIVITY 5)

Goal (e.g. minutes/week, articles per month, etc.): _____

Sources for current events

Sources for ethical issues

Sources for cultural issues

Block out time in your calendar to make a habit of reading/exploring for professional development and tracking current events.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING (SEE ACTIVITY 6)

Practitioners/professional school students with whom I'd like to connect:

1.

2.

3.

I have:

- ☐ learned how to request and conduct informational interviews
- ☐ met with my exploratory adviser if I have questions or feel uncertain about how to proceed
- ☐ drafted my "elevator pitch"
- ☐ researched the physicians'/students' backgrounds
- ☐ created a list of questions/topics I'd like to discuss
- ☐ reached out with a professional request to schedule an informational interview
- ☐ between interviews: reflected on what I'm learning and used it to guide future interviews
- ☐ after interviews: sent appropriate thank you notes and did any promised follow up