

CAREER ADVICE FOR ASPIRING HEALTH RESEARCHERS

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Choosing Your University Program

You're in your final year of secondary school and making plans to attend university next year. You know which science courses you have enjoyed most so far, but will it be the same at university? There are SO many options—more than you ever imagined—how do you decide on a program?

As a university undergraduate student, *what* you study is less important to your future career in science than *how well* you (1) nurture your curiosity about scientific problems, (2) develop a solid, scientific knowledge base, (3) acquire good laboratory skills, and—more importantly for your academic and future life—(4) develop the intellectual and personal skills you'll need for success. These include: critical thinking, creative problem-solving, independence, self-motivation, and effective communication. If you choose a program based on what truly interests you (rather than what you think might be "hot" when you finish your formal training) and you apply yourself with consistency and dedication, you are bound to do your very best. The motivation to understand and master the material and develop the necessary skills will come naturally because the work will be *interesting and enjoyable*.

Almost *any* four-year science program you choose will provide the necessary opportunities and challenges for success. The real question is: What program(s) are you most drawn to when you read through the program profiles, and course descriptions? Remember to review *all* the courses you'll be required to take *throughout the four years*, as well as the electives from which you can choose. Which program most grabs your attention? To which do your thoughts keep returning? Make this your first choice.

Our topic next month will answer the question: Does it matter *which university* I attend?

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