

## The Health Professions Advisory Office (HPAO)

<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/> • [hpao@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:hpao@vanderbilt.edu)

The HPAO is a resource for all students on pre-health professions tracks other than pre-nursing.  
(Pre-med, pre-dental, pre-vet, pre-pharmacy, pre-PT, pre-PA, etc.)

Students should:

- 1) **Schedule a formal meeting with a pre-health advisor at least once each year.**
- 2) Join the HPAO ListServ to receive informational emails. (send an email to [hpao@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:hpao@vanderbilt.edu) requesting to be added)
- 3) Consider joining pre-health society of interest. (links on the HPAO homepage)

### **Pre-Health RECOMMENDED Courses**

(In general – **VARIES PER SCHOOL** – some schools require additional courses)

<u>Semesters</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Possible Courses-May Vary-ALWAYS CONSULT WITH ADVISOR</u>
2	General Chem/Lab	(CHEM 1601/1601L & CHEM 1602/1602L)
2	Organic Chem/Lab	(CHEM 2221/2221L & CHEM 2222/2222L OR *If AP credit of 5 – 2211/2221L & 2212/2222L)
2	Biology/Lab	(BSCI 1510/1510L & BSCI 1511/1511L or 1511/1512L) [More required by TX]
2	Physics/Lab	(PHYS 1501/1601L & 1502/1602L - Life Sciences) <b><u>OR</u></b> (PHYS 1601/1601L & 1602/1602L – Engineering) <b><u>OR</u></b> (PHYS 1911 & 1912 – Physics Major)
2	English	(ENGL and/or Writing Intensive/W courses not in a foreign language and not technical writing. Requirement Varies/Confirm with Schools of Interest)
1	Calculus	(MATH 1100, 1200, 1201, 1300, 1301, 2200, 2300) [AP credit ACCEPTED]
1	Biochemistry	(BSCI 2520) [Pre-requisites=CHEM 2221 or 2211 <b><u>AND</u></b> BSCI 1510]
1	Statistics	(MATH 1011, 2810, 2820, BSCI 3270, ECON 1500, PSY 2100, PSY-PC 2110, 2120, SOC 2100, BME 2400)
1	Psychology	(PSY 1200)
1	Sociology	(SOC 1010, 1020, 3301, 3303, or 3304)

**Each health professions graduate school is independent and may have unique pre-requisites. STUDENTS MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR PARTICULAR SCHOOLS OF INTEREST.**

Specific requirements for each school can be found on the school's website or through resources from the respective association.

Medical - Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR) – [aamc.org](http://aamc.org)

Dental – ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools – [adea.org](http://adea.org)

Pharmacy – Pharmacy School Admissions Requirements – [aacp.org](http://aacp.org)

Vet – College Descriptor Pages – [aavmc.org](http://aavmc.org)

PT - Physical Therapist Centralized Application Svc-Course Prerequisites – [apta.org](http://apta.org)

**NOTE: If a student is uncertain as to whether or not a particular school will accept a certain course as a pre-requisite, the student should contact that specific school for confirmation.**

**In order to be a well-rounded applicant, students should focus on:**

Admissions Test (MCAT, DAT, GRE, etc)

GPA (Cumulative and Science/BCPM)

Exposure to the Health Professions (shadowing and clinical experience)

Service/Volunteering

Leadership

Research

\* If a medical school does not accept AP credit, upper division courses may be needed to meet requirements.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### 1. How often should a student meet with the HPAO?

Students are encouraged to schedule official appointments with the HPAO at a minimum of once each year, and certainly more often if the student prefers. In addition to receiving valuable advising, these meetings give the HPAO an opportunity to get to know the student better which is beneficial in composing a recommendation letter. (See question 6 – CLRM/Committee Letter)

### 2. Do schools accept AP credits to meet the pre-requisites?

Some health professions schools accept AP credits, and some do not. If a school does not accept AP credits, a student may need to take upper division classes to meet the requirements if the student chooses to use AP credit for a course. Medical schools do accept AP credit for calculus.

### 3. Can a student take courses during the summer at another college?

It's fair to say that some med schools prefer for students to take the pre-reqs at their home institutions, but many students do take summer courses away. In most cases, VU will only allow students to take 2 summer courses away and transfer the credits to VU. Since students will be taking a minimum of 9 pre-med science pre-reqs (gen chem I&II, orgo I&II, bio I&II, phys I&II, and biochem), it is generally fine to take 2 away and 7 here. (The med schools still get a good sense of how you did in your science courses at your home institution.) You must have the away courses pre-approved in advance to transfer to VU (early Spring semester). Contact the Office of Academic Services and/or view this link for more details: <https://as.vanderbilt.edu/academics/summer-sessions.php>

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. (Away course grades do not appear on the VU transcript and do not factor into the VU GPA.)

### 4. Are online courses acceptable?

Online courses may not be acceptable for meeting all schools' pre-requisite requirements. [Exceptions may be made during the period of COVID-19, and policies are typically noted on a school's website.]

### 5. Can a pre-health student 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 during 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 the HPAO recommendation letter (See #6), **2)** getting other recommendation letters, **3)** preparing for and taking the MCAT (or appropriate test), **4)** determining when the 2nd semester of a 2-semester sequence of coursework will be offered/taken (ex: Bio, Phys, Orgo). {Keep in mind, many medical schools either require or prefer for pre-requisite courses to be taken in the US.} **5)** There could be a delay in receiving your transcript information from the Study Abroad school which could delay the application verification process unless avoided. (Only a concern if abroad in the Spring before your application cycle.) Going abroad during the senior year could conflict with interviews and is not recommended.

### 6. What is a Committee Letter Review Meeting (CLRM)?

Most health professions schools either require or expect a Committee Letter from the undergraduate university's Health Professions Advisory Office (if the applicant is still an undergrad). A **Committee Letter Review Meeting (CLRM)** is **required** in order for the HPAO to prepare a Committee Letter. This 90-minute meeting is offered to current undergraduates during late-Fall and Spring of their application year. A completed Committee Letter Online Portfolio (CLOP/application draft) must be submitted to the HPAO in advance of the meeting. Access to the CLOP can be found on the HPAO website - <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/hpao/opportunities/applicationmaterials.php>

### 7. Which courses count as English pre-requisites?

Many schools require a year of English with W (writing intensive) classes meeting the requirement in most cases. The W course can usually be in any area other than labs, foreign language, or technical writing, however, some schools may require at least one to be specifically in the English department. 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.

### 8. Do medical schools require calculus and/or math?

Many medical schools have a math requirement. Of those, most require 2 semesters of calculus and/or statistics, therefore we recommend 1 semester of calculus and 1 semester of statistics. AP credit is accepted for calculus.

**NOTE: 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.**