**Premedical Information**

Premedical advisement is in 3328 WSC, the Preprofessional Advisement Center, and is open from 8:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday, except during devotionals and forums. The staff and materials are available to aid you in your preparation for medical school. The office contains many resources, including MCAT registration information, The Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR), books to check out, and admissions statistics for BYU applicants.

We strongly encourage you to **meet with a prehealth peer advisor during your freshman year** and plan out your class schedule in preparation for the MCAT and timely graduation. Peer advisors are available without appointment, so we encourage you to come to the office whenever you have questions.

In order to make sure you are on track, we suggest the following steps:

- **Freshman and transfer students.**
  - Meet with the college advisement center staff for the major you plan to pursue.
  - Meet with a prehealth advisor as soon as you decide that you would like to pursue medicine.
  - Enroll in STDev 170: Introduction to Health Professions.

- **Sophomore students**
  - Begin or continue to shadow physicians, become involved in service experiences, and research.
  - Attend orientation meetings, workshops, etc.

- **Junior students**
  - Begin collecting letters of recommendation and preparing your medical school application.
  - Attend orientation meetings, workshops, etc.
  - Take an MCAT prep course or begin studying independently.
  - Winter semester: enroll in STDev 470: Medical and Dental School Application.

**What About a Major?**

There is no “premedical” major. Medical schools do not have specific requirements for your major—but they do require specific premedical coursework. Choosing a major that you excel in and enjoy will probably help you to get better grades and have a more pleasant undergraduate experience. Also, choose a major that can be your contingency plan if you don’t get into medical school or choose not to go.

**Factors in Medical School Admissions**

- **GPA**: Your science GPA (biology, chemistry, physics, and math) is a very important factor in the admissions process. For example, consider the data on BYU applicants for the entering class of 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Science (biology, chemistry, physics, math)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Applicants</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants accepted</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants not accepted</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **MCAT Scores**: The Medical School Admission Test (MCAT) is a standardized test that is evaluated as part of the medical school application process. The MCAT is discussed in more detail in STDev 272 and STDev 470. The MCAT currently consists of four sections: biological sciences, verbal reasoning, physical sciences, and writing sample, but this will change in 2015. The MCAT is usually taken at the end of your junior year or the year before you hope to enter medical school. Visit www.aamc.org/students/mcat/ for registration information. Do not take the MCAT lightly! Treat it as you would a four-credit course. We recommend studying 4–6 months before you take the MCAT.

- **Workload**: It is important to take full course loads (about 14+ credit hours) each semester. Consistently light loads raise questions about an applicant’s ability to handle the much heavier loads required in medical school. Generally, work may not be total justification for taking fewer hours.

- **Withdrawing and Incompletes**: Incompletes and unofficial withdrawals can hurt your application. Withdrawals are detrimental only when your transcript contains numerous Ws and it is apparent that you are withdrawing from difficult classes to keep from receiving undesirable grades.

- **Repeating classes**: When you apply to medical school, each grade is treated equally regardless of how many times you have taken the class. Do not retake classes in which you received a C grade or higher unless you feel you did not learn the subject matter well enough to do well in subsequent classes and on the MCAT. You should repeat classes in which you received a C- or below.
• **Post-Bacc Premedical Program:** Post-baccalaureate premedical programs are for students who lack medical prerequisites or who have been previously unsuccessful in gaining admission to medical school. It serves recent graduates as well as those returning to school after an extended amount of time. For additional information and a complete list of schools offering post-bacc programs, visit [www.aamc.org/students/considering/postbac/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/considering/postbac/start.htm).

**Clubs**

• **The Premedical Club** hosts speakers, provides service opportunities, and networking with other premed students. Discounts for MCAT review courses may be given to members. Information about joining is available at premed.byu.edu.

• **Women in Medicine** strives to educate both men and women about the opportunities, influences, and value women have in the medical field. This club also sponsors speakers, service opportunities, and social gatherings.

**Scholarships**

Several scholarships are available to premed students through the generosity of several donors. Applications are available near the end of Winter semester in the Preprofessional Advisement Center.

**Keys to becoming a good applicant:**

Becoming a strong applicant takes more than just a high GPA and MCAT score. Medical schools like to see students that are well rounded, that have made the most of their educational experience, and that have gone that extra mile to stand out. Here are seven keys to getting into medical school.

1. **Physician Shadowing (50–100 hours):** Medical schools want to see that you have researched the profession that you are about to invest the rest of your life into. Your shadowing experience should be divided up between several specialties that you are interested in. Spend a good amount of time (20–30 hours) with each physician in order to see all aspects of their work (not just seeing patients but doing all administrative duties and paper work as well). The best way to get shadowing experience is to contact doctors directly.

2. **Service (200+ hours):** As a physician you will be asked to dedicate your life to service. Medical schools want to see that you are a committed to serving those around you. Service experience does not necessarily have to be in the medical field. It is best have long term meaningful involvement in a couple of organizations from different fields rather than shallow involvement in many organizations. Service hours do not have to be officially logged but it is always good to keep a good personal record.

3. **Research (1 year recommended):** Medical schools like to see that applicants have gone beyond classroom education and have become involved in research. Research can be done with any department as long is based on the scientific method (i.e. observation, hypothesis, experiment, results, conclusion). BYU is one of the top universities in the nation for offering undergraduate research experience. The best way to get into research is to investigate the professor and the type of research you would like to do then contact the professor directly and set up a time to meet with them face to face.

4. **Patient Exposure:** Although not required at all schools, patient exposure is a great way to boost your application. It is an absolute must for University of Utah. You can get good patient exposure by becoming an EMT, a phlebotomist, or a CNA, or by working or volunteering in a clinic, hospital, nursing home, or hospice. You must have contact with the patients and not just work at a desk in order for your experience to count.

5. **Extracurricular Activities:** Get involved! Sports, clubs, church, work, and hobbies can all demonstrate your “well-roundedness”. It is better to become deeply involved in a few activities than to be superficially involved in many. Anything that is outside the “norm” is a plus on your application.

6. **Leadership:** Physicians must be motivated and able to lead. Leadership is an important quality medical schools look for. You do not need to run for BYU/SA President, but do take a more involved leadership role in those activities that you are already involved in, (e.g. service organizations, research, work, clubs, etc.)

7. **Letters of Recommendation:** Each medical school has specific requirements for letters of recommendation. Students usually need letters from 2–3 professors (usually science professors), a personal reference (church leader, employer, advisor, etc.), and a physician in order to meet the requirements from all the schools that they apply to. Seek to develop relationships with potential letter writers so that they can write you a sincere letter that gives insight into your character and truly endorses you as an excellent medical school applicant.

Remember it is not necessarily what you do, but what you get out of what you do. The MCAT and GPA can only tell so much about an applicant, so it's the quality of these “extras” that will really help you stand out.

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