Physicians and surgeons diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses. Physicians examine patients, take medical histories, prescribe medications, and order, perform, and interpret diagnostic tests. They often counsel patients on diet, hygiene, and preventive health care. Surgeons operate on patients to treat injuries, such as broken bones; diseases, such as cancerous tumors; and deformities.

Physicians and surgeons typically do the following:

- Take a patient’s medical history
- Update charts and patient information to show current findings
- Order tests for nurses or other healthcare staff to do
- Review test results to identify any abnormal findings
- Recommend and design a plan of treatment
- Answer concerns or 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

Physicians and surgeons work in one or more of several specialties. The following are some of the many types of physicians and surgeons: family physicians, internists, pediatricians, obstetricians, anesthesiologists, cardiologists, dermatologists, radiologists, general surgeons, and surgeons of varying specialties.

(Occupational Outlook Handbook)

The College of Medicine of the University of Nebraska Medical Center requires a minimum of 90 semester hours for admission. However, students pursuing a pre-medical curriculum are expected to choose a major so that they can be working towards a baccalaureate degree concurrently with the pre-medical program. This requires a major/minor combination or a comprehensive major as well as completion of the UNK general studies requirements and other degree requirements as set forth in the college catalog. Medical schools do not specify which major a student should pursue in conjunction with his/her pre-medical studies. Gaining acceptance into a medical school is a very competitive process. Completion of the pre-requisite courses does not automatically guarantee admission.

The following requirements are based on the admission requirements of the College of Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Students wanting to apply to other medical schools should check with those specific schools for additional requirements.

1. Required courses:

   Take 8 hrs of biology from the following:
   - BIOL 103 General Biology 4
   - BIOL 105 Biology I 4
   - BIOL 106 Biology II 4
   - BIOL 211 Human Microbiology 4
   - BIOL 215 Human Physiology 4
   - BIOL 225 and 226

   Take all of the following:
   - CHEM 160 General Chemistry 4
   - CHEM 161 General Chemistry 4
   - CHEM 360 Organic Chemistry 5
   - CHEM 361 Organic Chemistry 5
   - CHEM 351 Biochemistry 4
   - BIOL 360 Genetics 4
   - ENG 101 Introduction to Academic Writing 3
   - ENG 102 Academic Writing and Research 3
   - PHYS 205 General Physics 5
   - PHYS 206 General Physics 5

   Take one of the following to fulfill the math requirement:
   - STAT 241 Elementary Statistics 3
   - MATH 115 Calculus I 5
   - MATH 123 Applied Calculus 3

2. Electives: A minimum of 12-16 hours is required.

   Recommended electives to assist in preparing for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT):
   - PSY 203 General Psychology 3
   - PSY 440 Health Psychology 3
   - SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology 3
   - SOC 275 Social Psychology 3

   Other courses in English literature, foreign language, psychology, philosophy, political science, economics, sociology, fine arts, and upper division biology and chemistry are also recommended. See advisor for suggestions.

Academic Guidelines

An overall GPA of 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) is preferred. The overall average GPA for the students accepted to medical school is approximately a 3.75 or higher at most schools. Each required course must be passed with a grade of “C” or better. A grade of “C-” will not be accepted. Students searching for electives outside their major requirements should consider courses from the following areas: biology, chemistry, mathematics, sociology, psychology, business administration, healthcare management, and healthcare economics. See your advisor for suggestions. Students should be aware of prerequisites on all courses and plan their coursework accordingly.

Non-Academic Guidelines

There is no magic formula for acceptance into professional school. Admission is based on GPA, test scores, shadowing and medical experiences, community involvement and volunteerism, leadership qualities, the interview, the essay, and letters of recommendation. Shadowing and medical experiences are of utmost importance. Students should plan to shadow a minimum of 40 hours in their selected profession. Health Sciences offers opportunities to meet these non-academic guidelines through the Shadowing Program, the Health Science Club, and volunteer experiences. Research experience is not required, but will be looked upon favorably. Students should plan to be involved in these types of activities and experiences throughout their undergraduate career. Other important non-academic factors include good moral character, excellent interpersonal skills, a deep commitment to healthcare, evidence of leadership potential and service to others.

The Application Process

Students will make application to most medical schools through a centralized application service called the American Medical Colleges Application Service (AMCAS). The centralized application service allows students to fill out one application to apply to multiple schools. The application and additional information may be accessed at www.aamc.org. The application becomes open for students in early summer and the deadline for the regular admission cycle for the UNMC College of Medicine is November 1st. Early application is strongly encouraged. Students should make application in the summer or early fall of the calendar year preceding the year in which they hope to enroll in professional school. Applicants need not wait for MCAT scores, transcripts, or other application materials before applying through AMCAS. Check with the schools to which you are applying to verify their policies and procedures regarding supplemental applications, which may be required by many schools.

2020
Websites
- American Medical Association: www.ama.org
- American Association of Medical Colleges: www.aamc.org
- UNK Health Sciences: www.unk.edu/healthsciences

Prerequisite for enrollment into any health science professional program is consent for an external background check. This check includes, but is not limited to, past criminal offenses and registry information. If there is evidence of arrest for a crime(s), conviction for a crime(s), presence on an abuse registry, or other information which reasonably suggests that patient safety might be compromised, the student will be asked to provide additional information.

Letters of Evaluation/Recommendation
Letters of evaluation will be required of applicants. Letters from a faculty member, physician, academic advisor, or employer would be appropriate. Information about the non-academic character of a student would be most useful as academic information is already in the application. Students should have their evaluation letters submitted directly through AMCAS.

Interviews
Most schools screen applicants with some form of personal interview. The format of the interview may vary depending on the schools to which you are applying.

Criminal Background Checks
The MCAT has recently undergone significant changes. Students should plan to add the psychology and sociology classes recommended above. A full year of general biology, at a minimum, will also be critical to success on the MCAT.

Citizenship/International Students
Professional schools in the health sciences vary as to whether they accept non-U.S. citizens. Some schools that do accept non-citizens require a substantial financial commitment up front. Since not all schools accept non-citizens and since the financial commitment of those that do may be substantial, students should thoroughly research and carefully consider such a decision and discuss it with their pre-health advisors early in their undergraduate years.

Osteopathic Medicine
There are two types of physicians: M.D. (Medical Doctor, often referred to as allopathic medicine) and D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine). Both types of physicians 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.

Osteopathic medical schools require the same coursework as allopathic programs. They also require the MCAT exam and similar non-academic qualifications. The same specialty and residency opportunities exist for both allopathic physicians and osteopathic physicians. Students interested in Osteopathic Medicine should follow this Pre-Med Guide, with the exception that the application process occurs through a centralized application service called the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS). For more information regarding the osteopathic profession and schools/college of osteopathic medicine, please refer to the following websites:
- www.aacom.org
- www.osteopathic.org

Students who are accepted into medical school prior to completing a baccalaureate degree at UNK may be eligible to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Health Sciences if they have completed all general studies requirements and other graduation requirements as set forth in the UNK catalog and have at least 85 semester hours completed in pre-medical studies.