

Pre-Professional Competencies Worksheet

The core competencies indicated on the following pages have been endorsed by the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC). Based on extensive review, the AAMC identified that *“successful medical school applicants are able to demonstrate skills, knowledge, and abilities in these areas.”* The four broad areas are: interpersonal, intrapersonal, thinking/reasoning, and science competencies.

The Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC) at Skidmore College encourages students interested in any health profession to carefully consider (throughout their undergraduate experience) the ways in which their experiences address these different competencies, and to also identify those competencies that are in need of further development as well as the types of experiences that could help to enhance those competencies. *(Please note that all students who plan to interview with HPAC for a committee letter of recommendation are required to complete this competencies worksheet, review it with Shannon Rodriguez in the Career Development Center, and include it as part of their portfolio that is submitted to HPAC prior to the interview process.)*

First, list your experiences. While some of these experiences will likely overlap with items listed on your resume (e.g., work experience, volunteer experience, research accomplishments [internships, publications, presentations at conferences], athletics, extracurricular activities, leadership roles, etc.), this exercise takes you beyond just a description of a given item on your resume to think about the ways in which this experience has helped you to develop multiple competencies. We also encourage you to think broadly and include other experiences that aren't typically included on a resume (e.g., first generation college student, running marathons, strong performance in your final two years at Skidmore after uneven performance in your first two years, a particular paper that you wrote or project that you did in a particular course, overcoming a health challenge, international travel, etc.).

Second, where relevant, provide some descriptive information regarding your level of engagement with that experience:

- Amount of time engaged with activity [e.g., hours, days, weeks, months, years, etc.]
- Level of involvement in activity [e.g., observation, participation, performing, teaching]
- Level of independence in engaging in that activity [under full/partial/no supervision]

Third, for each experience, articulate which (and how) specific competencies within each of the four broad categories you developed while engaging in that experience, as well as your level of mastery of those competencies (e.g., beginning/introductory, reinforced/practiced, mastered).

Fourth, upon review of your experiences and competencies, identify any gaps in your competencies or areas in need of further development, and discuss with your academic advisor, your HPAC advisor, and Shannon Rodriguez in the Career Development Center.

Interpersonal Competencies

Service Orientation: Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society; locally, nationally, and globally.

Social Skills: Demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.

Cultural Competence: Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

Teamwork: Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.

Oral Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.

Intrapersonal Competencies

Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.

Reliability and Dependability: Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.

Resilience and Adaptability: Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.

Capacity for Improvement: Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

Thinking and Reasoning Competencies

Critical Thinking: Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

Quantitative Reasoning: Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.

Scientific Inquiry: Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.

Written Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences.

Creativity and Entrepreneurship: Identifies a problem, sees possibilities, develops a plan and vision, envisions solutions, and takes action; a change agent; sees solutions to problems that others might not notice.

Science Competencies

Living Systems: Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.

Human Behavior: Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

Examples:

Experience: Backpacking through Southeast Asia after my junior year of college

Amount of time engaged: 6 weeks

Level of involvement: Fully!

Level of independence: Mostly independent – traveled alone for the first four weeks and then traveled with a friend for the last two weeks

Competencies developed:

- Cultural competence: Throughout my time I learned about the culture of the region and began to identify the ways in which my preconceived notions had biased my expectations.
- Social skills: I interacted with the residents daily and learned to pick up on behavioral cues to ensure that my interactions were culturally appropriate.
- Resilience and adaptability: This was my first time to Asia and I had never traveled alone before, thus I was very much outside of my usual comfort zone. My only other abroad experience was to Costa Rica. At first, I was overwhelmed by the motorbikes, the pollution, and the poverty I saw, and I wanted to go home. I had to learn to adapt to these conditions, and to learn to embrace what was different about the region and what I could learn about this culture as well as my own preconceived beliefs.

Experience: Summer research internship at the National Institutes of Mental Health in the Pediatric Development and Neuroscience branch

Amount of time engaged: 7 weeks over the summer, 8 hours per day

Level of involvement:

- Observed weekly rotations and case conferences with attending physicians; participated in weekly laboratory meetings in which we discussed empirical research; participated in the collection of data for markers of Autism Spectrum Disorder in at-risk toddlers; prepared exam rooms and assisted in the administration of neuropsychological assessment measures

Level of independence: For the first three weeks, I was supervised by the principle investigator in the lab in data collection and administration of assessments; for the final four weeks, I engaged in these tasks fully independently.

Competencies developed:

- Social Skills: Because I was working with children at risk for autism and their parents, I had to learn to pay close attention to the comfort level of the children/parents during testing, and I learned how to put them at ease. I also learned to become adept at explaining in layperson terms the nature of the research to the research participants.
- Teamwork/Reliability/Dependability: Throughout the summer, I worked with three other research interns, a graduate student, and the principle investigator. Each member of the team had a specific role in the lab and our roles had to be well coordinated to ensure that the project ran smoothly.
- Oral Communication/Scientific Inquiry: Three times throughout the program, I was required to present an empirical article at the lab meetings and lead discussion about the study's methodology and findings.
- Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: I followed all human-subject guidelines to ensure confidentiality and the ethical treatment of our research participants.
- Quantitative Reasoning: I utilized statistical software programs (e.g., SPSS) to analyze data.