

# Pre-Med Tip Sheet

## General Requirements for Medical School: Courses & the MCAT

Course requirements for medical schools vary widely. For example, some schools require calculus and others do not. Most programs prefer students with broad, well-rounded backgrounds and value a liberal arts education. A science major is not necessarily required for professional programs; in fact, a major or minor in the arts, humanities, or social sciences may be attractive to some medical schools. However, you must balance the requirements of your major with those of medical school admissions and take a wide variety of science courses. Careful planning is essential to avoid scheduling conflicts.

It is recommended that you investigate the particular requirements of medical schools to which you are interested in applying. Many of these may be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/medical-school-admission-requirements/required-premedical-coursework-and-competencies>

Regardless of a school's particular course requirements, students applying to medical school programs must take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). The MCAT requires specific knowledge content that you need to obtain from your courses here at Hollins. The content categories are:

- *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*

Information about the exam and complete content description may be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/taking-mcat-exam/taking-mcat-exam>

The following are general coursework requirements for admission to most medical schools, and the courses at Hollins that satisfy them.

2 semesters of General Chemistry	CHEM 101/102 or 105/214
2 semesters of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 221/222
1 semester of Biochemistry	BIOL/CHEM 351
2 semesters of General Biology	BIOL 220/236
1 semester of Human Anatomy	BIOL 260
2 semesters of Introductory Physics	PHYS 151/152 or 201/202

In addition, many schools require the following; these courses are also necessary to sufficiently prepare for the MCAT.

Pre-calculus or Calculus	MATH 140 or 241/242
Intro to Statistics or Research Statistics	STAT 140 or PSY 208
Intro to Psychology	PSY 141
Intro to Sociology	SOC 110
2 semesters of English Composition	ENG 141 and other writing courses

Many schools strongly recommend some combination of the following. These courses may depend upon your intended medical specialty.

Advanced Biochemistry	BIOL/CHEM 352	Genetics	BIOL 314
Comparative Anatomy	BIOL 315	Epigenetics	BIOL 350
Biological Psychology	BIOL/PSY 317	Immunology	BIOL 332
Abnormal Psychology	PSY 342	Microbiology	BIOL 312

## Applying to Medical School

If you are planning to enter medical school immediately following graduation, then you must take the MCAT in your 3rd year. Dates for the exam typically run from December through July, but it is advised that you take the exam by May 1. Information about dates, locations, and fees can be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/taking-mcat-exam/taking-mcat-exam>

Official medical school application deadlines vary but are typically in October or November. However, it is strongly advised that you apply in early June of your 3rd year. Again, this requires that you take the MCAT by May 1! Medical schools accept applications on a rolling basis and the earlier you apply the better your chances of being accepted.

In addition to transcripts and test scores, you will need letters of recommendation from your professors. You must request these from professors who can honestly comment on your potential to successfully navigate a medical program. If you choose, the pre-health advisor can help coordinate the collection and collation of the letters and their submission. Most medical schools use the American College Medical Application Service (AMCAS) system for recommendation letter submission. Information about AMCAS, participating colleges, fees, and deadlines can be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/applying-medical-school-amcas-program>

If you are not able to get into medical school on the first attempt it may be useful to consider a medical master's post-baccalaureate program. Information about these programs can be found here: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc/>

Many students find that applying for medical school the year following graduation (taking a "gap year" or "growth year") allows for more time to gain patient contact hours and prepare for the MCAT. In fact, this is becoming more common, and the average age of medical school matriculation is 24 years old. This timeline also allows you more time to focus on challenging classes, as well as participate in extra-curricular activities that can enrich your undergraduate experience and ultimately make you a more competitive applicant to a medical program.