



Your

Health Careers Portfolio



Created by the
North Carolina
Health Careers Access Program
an interinstitutional program
of the University of North Carolina

Health Careers Portfolio

Written by

Moses V. Goldman, Ed.D.

Associate Director

North Carolina Health Careers Access Program

Layout and design by

Deborah H. Oesterling

Information Communications Specialist

North Carolina Health Careers Access Program

*© 1995 by Moses V. Goldman, Ed.D. and the
North Carolina Health Careers Access Program,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

All rights reserved.

What is a Career Portfolio?

■ A **career portfolio** is a guide that helps students facilitate career planning. **Career planning** is the process by which a person selects a career choice and then obtains the knowledge and skills necessary to gain access to and successfully perform in that career during his or her adult life.

Why do I need a career portfolio?

1. Upon completion of your formal education you will spend more of your waking hours at your place of employment than you will doing any other single activity.
2. The average person will change jobs 6 to 8 times during a lifetime. Often times, these changes are made by people who did not plan well.

What is the purpose of a career portfolio?

The purpose of a career portfolio is to provide you with a general set of guidelines to assist you in developing and implementing a sequential plan that can be used to direct you through the various stages of career planning and development.

How do I effectively use my career portfolio?

1. Thoroughly read all of the information included in this portfolio.
2. Complete each suggested activity in a timely manner.
3. Discuss the information with your parents, school counselor and other interested adults.
4. Review and revise (when necessary) your career portfolio at least once a year.

I. DEVELOPING A PERSONAL CAREER PLAN

Learning About Me: Personal Assessment

Human Observations

Find a quiet place with minimal distractions. Spend as much time as necessary thinking about the following questions, then write an answer for each.



- What do I like to do (interests and personality)?
- What do I do best (aptitude)?
- What is my preferred work environment (values or beliefs)?

You may also want to ask others (family, relatives, friends, church members etc.) who will be honest with you about your strengths and weaknesses to answer questions about you.

Self Assessment Instruments

- ▲ **Differential Aptitude Test (DAT):** Assesses students ability to perform well on various cognitive areas of learning. Aptitude tests do not necessarily predict one's ability to learn, but rather they measure one's ability to perform well across a variety of subject areas during timed testing.
- ▲ **Career Interest Inventory:** Assesses educational goals, interest in various school subjects and career clusters. Assists students to explore career options and set career goals.
- ▲ **Self-Directed Search:** Assists students with career exploration and self-assessment of abilities and skills. Students administer, score and interpret their own results.

Check with your teachers, school counselors, career development specialists, industry education coordinators and/or college placement counselors. These individuals have access to these and other self-assessment inventories and are trained to use them.

Health Career Opportunities Assessment

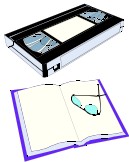
Researching Careers of Interest



▲ Role Model Contacts

- Conduct **information interviews** with family, relatives, friends, church members or other professionals who are currently practicing in the area in which you are interested. See Appendix A for a list of questions to ask during an interview. The purpose of the interview is to find out about the person's job, why s/he chose it, likes and dislikes etc.
- Talk to your teachers, school counselors, career development specialists, industry education coordinators and/or college placement counselors.

▲ Resources and Activities



- Check out videos, books and other publications from your school, public and university library career centers or information sections.
- Participate in school and community sponsored career days or career fairs.
- Contact the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program to get information on specific careers of interest: phone **(919) 966-2264** or reach us on the Internet at **www.unc.edu/~nchcap**.
- Contact the Health Careers and Minority Development Director at your local Area Health Education Center.
- Volunteer! Look for shadowing experiences, internships in hospitals, nursing homes, recreational facilities, health department, community health centers etc., or paid work experience such as after school and summer employment, internships or apprenticeships. Work experience will help you decide if the career you are interested in is really what you want to do.

Compare Results and Make a Decision

▲ Your Career Interests



- What do you like?
- What do you dislike?
- What kind of adult life do you want to live?
- How much money do you want to make?
- Do you want to be married?
- Do you want children? If yes, how many?

- Do you want to work in a small business?
- Do you want to own a business?
- Do you want to work in a large corporation?
- Do you want to work in government or other public service job?
- Do you want to work in an educational institution or teaching hospital?

▲ Health Career Opportunities



- Will your career choice provide you with enough money to meet you and your future family's desired lifestyle?
- Will your career choice allow you to utilize your strengths?
- How long will it take to acquire the education and skills necessary to qualify you for a career in the field being considered? How does this compare with the amount of time you want to spend in school?
- Where can you get the necessary education and training to qualify you to work in this field?
- How much will your education and training cost?
- Is financial assistance available if needed?
- How much time will a career in this field require you to spend at work?
- If you want a family, will this career choice cause you to spend too much time away from home? Keep in mind that some physicians, dentists, executives and public service workers spend 70 to 80 hours a week on the job.
- Will jobs be available when you complete your education and training?

