

## General Advice/Timeline for University of Idaho Pre-Med Students

### During High School

- Take the maximum number of science, math and English classes.
- Develop study skills and keep your GPA up.
- Volunteer/observe in clinical and health settings and talk with health care professionals.
- Get involved in community service and leadership activities to develop all of your skills and interests.
- Check out AP course limitations at your preferred med schools (although the AP courses are excellent preparation, they may not satisfy prerequisites for some programs; therefore, you may want to forgo your AP exam credits in order to avoid limiting your options).
- Explore health careers at <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

### During College

- Choose a major that you enjoy and that provides a good “back-up plan” and career options in case you change your mind about medicine.
- Develop a “dream list” of medical schools to which you want to apply – familiarize yourself with the prerequisites of each specific program and create a reference spreadsheet; take these courses early in order to test your interest and aptitude.
- Med school admission requirements vary from school to school, and you should carefully check admission requirements at your med schools of most interest – strongly consider purchasing [Med School Admission Requirements \(MSAR\)](#)  
However, **most schools will expect applicants to have completed at least the following:**
  - One year of general or inorganic chemistry with lab
  - One year of organic chemistry with lab
  - One year of general physics with lab
  - One year of biology with lab
  - One year of English
  - Psychology and Sociology are also required by some schools and are highly recommended as preparation for the [\(MCAT 2015\)](#)
  - Additional courses that may be required by some schools or highly recommended as MCAT preparation include: Math and Statistics, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Genetics, Cell Biology, Anatomy, English, Physiology, Calculus, Philosophy, Ethics, etc.
- Get involved: develop leadership skills, participate in professional and interesting activities/clubs, volunteer for several service activities (maybe one each semester and consider an Alternative Service Break [ASB trip]), Honors Program, consider study abroad, build resume, apply for honorary awards, or other things that set you apart
- Begin with and maintain a competitive GPA - Successful applicants to MD programs have an average GPA of 3.65-3.70 and to Doctor of Osteopathic (DO) programs an average GPA of 3.50.
- Develop a **4-yr dream resume** as a goal setting exercise—then work to make it happen with extracurricular, work experiences, honors, target GPA etc.
- Participate in extracurricular activities: develop your personal, interpersonal and leadership skills.
- Develop strong relationships with faculty, physicians and other professionals. Work on getting to know your professors from day one and set a goal of **finding one professor each semester who knows you well enough to write a reference letter** for summer jobs, scholarships, honor nominations, and ultimately for med school.
- Work on becoming well-rounded and interesting—build a resume through extracurricular activities that interest you, develop your leadership skills, get involved in fun things and professional things that relate to your major and intended career, potentially develop a “theme” and/or demonstrate personal attributes and strengths, that carry through your 4 years that will show up in your application and reference letters that sets you apart from other applicants
- Get hands-on **volunteer medical experience** early and steadily. Find out if medicine is right for you! Volunteer, work, and observe. Maintain a formal log. **Most applicants have several hundred volunteer hours.** Consider different volunteer experiences that engage you and that will demonstrate that you are serious and committed. For example, some students have gotten their EMT and have volunteered with the local ambulance. See volunteer location examples in the UI pre-med manual. Spend time with physicians and patients.

### Freshman Year:

- Select a major and course of study. Choose a major that interests you; remember that it is OK to change majors.
- Attend Pre-Health workshops.
- Coursework - a typical first-year sequence would be:
  - Fall semester: Chem 111, math (begin necessary sequence to complete Calculus), English, and courses for your major and general education
  - Spring semester: Chem 112, Bio 115 (Cells and the Evolution of Life), and courses for your major and general education

### Sophomore Year:

- Meet with your Pre-Health Advisor to develop a plan of study.
- Purchase MCAT (Medical College Aptitude Test) study guide and look over the questions to assess your understanding as you cover the material in your courses.
- Carefully review specific requirements for your degree and admission requirements at your preferred med schools and continue taking required courses.
- Continue to develop strong relationships with faculty, physicians and other professionals who will be writing letters of reference.
- Consider getting involved in a medically related undergraduate research project, an internship, a summer NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) etc.
- Begin preparing for MCAT over summer.

### Junior Year:

- Meet with your primary (major) and Pre-Health advisor; begin to think about the application process and review your list of medical schools to which you want to apply.
- Continue taking required courses: carefully review specific requirements for your degree and admission requirements at your preferred med schools.
- Continue gaining medical experience through volunteering or working in health/clinical settings, research, internships etc. (show that you are serious through the types of volunteer activities you choose and the time commitment; this will enable you to fully justify through experience and direct knowledge how you are certain that you want to be a doctor)
- Make sure that you have a “back-up” plan in case you don’t get admitted to med school, or you change your mind about attending.
- **Take the MCAT** - prepare for, register for, and take the MCAT (typically taken in Spring).
- **Apply** - begin primary application to the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), draft your personal statement, request letters of recommendation, submit the application on-line through AMCAS or through AACOMAS (best to submit in summer a year before you intend to enroll).

### Senior Year:

- Complete secondary, supplemental applications (summer, early fall)
- Schedule a mock interview through the Career Center and your Pre-Health Advisor (fall)
- Update the Pre-Health Advisor on your progress.
- Academic coursework: complete remaining courses for your degree and any desired electives.
- Interview at med schools, complete FAFSA financial aid application and any necessary financial planning steps
- Make interim and final decision on your choice of medical school, immediately notify med schools that you will or will not be attending, and write thank you notes to all people who helped you through the process (fall/spring).
- Summer – **celebrate** and get ready for your first year of med school!

### Gap Year(s):

There are many pathways to medical school. In fact, national trends indicate that an increasing number of med school applicants are postponing their application by one to two years. They use this time to work on improving their chance of admission by gaining relevant work experience, spending time completing pre-med focused coursework in graduate programs, and participating in other scholarly activities and/or relevant life experiences.