

**What are the pre-requisites for medical schools?**

There are approximately 150 US allopathic medical schools, and each may have unique requirements. **It is the responsibility of the student applicants to know the CURRENT requirements for each specific medical school of interest to them.** Requirement information can be found in the Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR) information through the AAMC. (Students are welcome to visit the HPAO office during the week and use the computer to review the online MSAR and DO Information.) If a student is uncertain as to whether or not a specific medical school will accept a certain course as a pre-requisite, the student should contact that specific medical school.

**IN GENERAL**, most medical schools require a year of general chemistry, organic chemistry, biology, and physics, all with associated labs. Many will require a year of English, and some will require a semester of calculus. Some medical schools are beginning to require biochemistry, statistics, and behavioral sciences. Other medical schools require additional courses such as (but not limited to) anatomy and genetics.

In light of the changes to the 2015 MCAT, Vanderbilt is recommending a semester of biochemistry, an introductory statistics course, and knowledge of sociology and psychology. (More details on back)

**Which courses count as English pre-requisites?**

Approximately two-thirds of the allopathic (MD) medical schools require a year of English with W (writing) classes meeting the requirement in most cases. The W course can usually be in any area other than a lab or foreign language, however, some schools require it to be specifically in the English department (e.g. Houston). There may also be schools that require more than 2 semesters of English (e.g. Oklahoma). If a student is uncertain as to whether or not a specific medical school will accept a certain course as a pre-requisite, the student should contact that specific medical school to clarify.

**Do medical schools require calculus and/or math?**

Approximately one-half of the allopathic medical schools have a math requirement. Of those, most require 2 semesters of calculus and/or statistics. Some accept AP credit and others do not. Students should become familiar with the requirements for the specific medical schools of interest to them. If a student is uncertain as to whether or not a specific medical school will accept a certain course as a pre-requisite, the student should contact that specific medical school to clarify.

**Do medical schools accept AP credit to meet the pre-requisites?**

Some medical schools do not accept AP credits for satisfying a medical school prerequisite. On average, our students apply to 15-20 medical schools. If one of your medical schools of interest does not accept AP credits, you may need to take upper division classes in order to meet that med school's requirements.

**Can I take courses during the summer at another college?**

If students take courses away at a school that is as rigorous as Vanderbilt, there shouldn't be a problem. However, there is some thought that taking courses at one's home institution is preferred. The better a student does at Vanderbilt, the more flexibility they have to take courses away. If one does well at Vanderbilt and also does well away, the message is consistent. If one does poorly at Vanderbilt and well away, the message is inconsistent.

All transcripts from all colleges attended must be sent to the common app when applying to med school, even if away courses have transferred and are shown on the Vanderbilt transcript. In order to qualify to have away courses transferred to Vanderbilt, students must get permission prior to taking the course, and prior to the approval deadline by following the requirements found on this link:

<http://as.vanderbilt.edu/academics/policies/summer-work-elsewhere.php>

**What do medical schools look for in applicants in addition to academics?**

In addition to the GPA and MCAT score, medical schools are looking for well-rounded students. It is preferred for students to have **service, exposure** to the health professions, **research**, and **leadership** experience. Students are encouraged to volunteer for service organizations, shadow in the medical field, and be involved in research opportunities.

**Are online courses acceptable?**

Online courses may not be acceptable for meeting a school's pre-requisite requirements.

### **Can a student on the pre-med track participate in a Study Abroad Program?**

Many pre-med students study abroad. If a student is not planning to take a gap year before entering medical school, it is typically done in the sophomore year or in the first semester of the junior year. It can be done in the second semester of the junior year with proper planning. Things to consider are 1) getting recommendation letters, 2) preparing for and taking the MCAT (or appropriate test), 3) having the ASAP meeting/interview with the HPAO, and 4) determining when the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of a 2 semester sequence of coursework will be offered/taken (ex: Bio, Phys, Orgo). Also keep in mind, many medical schools either require or prefer for pre-requisite courses to be taken in the US. There also could be a delay in receiving your transcript information from the Study Abroad school which could delay the application verification process unless avoided. Going abroad during the senior year could conflict with interviews.

### **Is there a pre-med major?**

No, there is no pre-med major. It is a pre-med track. Students may choose any major. They will simply need to take all of the pre-requisite courses required by the medical schools in which they are interested.

### **What specific courses should I take, and when?**

The HPAO website link <http://as.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/professions/medical.php> has some valuable information that may help students in making a decision regarding courses and schedules. Students can click on the links for “Pre-medical Preparation” and “Threading a path through pre-medical expectations.” It is important to note that these are just suggestions, and each student must decide the schedule that best fits his/her learning style and capabilities. Students are also encouraged to schedule an appointment to meet with the HPAO at least once each year, and certainly more often if they would like. Appointments may be booked through the HPAO website: <http://as.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/>.

### **How did the MCAT change in 2015?**

The Writing Sample was eliminated and the previous 3 sections of Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences changed to 4 sections:

- Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
- Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
- Psychological, Social and Biological Foundations of Behavior
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills

In order to be adequately prepared for the new MCAT, students will, in addition to the basic sciences of general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics and biology, need to be knowledgeable in biochemistry, introductory psychology and sociology concepts, and introductory biology concepts that relate to mental processes and behavior. Although specific knowledge of ethics, philosophy, cross-cultural studies and population health is not required, these areas will be tested through the analysis, evaluation and application of information provided by passages from a wide range of social sciences and humanities disciplines.

It is strongly recommended that students who plan to apply to medical school take one semester of biochemistry and one semester of statistics as part of their curriculum. Additionally, through course work or self-directed study, students will need to be knowledgeable in basic concepts of psychology, sociology and bioethics. (It is important to note that these are **RECOMMENDATIONS** intended to help students prepare for the MCAT. Students also need to be familiar with the course **REQUIREMENTS** for their particular medical schools of interest.)

### **Does Vanderbilt offer an Early Acceptance Program?**

The Vanderbilt University School of Medicine no longer has an Early Acceptance Program. The decision was based in part on the changes in the medical school curriculum. VUSM feels a longer view of the applicant’s undergraduate accomplishments is needed in order to determine the student’s potential for success.

### **What percentage of medical school applicants are accepted?**

The **national** average for acceptance of 1<sup>st</sup> time applicants into US allopathic medical schools in 2015 was 42%. The **Vanderbilt** average for acceptance of 1<sup>st</sup> time applicants in 2015 was 70%. Vanderbilt’s average over the last 9 years has been between 61-70%. In 2015, the **national** average for the MCAT score was 26.4, and **Vanderbilt’s** MCAT average score was 29.5. For more Vanderbilt acceptance statistics, view the HPAO website of <http://as.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/> and click on the link: “Click here to view the HPAO Annual Report with ACCEPTANCE STATISTICS”