

Partnering with Your Advisor

How do I find an advisor?

Carol Baffi-Dugan, Director for Health Professions Advising at Tufts University and Director of Communications for the NAAHP, suggests finding out who the premed or health professions advisor is at your school. S/he may be in the Academic Dean's office, a science professor, or a counselor in the Career Services office. Some colleges have a separate pre-professional advising office that includes advising services for premed students, those interested in other health careers, and perhaps even pre-law students. Most premed advisors also maintain websites that can help you contact them or the advising office, so search your school's website. Even if there is no specifically designated premed advisor, try to meet with someone in one of the departments mentioned above. If no one at your school is available to help, visit the National Association of Advisors to the Health Professions ([NAAHP](http://naahp.org)) [website](http://naahp.org) and click on Advisor Resources, then, Find An Advisor.

When should I contact an advisor?

Contact your premed advisor as soon as you think you're interested in a medical career. There's a lot of planning and preparing that has to be done before you'll be ready to apply to medical school, so the earlier, the better. See if you can make an individual appointment with your advisor, go to drop-in hours, or attend a workshop. Be sure to register to receive any emailed updates, or newsletters. Also check to see if there's a Facebook page or Twitter feed you can follow.

What can they help with?

Your advisor can help you learn about the medical profession and help you ask the right questions to decide if it's the right career for you. Then, you can work together to develop a plan to get to you where you want to go.

MORE INFORMATION

NAAHP: www.naahp.org

Medical School Admission Requirements and The Official Guide to Medical School Admissions: www.aamc.org/msar

What questions should I be asking?

Ask your advisor which courses are required for medical school and how to best sequence them at your school. You can ask about ways to gain health-related experiences, internships and lab experiences. You can learn about the MCAT, discuss when you're best prepared to take the exam, and learn if the school offers any prep courses. It's also a good idea to ask detailed questions about the timeline for applying to medical school.

What is *my* responsibility?

You should actively seek out your advisor and follow up on the advice and suggestions s/he gives you. While your advisor may be very supportive of your goals, s/he will also challenge you to do your best work and objectively evaluate your objectives. Your advisor cannot earn the good grades and participate in the health-related experiences you'll need to be a competitive applicant. That is up to you.

What if I've been out of school for many years?

There is no age limitation on applicants or when it comes to who will make a good doctor. Many individuals decide later that this is the path they want to pursue. Others were not as successful as they wanted to be in their early experience, but with renewed motivation and effort can become competitive applicants. Premed advisors know all this and work with students of all ages as they prepare for medical school. You should go back to your home institution (alma mater) to find out what services they offer alumni. Many premed advisors will work with their alums in planning for and applying to medical careers.

What if I am in high school and I'm looking at BS/MD programs? Is there still a pre-health advisor that I can work with?

If you are in high school and are considering BS/MD programs your best resources are the premed advisors at those programs. Typically the admissions offices at those colleges and universities provide information on the structure of the programs, the support services, and the policies and procedures. Check out the AAMC's [The Official Guide to Medical School Admissions](#) for basic information, including a list of combined Baccalaureate/MD programs. More detailed information about these programs and medical schools can be found in the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#).