



DIVISION OF STUDENT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

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Health Professions Office

PRE-MEDICAL PREPARATION

Medical school takes four years to complete. The first two years usually consist of basic sciences coursework, beginning with normal structure and function of human systems and then shifting to abnormalities of structure and function. The last two years consist of a series of required clinical rotations followed by electives. During the fourth year, students choose a medical specialty and apply to graduate medical education programs (residencies) through ERAS, the Electronic Residency Application Service. Depending on the specialty chosen, residency takes an additional 3 to 7 years.

Major

There is no required or preferred undergraduate major for students who wish to pursue a career in medicine provided that you include required pre-medical prerequisites in your course of study. Students should, however, major in a field which engages them, in which they can perform well, and which might lead to an alternate career should they decide not to continue their education in medicine. Most students, however, do choose a science major as there is a great deal of overlap between the required major courses as well as those required for medical school. No matter the choice in major, please keep in mind that medical schools prefer students with overall academic breadth.

Required Courses

One year of general chemistry, organic chemistry, biology, physics (all with lab) and English are requirements for most medical schools. The mathematics requirement varies; however, a number of schools require one year of calculus. Consult school catalogs, websites or the Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR), a publication revised annually by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), for specific school requirements. Copies of the MSAR catalog are available for \$25 at the AAMC website (www.aamc.org)

General Chemistry (with lab): Chem 1A/1AL, Chem 1B/1BL, Chem 1C/1CL (or Chem 2 equivalent)

Organic Chemistry (with lab): Chem 109A, 109B, 109C and 6A, 6B

General Biology (with lab): MCDB 1A/1AL, 1B, MCDB 1BL or EEMB 2L, EEMB 2, 3, 3L

Minimum upper division biology courses recommended: MCDB 101A (genetics), MCDB 108A or 110 (biochemistry), MCDB 111 (physiology). Check each medical school's admission requirements.

General Physics (with lab): Physics 6A/6AL, 6B/6BL, 6C/6CL or Physics 1, 2, 3/3L, 4/4L

English: Three quarters titled “Writing”, “English” or “Comparative Literature” not including Writing 1 or AP courses. One quarter should be a literature course taught in the English department. Writing 109HP is a useful course for writing personal statements.

Mathematics: Math 34A/B or Math 3A-B-C; PSTAT 5A (or equivalent) may be required for some medical schools.

Please note that some medical schools will not accept AP credit.

Calculus does act as a pre-requisite for some of the required science courses.

All required courses must be taken for a letter grade, not on a Passed/Not Passed basis. If courses are repeated, both grades will be calculated in your AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service) grade-point average. Please note this is different than UC Santa Barbara policy.

Required Tests

Almost all medical schools require that applicants take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test). The MCAT is currently given 19 times a year and includes four sections: Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning and Writing Sample. It is advised that the above chemistry, physics and biology courses be completed before taking the exam (excluding Chem 6B). You may take the MCAT in the spring quarter in which you are enrolled in Chem 109C or Physics 6C; however, it is recommended that carbohydrates and amino acids have been covered in organic chemistry, as well as optics in physics. MCDB 111 or EEMB 154 and MCDB 101A should also be completed prior to taking the exam. You should take the MCAT at least one year before you plan to enter medical school, which is typically in your junior year. Please refer to the MCAT Student Manual for detailed information regarding the format and content, <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat>.

Extracurricular Activities

Please refer to the Enrichment & Volunteer Opportunities on the health advising website, www.ltsc.ucsb.edu/health. Volunteering, shadowing a doctor, getting EMT certified, and performing undergraduate research are all great ways to improve your medical school application.

Applying

Most medical schools participate in AMCAS, the American Medical College Application Service. AMCAS consists of a primary application, which includes a personal statement, extracurricular activities, and college transcripts; the service sends this application to every school to which you indicate you want to apply. Following this application, schools will send out secondary applications, which may ask for some additional essays, as well as letters of recommendation. Well before letters of recommendation are sent out, be sure to open a file with Career Services for the Letter Service. After you open a file, professors and employers who are writing letter of recommendation for you can send completed letters to Career Services, who will keep everything in your file until you notify them to send the letters to schools. Following completion of the secondary applications, you may be invited to interview. Be sure to prepare for your interview: try to imagine questions schools might ask, be familiar with what you wrote on your application, and practice speaking to friends. If schools don't participate in AMCAS, you are responsible for contacting them and asking for their application materials.

Contact Information

AAMC – Association of American Medical Colleges

<http://www.aamc.org>

MCAT – Medical College Admissions Test

<http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat>

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