

PRE-APPLICATION SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. COMPETITIVE GPA

By the time you submit your professional school application, your GPA should meet one of the following standards:

- ☐ *Ideal:* Your cumulative *and* science GPAs meet or exceed the averages for accepted students at each of your schools

OR

- ☐ Your cumulative and science GPAs are both above 3.0 AND
- ☐ In each of the four full-time semesters leading up to application time, your term GPAs (both overall and science) meet or exceed the national averages.

National GPA averages for accepted applicants, by field:

- Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant: 3.5 overall, 3.5 science
- Dentistry: 3.5 overall, 3.5 science
- D.O. Physician: 3.5 overall, 3.4 science
- M.D. Physician: 3.8 overall, 3.7 science
- Naturopathic physician: varies by program, range is 3.1 to 3.4 overall
- Nursing: varies by program, but range is 3.0 to 3.7
- Optometry: varies by program, range is 3.0 to 3.6 overall
- Pharmacy: 3.4 overall, 3.2 science
- Physical Therapy: 3.6 overall, 3.4 science
- Physician Assistant: 3.5 overall, 3.5 science
- Veterinary Medicine: 3.6 overall, 3.5 science

2. EXPERIENCE CRITERIA

You are on track to be a competitive applicant if, by the time you submit your professional school application, you meet the following standards:

- ☐ Score "2" or higher in at least three categories, including Direct Patient Interaction.
- ☐ Total score of 8 or higher.

Category	Rating
Shadowing/Scribing	
Direct Patient Interaction	[Min: 2]
Non-Clinical Interpersonal Service	
Experience with People in Marginalized and/or Vulnerable Populations	
Leadership and Collaboration	
Research	[If MD only, Min: 2]
TOTAL	[Min: 8]

DEFINITIONS OF EXPERIENCE CATEGORIES

Clinical Shadowing/Scribing

Shadowing is the observation of a health care clinician while that individual cares for and treats patients. Scribing typically falls under this category. You should be able to articulate why you are drawn to your specific intended field, as compared to other clinical, scientific, and service-based professions. You also should be ready to articulate what you have observed about effective, compassionate approaches to caring for patients.

Direct Patient Interaction

Direct patient interaction is defined as being in a position to offer comfort and moral support to conscious patients (and, for pre-vet students, human clients) in a health care environment. It may include attending to patients' health maintenance, progression, or end-of-life needs. It is important that you be comfortable working with and around patients who are sick and injured. It may include hands-on involvement (as appropriate to level of training).

Direct patient exposure can be gained in a variety of ways, such as volunteering or working in hospitals, emergency rooms, clinics, nursing care facilities, or hospice. This category does *not* include indirect patient interaction, such as housekeeping (cleaning operating or patient rooms) or staffing the hospital information desk.

You should be able to share meaningful interactions you have had with patients in clinical settings, identifying how those experiences not only reinforced your interest in entering a clinical career but also informed your approach to caring for patients and their loved ones.

- **Most fields:** By time of application, competitive applicants will have spent *at least one year* (often more) volunteering or working for 4+ hours/week in a direct patient interaction role, within the past two years.
- **Pre-PA and Pre-Vet:** Most successful applicants will have spent over 1,000 hours (national average for accepted students is typically closer to 2,000 hours by application time) volunteering or working in a hands-on patient care role, within the past three years.

Non-Clinical Interpersonal Service

Professional schools select applicants with a long history of serving in jobs and volunteer roles that put them in a position to help other people directly. Examples include retail/restaurant jobs; working as a teacher, tutor, or mental health counselor; serving as a coach, outdoor trip leader, or church group leader; etc. You should be able to articulate why you are motivated to work in a service-based profession and why you find it meaningful.

Experience with People in Vulnerable and/or Marginalized Populations

Clinicians are responsible for serving each of their patients in a respectful manner. Your future patients will hail from a wide range of backgrounds and will represent a rich diversity of life experiences, values, and belief systems. Thus, professional schools are interested in candidates who have gone out to their way to get to know and be of service to people of differing socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, education level, language, family structure, age, size, political affiliation, religion, and ability/disability. In particular, professional schools value experiences that have given you insights into the needs and challenges faced by those who are members of vulnerable and/or marginalized populations.

Leadership and Collaboration

Leadership is a process of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others, toward the achievement of a goal. Leadership capacity can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including formal leadership roles in student groups, at work, in volunteer roles, and on athletic teams. You should be prepared to articulate your personal style of effective leadership.

Likewise, strong applicants will be individuals who gravitate toward collaborative, supportive interactions with others. You should be able to articulate why you value collaborative environments. Be ready to provide examples of times when you engaged in effective collaboration despite initial challenges.

