



A HANDBOOK FOR PRE-MEDICAL STUDENTS



PRE-MEDICAL PROGRAM

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PRE-MEDICAL PROGRAM

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission requirements are published annually by the Association of American Medical Colleges (aamc.org), and this is an excellent source for all types of pertinent information.

Entrance into medical school has five essential requirements. These are:

I. A FOUR-YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Medical schools do not require any specific major. You are free to major in any area of study ranging from the sciences to the humanities. Traditionally, the majority of students throughout the country who apply to medical schools have earned biology or chemistry degrees, because these best prepare you for the rigorous basic sciences that must be mastered during the first two years of medical school. It is counter productive for a student who is weak in the sciences to take a major outside of the sciences to boost his or her GPA. You will need to be strong in the sciences to handle the rigors of medical school. If you choose a different major, it is best to take additional courses in the sciences to get stronger in this area.

II. GOOD ACADEMIC GPA

Medical schools characteristically compute two GPAs for the students who apply to their schools—the overall GPA and the science GPA. The science GPA carries more weight as an indicator of the student's ability to meet the academic challenges of medical school. A high GPA in non-science subjects and a mediocre GPA in science will not cut it. The average GPA for acceptance into any medical school is about 3.7, and the lowest GPA is about 3.5. GPAs are calculated on all classes taken. If you get a C in a class, and then retake it and get an A, it is calculated as two B's. It is important to do well the first time you take a class.

III. REQUIRED COLLEGE CLASSES BASIC SCIENCES + BIOCHEMISTRY

General Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, General Physics (with labs), and one semester of Biochemistry without a lab, are the absolute minimum number of classes required. Additional classes are highly recommended. It is expected that you do well in these classes, with most grades in the A range. The science GPA that most medical schools use to evaluate you will include these classes and any other science courses you have taken in college. It is not advisable for you to shop around to find an “easy A” basic science summer class at another college. Medical school admission committees are suspicious of students who take their basic science classes at schools other than their primary college or university.

IV. THE MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST (MCAT)

This test is administered online by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) several times a year, mostly in the summer. The content of the MCAT examination is described on the AAMC website (aamc.org/mcat). You can take this examination after the four basic sciences and Biochemistry are completed. The MCAT scores must be available to

medical schools for evaluation the year before you are expecting to begin medical school. Taking an MCAT review such as that offered by Altius (*altiustestprep.com*) or Princeton (*princetonreview.com*) is recommended, but not required, in preparing to take this important exam.

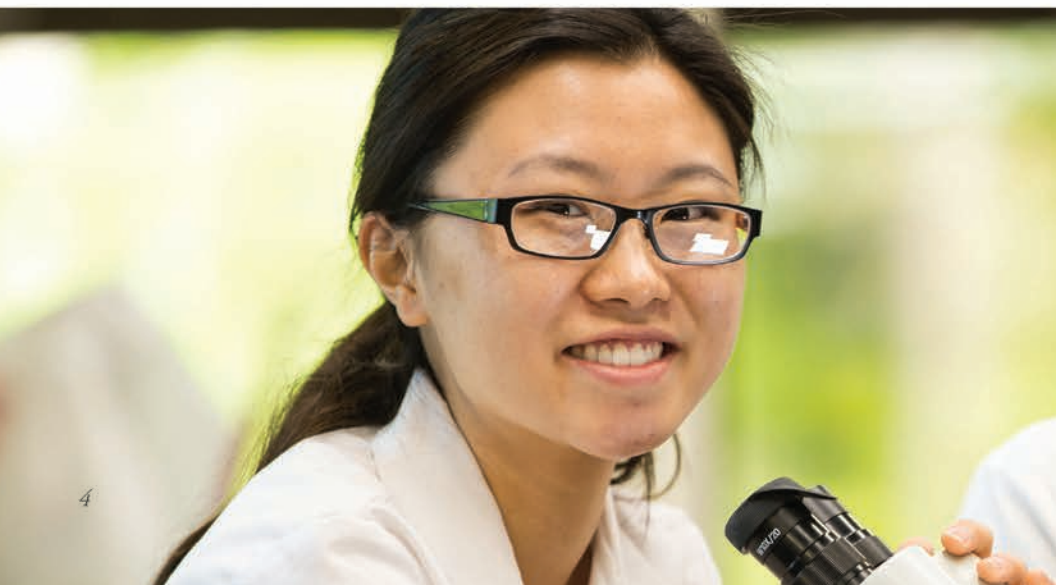
V. GOOD WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS

You should have good written recommendations from the Pre-Professional Recommendations Committee of your undergraduate university or college. Medical schools are most interested in applicants who show good noncognitive traits of integrity, leadership, compassion, and community involvement as well as being well-rounded, with interests in areas such as music, sports, etc. It is very important that you get to know the science professors at the college in which you are taking pre-medical studies. They form the core recommendations committee, and their impressions of you are the basis of this important component of the application. For this and other reasons, it is not advisable for you to go off campus to take the required basic science courses. Regardless of the degree pursued, it is critical that pre-medical students frequently consult with their university's pre-medical adviser in the biology or chemistry department for advice on the selection of courses and preparation for admission requirements.