Possible Health Careers for Various Personality Types:



- **Desire to work with people:** Physician, Chiropractor, Dentist, Dietitian/Nutritionist, Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Midwife, Pharmacist, Physician Assistant, Podiatrist, Health Educator, Health Care Administrator, Social Worker, Physical or Occupational Therapist, Speech Language Pathologist



- **Desire to work with data and information:** Biostatistician, Epidemiologist, Environmental Health Specialist, Medical Records Administrator, Health Sciences Librarian, Pharmacist



- **Desire to work with laboratory equipment and/or specimens:** Cytotechnologist, Pathologist, Medical Technologists, Radiologist, Perfusionist, Respiratory Therapist



- **Desire to create or explore new ideas:** Biomedical Researcher/Engineer, Pathologist, Medical Illustrator, Public Health Administrator, Health Policy Analyst, Pharmacist, Medical Researcher

Good match or not a good match?

If your desires and the career that you are interested in are **not** a good match, explore and research additional career options.

If your desires and the career that you are interested in **is** a good match, **get busy attaining the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain and keep a job in that field!**

II. IMPLEMENTING YOUR CAREER PLAN

Acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills

High School Academic Plan

The purpose of this section is to provide you with a general overview of the courses needed to adequately prepare you for successful completion of an undergraduate pre-professional or health professional training program that will lead to certification, licensure or graduate/professional school. A suggested course sequence is provided in Appendix B. This plan is intended to serve only as a guide. Therefore, it's wise to review and revise your plan before you develop your course schedule for the next school year. The revised plan should reflect changes that may occur in your career aspirations and goals. Consult with your school counselor and parents on a regular basis to ensure appropriate course selections. Keep your plan in a safe place where it can be easily located.

Financial Aid

▲ Types of Aid

- **Scholarships and Grants:** Awards that students do not have to pay back. Scholarships and grants are usually based on academic merit or career choice.
- **Loans:** Awards that have to be paid in full, with interest, upon completion of a student's education or training. Some loans in the health professions contain incentives that reduce or eliminate debt. The reduction or elimination of debt is usually based on the student's decision to serve in an underserved geographical region for a specified period of time.
- **Internships, Work Study, Part-time Employment:** Money earned by working while enrolled in school. It is recommended that you look for employment opportunities in the area related to your field of study.



▲ Information Sources



- *The Student Guide: Financial Aid from the US. Department of Education*
- Financial Aid Administrator at the college or university you are interested in attending
- Local public library
- Federal Student Aid Information Center (1-800-433-3243)
- Pell Grant Information Center (301-722-9200)
- The College Board (404-636-9465)
- *A Comprehensive Guide to Preparing and Paying for College For High School Students and Their Parents.* Nellie Mae Publications (1-800-634-9308)

▲ Major Federal Sources



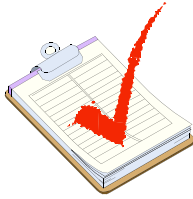
- **Byrd's Honors Scholarships** (formerly merit scholarships): Awards based on academic achievement.
- **Pell Grants:** Awards based on demonstrated financial need.
- **Perkins Loans:** Low interest loans based on demonstrated financial need. A limited amount of funds are received by each institution so apply as early as possible for consideration.
- **Supplemental Education Opportunities Grant (SEOG):** Awards given directly to institutions based on the number of students enrolled who demonstrate exceptional financial need.
- **National Science Scholars Program:** Competitive awards (2 per congressional district) based on excellent achievement in math, engineering, physical, life or computer sciences.

▲ Major State Sources



- **NC Federal Family Education Loans:** Stafford and Supplemental Loans
- **NC Student Incentive Grants:** Awarded to currently enrolled students who demonstrate substantial financial need
- NC Community College Scholarships
- **NC Legislative Tuition Grants:** Awarded to NC residents enrolled full-time in one of NC's private colleges or universities
- Career or discipline specific grants and scholarships
- Privately funded grants and scholarships

Selecting an Appropriate Educational Training Program



- ▲ Conduct a survey of community colleges, four year colleges or professional training/certification programs that offer educational opportunities **in the area that you are interested in pursuing**. Schools should **NOT** be selected solely on the basis of the social environment (good athletic teams, reputation for partying etc.). You should begin collecting this information no later than the fall semester of your junior year in high school.
- ▲ Compare the written information using the following guidelines as points of consideration:
 - **Location and setting:** Distance from home, setting (large, small, urban, rural, metropolitan or non-metropolitan etc.)
 - **Type and size:** Co-ed, liberal arts, number of students enrolled, public or private
 - **Total cost:** Tuition; room and board (if applicable), student fees, in-state versus out-of-state tuition
 - **Financial aid available:** Scholarships, grants, loans, work study, availability of part-time jobs
 - **Support services:** Computer and science labs, specialized libraries, research opportunities
 - **Admission requirements:** High school courses required, admission test requirements and scores, grade point average (g.p.a.)
 - **Environment:** Habits, interests, ethnic and religious background of other students who are enrolled, cultural events and activities, athletic teams, intramural sports, health science clubs, fraternities and sororities
- ▲ Narrow your choice to 10 to 15, then write for catalogs and other informational materials
- ▲ Talk to representatives who visit your school and review catalogs and other materials such as these:

Institutional Profiles: University of North Carolina

Annual publication prepared by the Planning Division of the University of North Carolina General Administration.