Research and Scholarly Inquiry

Research is defined as involvement in a scholarly or scientific hypothesis investigation that is supervised by an individual with verifiable research credentials. Research may be in any discipline and performed at any site, but *it generally involves the testing of a hypothesis*.

Pre-Vet students only: Animal handling experience

Animal handling experience is defined as formal animal care positions that are not classified as "clinical" or "research." They include dog walking and cat care positions at a humane society, working in a doggie daycare facility or on a farm, volunteering at an animal sanctuary, or participating in 4-H. Owning a pet does not qualify. This category is not listed on the rubric below, but competitive pre-vet applicants will have spent over 1,000 hours working or volunteering in animal care roles, with large *and* small animals.

EXPERIENCE EVALUATION RUBRIC

Category			1 – Sufficient	0 – Limited or None
Clinical Shadowing/ Scribing (within past 3 years)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 or more clinicians • Multiple specialties and professions -OR- hundreds of hours in a single specialty • Articulates thoughtful reflection on best practices in patient care • Articulates insights into the challenges/rewards inherent to chosen profession • Expresses developing understanding of the roles of different members of healthcare team. Cites strategies for responding to challenges in profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No shadowing OR • 1-2 clinicians • Similar or different specialties • Starting to articulate insights from the experiences

Category	3 - Outstanding	2 - Competitive	1 - Introductory	0 – Limited or None
Direct Patient Interaction (within past 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in meaningful, ongoing patient interaction for an extended period of time (typically years, not months) • Expresses nuanced insights into the experiences of patients • Exhibits thoughtfulness about how to interact with patients • Articulates the ability to adjust approach with patients depending on situation • Demonstrates passion for patient care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in regular, ongoing clinical experiences, typically for more than one year by time of application • Primary form of engagement with patients is through simple, straightforward interactions • Expresses a developing understanding of the experiences of patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced to the clinical setting through limited/short-term patient interaction experiences • Insights into profession are typically characterized by watching others respond, rather than from first-hand patient interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No patient interaction
Non-Clinical Interpersonal Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently involved in non-clinical interpersonal service roles for many years (paid or unpaid) • Articulates personal motivation to be of service to others • Clearly committed to a certain service activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular involvement in non-clinical interpersonal service roles, typically over a period of one or more years (with emphasis on recent years). • Articulates personal motivation to be of service to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has spent some time (typically less than one year) in one or more non-clinical interpersonal service roles, but this has not been a primary area of focus. • Developing ability to articulate motivation to help others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or sporadic involvement in interpersonal service roles.

Category	3 - Outstanding	2 - Competitive	1 - Introductory	0 – Limited or None
Experience with People in Vulnerable and/or Marginalized Populations (within past 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently engaged in meaningful interpersonal service roles that provide deep insight into the lives of people from vulnerable and/or marginalized backgrounds (typically over a period of years) Recognizes and appreciates patterns of difference among people of different backgrounds Exhibits caring and empathy for people of various backgrounds Aware and sensitive to the manner in which own background, belief system, and experiences informs own attitudes and behaviors Able to consider alternative perspectives and modify own behavior in response to differing cultural norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has spent a period of time (typically several months) that provided insight into the lives of people in vulnerable and/or marginalized populations. Recognizes and appreciates patterns of difference among people of different backgrounds Exhibits caring and empathy for people of various circumstances and backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited involvement in a service activity that provides insight into the lives of people from vulnerable and/or marginalized populations Developing an understanding of the differing needs of people in groups other than one's own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct experience with people of vulnerable and/or marginalized populations
Leadership and Collaboration (within past 5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held formal leadership position with a purpose of guiding/ directing others for an extended period of time (typically 2+ years) Clearly articulates personal approach to effective leadership and collaboration, as informed by extensive experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held a formal position of responsibility with a purpose of guiding/ directing others, typically for 1+ years Able to articulate personal philosophies of effective leadership and collaboration, as supported by concrete experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held a short-term position of responsibility with a purpose of guiding/directing others Able to articulate contributions as a leader Able to articulate approach to collaborating with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited or no formal leadership experience and/or Limited or no formal collaborative experience
Research (within past 3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to criteria listed in the "Average" column, has taken intellectual ownership of a research project, including literature review, experimental design, data interpretation May have presented at conferences May have published article(s) in peer-reviewed journal(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectually engaged in research: regular attendance at lab meetings and/or journal club Knows how to read/understand primary literature and critique experimental design Able to troubleshoot when the unexpected occurs May have written successful grant proposal to support work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had an introduction to research outside of "cookbook"-style laboratory course settings Focus is on carrying out research methods May have completed a literature review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited or no research experience outside of laboratory course settings