

Professional Skills to Pick Up on Your Own

BB H will provide many opportunities for you to acquire knowledge about health and the many factors that impact health. You will also have opportunities to acquire practical skills in health education, health promotion and critical analyses of health-related information. However, you may not be taught all of the many skills that are important for success in your academic studies and for career aspirations, or advancing to post-baccalaureate education. Therefore, we have compiled a list of suggestions for areas of personal development. There are many opportunities on campus for you to develop and practice many of these skills.

Public Speaking:

Public speaking is an acquired skill. In your academic education and in most careers, you will be expected to make formal and informal presentations to groups and audiences of various sizes. In BB H you will get opportunities to make in-class presentations. As a PSU student, you are also required to take a public speaking course: CAS 100. However, you may want to go beyond these experiences to hone your skills in public speaking. The Penn State Undergraduate Speaking Center provides guidance to students who seek support in oral and group presentation. Student mentors are trained to assist with writing, outlining, delivery, and visual aids, for both individual and group presentations. The Center's services are available to all undergraduates, across all majors, and will have both walk-in and appointment hours. In addition to specific presentation support for individual students or their groups, workshops or presentations can be requested by faculty to assist their classes in preparing assigned presentations. For more information, visit <http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/tutoring/public-speaking-0>

Computer skills:

At the very minimum upon entry into the university, you will be already expected to have basic computer skills in Word Processing (e.g., Word) and Making Presentations (e.g., PowerPoint). You will have the opportunity in BB H to acquire other computer skills, including how to acquire information from health-related databases and from scientific literature, and some basic skills in statistical analysis of health-related data. However, you should consider acquiring additional training to enhance your existing skills and to acquire new skills: To be competitive academically and professionally, you should consider learning spreadsheet software (e.g., Excel) data analytic software (e.g., SPSS, SAS), and applications such as Google docs.

Career-related skills:

As you approach the 6th semester of your undergraduate education in the Biobehavioral Health major you should already be considering the next stage of your life after graduation. You might consider acquiring an entry-level position in a health-related field, or acquiring additional education in graduate or professional school, or both. You will receive excellent career-related advice from the BB H Academic Advisors, and from the BB H faculty. However you will not receive training on the many important practical skills needed to get to that next stage. To be prepared you should have been building skills in such areas as Interview skills; Resume-writing skills; and personal statement writing. It is absolutely essential that you visit the Penn State Career Services building and meet with a career counselor: <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/>. It is also worthwhile to download and review the career-related handouts available through Career Services at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/cic/handouts.shtml>.