North Carolina Community College System: Education Guide Chart

Annual publication prepared by the NC Community College System that lists all programs and related courses offered along with the colleges that offer each.

North Carolina Health Careers. Published by the North Carolina Health Education Centers Program.

- ▲ Narrow choices to 3 to 5 schools, then make personal visits to as many as possible.

Personal visits

- Make advanced arrangements for all visits.
 - Visit potential schools during the summer between your junior and senior year in high school.
 - Tour facilities, observe a class if possible, eat in the dining hall, talk to a variety of students who are currently enrolled (freshmen through seniors).
- ▲ Apply to a minimum of 3 schools. File your application(s) in January of your senior year.

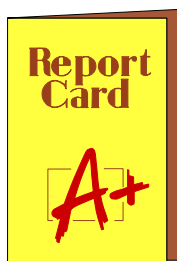
Two or Four Year Undergraduate Program of Study

The purpose of this section is to provide some **general guidelines** to assist you in developing your undergraduate course of study. The specific courses you need will vary based on your health career interest and the college or university you are attending.

Generally, majoring in the sciences is not necessarily a prerequisite for admission to a graduate or professional school in the health sciences. Courses that will increase your ability to communicate and get along with others are just as important as basic science courses. Therefore, you should take a variety of courses in behavioral and social sciences, quantitative skills (math) and the arts, as well as courses in the physical and biological sciences.

Other suggested courses include: Biology, Chemistry (inorganic and organic), Biochemistry, Physics, English, Quantitative Skills (statistics, calculus), Computer Science, Psychology, Sociology, Anatomy and Physiology, Foreign Language, English Composition (College Writing), Genetics, Anthropology, History, Art, Music, Literature and Philosophy.

The following guidelines should also be reviewed as you begin your college/undergraduate education.



- **Get off to a good start.** Do not waste time by making poor grades during the freshman and sophomore years. Grades are the single biggest factor used by admissions committees in their decision to admit or reject graduate/professional health professions applicants.
- **Improve your study, critical-thinking, reading and writing skills.**
- **Participate in extracurricular activities** such as academic clubs, community activities and volunteer work. Any reasonably intelligent person can achieve a high grade point average if all s/he does is study for four years. Look for opportunities to serve in leadership roles. Leadership qualities and experi-

ence is looked upon favorably by employers and members of graduate/professional school admissions committees.

- Take the Graduate Records Examination (GRE), Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT), Optometry Admission Test (OAT), Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), Dental Admission Test (DAT) or other admissions test by your junior year.



ACTIVITY AND ACTION STEPS	TIME FRAME AND GRADE LEVEL
Personal assessment	Middle School Grades 6–8
Explore career opportunities	Middle School Grades 6–8
Develop long-term career plan	Middle School Grade 8
Develop high school program of study	Middle School, Spring of Grade 8
Annual review and revision of overall plan	High School and College/University Spring of each year
Update high school program of study	Spring of each high school year prior to making course schedule
Register for and take preliminary college admissions test (PSAT, PACT, etc.)	High School, Fall of Junior year
Prepare for college admissions tests (SAT, ACT, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze results of preliminary tests to determine strengths and weaknesses • Develop strategy for strengthening weaknesses 	High School, Winter of Junior year
Register for and take college admissions tests (SAT, ACT, etc.)	High School, Spring of Junior and Fall of Senior year (if necessary)
Identify and select college or health professions training program (See pages 7 and 8 for specific activities)	High School, Junior and Senior years
Research and procure financial aid	High School, Junior and Senior years
Gain paid or volunteer work experience in areas of career interest	High School and College/University Summer

Sources:

Career Choices in North Carolina: 1993-94. North Carolina State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

The Complete Medical School Preparation and Admissions Guide

Plan for Success: An Organizing Guide for Prehealth Professions Students. Charles E. Kozoll, Ph.D.

Gefion's Plough. National Medical Association, MSD Health Information Services, 1980.

Appendix A

What to Ask During the Information Interview

1. How long have you worked in this occupation?
2. What do you like *most* about your career?
3. What do you like *least* about your career?
4. Do you primarily work with people, data, things or ideas?
5. Why did you choose this career?
6. What personal qualities are needed to succeed in this career?
7. What type of education and/or training is needed for this career?
8. What are the most frequently recurring problems in your practice/profession?
9. Are there any shadowing, internship, part-time employment or apprenticeship opportunities available in your worksite and/or field?
If yes, how do I get more information about these opportunities?