



Funeral directors, also called morticians and undertakers, manage funeral homes and arrange the details of a funeral. Funeral directors typically do the following:

- Arrange transportation of the deceased
- Prepare the remains (body)
- Submit paperwork and legal documents
- Consult with the deceased's family
- Help plan funerals
- Discuss and plan funerals with people who wish to arrange their own service in advance

Most funeral directors arrange the details and handle the logistics of funerals. Together with the family, funeral directors establish the locations, dates, and times of wakes, memorial services, and burials. They handle other details as well, such as determining whether the body should be buried, entombed, or cremated. This decision is critical because funeral practices vary among cultures and religions. Although family members or others may handle some details, funeral directors must be able to assist family members in preparing obituary notices and arranging for pallbearers and clergy. They may decorate and prepare the sites of services, arrange for flowers, and provide transportation for the deceased and mourners.

Most funeral directors handle paperwork involved with the person's death, including submitting papers to state officials to get a formal death certificate. Some help resolve insurance claims or apply for veterans' funeral benefits on behalf of the family. They also may notify the Social Security Administration of the death. In many settings, funeral directors embalm the deceased. Embalming is a sanitary and cosmetic process through which the body is prepared for burial, usually in a casket. A growing number of funeral directors work with clients who wish to plan their own funerals in advance to ensure that their needs are met. Many funeral directors also help prepare and ship bodies if the person dies in one place and is to be buried or cremated elsewhere. (*Occupational Outlook Handbook*)

The program to be followed by a pre-mortuary science student is largely determined by the requirements of the state in which you will practice and the mortuary school you will attend. As requirements for state licensure change from time to time, it is the student's responsibility to contact these entities to request a list of requirements. **Gaining acceptance into a mortuary science program is a very competitive process. Completion of the pre-requisite courses does not automatically guarantee admission.** Since the acceptance process is competitive, students pursuing a program of study in pre-mortuary science are encouraged to choose a major as an alternate plan so that they can be working towards a baccalaureate degree concurrently with the pre-mortuary science 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.

The following is based upon the state of Nebraska requirements (40 credit hours required) and requirements for regional mortuary science programs. Students planning to work in other states should contact their state's licensing board.

Take these two courses:

ENG 101	Introduction to Academic Writing	3
ENG 102	Academic Writing and Research	3

Take one of the following options:

CHEM 148	Intro to Chemistry for Health Sciences	4
CHEM 160	General Chemistry	4

Take two of the following courses:

PSY 203	General Psychology	3
PSY 230	Human Development	3
PSY 231	Abnormal Behavior	3
CSP 417	Counseling Skills	3

Take three of the following courses:

BIOL 103	General Biology	4
BIOL 106	Biology II	4
BIOL 211	Human Microbiology	4
BIOL 225	Anatomy & Physiology	4
BIOL 226	Anatomy & Physiology	4

Take four of the following courses:

ACCT 240	Accounting for Nonbusiness Majors	3
ACCT 250	Principles of Accounting I	3
ACCT 251	Principles of Accounting II	3
ACCT 311	Business Law I	3
BSAD 295	Business Communications	3
ECON 270	Principles of Economics, Macroeconomics	3
ECON 271	Principles of Economics, Microeconomics	3
MGT 230	Managing Diversity in Organizations	3
MGT 233	Business Statistics	3
MGT 301	Principles of Management	3
MKT 300	Principles of Marketing	3
MKT 336	Services Marketing	3

Recommended electives:

SPCH 100	Fundamentals of Speech Communication	3
One math course is recommended:		
MATH 102	College Algebra	3
MATH 120	Finite Mathematics	3
MATH 123	Applied Calculus I	3

Academic Guidelines

A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required; however, a higher GPA is preferred and will result in the student being a more competitive applicant. 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 should consider courses from the following areas: biology, chemistry, mathematics, sociology, psychology, business administration, and counseling skills. 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 in to professional school. Admission is based on GPA, shadowing and medical experiences, community involvement and volunteerism, leadership qualities, the interview, the essay, and letters of recommendation. Health Sciences offers opportunities to meet these non-academic guidelines through the Shadowing Program, the Health Science Club, and volunteer experiences. 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 who wish to make application to a mortuary science program should do so through the website of the respective program.

Criminal Background Checks

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.

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.

Licensure Requirements

Students wishing to pursue a career as a funeral director should contact the state in which they intend to practice for a full list of the licensure requirements.

Websites

State of Nebraska – HHS, Licensing Division
Nebraska Funeral Directors Association
National Funeral Directors Association

<http://dhhs.gov>
<https://www.nefda.org>
<https://www.nfda.org>

Suggested Sequence of Key Courses

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	CHEM 148 or CHEM 160 BIOL 211 ENG 101 SPCH 100 (recommended)	Biology course Psychology/Counseling Course MATH 102 ENG 102
Year 2	ACCT 240 or 250 (recommended) BIOL 225 (recommended) Psychology/Counseling Course Elective	BIOL 226 (recommended) Elective Elective Elective

- Sophomore standing is a pre-requisite for BIOL 225.
- Completion of MATH 102 or another math course is a pre-requisite for ACCT 240 and ACCT 250.
- A minimum MATH ACT score of 22 or prior completion of College Algebra (MATH 102) or higher is a pre-requisite for CHEM 160.
- A minimum MATH ACT of 20 or prior completion of Intermediate Algebra (MATH 101) is required for MATH 102 and CHEM 148.