TIMETABLE OF IMPORTANT DATES FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

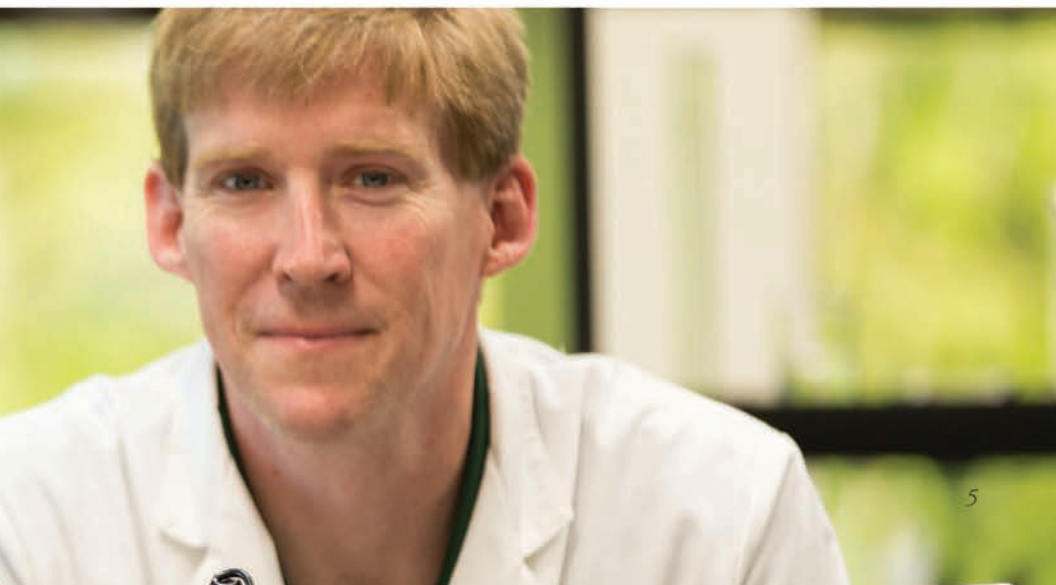
FRESHMAN YEAR

1. GPA is calculated from your first semester as an undergraduate. Keep your academic record competitive! GPA is the first critical factor in determining your application's success. Begin now to get involved in some extracurricular activities, especially those that reach *OUT* to others.
2. Get to know your adviser. If your major is not in the sciences, "adopt" a pre-medical adviser in biology or chemistry to work with you throughout your time at Southern. Also, begin considering a few other related career paths.
3. By the second semester, think about working in a medical setting such as a hospital, nursing home, or medical office, either paid or as a volunteer. Experience in this type of setting will let the medical school admissions committee know that you are serious about a career in the health sciences. Getting to know a physician in this context will also add a positive element to your recommendations when you apply.
4. Join Southern's Pre-Medical Club and be an active part of it.



SOPHOMORE YEAR

1. Begin or continue to work in a medical office, hospital, or other location, either paid or as a volunteer.
2. Being involved as a volunteer in either a church-sponsored mission project or as a student missionary would also help your application.
3. By this time, you should have at least one of the basic science courses completed, perhaps two. If you have only completed one, think seriously about taking two more this year. This will give you more time to study for the MCAT during your junior year.
4. Remember to be engaged in the Pre-Medical Club and its' activities. Now is a good time to think of participating in the club as an officer.
5. A number of medical schools consider research to be an important part of undergraduate preparation for a medical career. This is a good time to check with the department's research coordinator, or your academic adviser, for research opportunities during the school year or summer.



JUNIOR YEAR

FALL SEMESTER

1. Begin reviewing for the MCAT (November or December).
2. Continue to work or volunteer in a medical setting.
3. Think about who you will ask to write your supplementary recommendation letters. In addition to a recommendation from the Pre-Professional Recommendations Committee, you will need three others for the supplementary application to medical school. Typically, the following are suggested:
 - a. A physician you have shadowed.
 - b. A supervisor or professor for whom you have worked.
 - c. A pastor or friend for a character reference.Try to think in terms of who will write an effective letter on your behalf. People who know you and your desire and commitment to becoming a physician are best.
4. Set up an appointment with your pre-medical adviser to discuss your application.
5. It is advisable to get some research experience to strengthen it as well.

WINTER SEMESTER

1. If you have decided to take the MCAT this summer, you should start your application *NOW* and pay attention to deadline dates. Apply as soon as it opens. Some test sites fill up.
2. Consider which schools you are going to apply to. Typically, you choose a few “wished for” schools, a few “in-state” schools, and a few “last hope” schools.
3. Begin work on your personal essay for the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) application.
4. Obtain, complete, and turn in a personal information sheet to the Associate Vice President’s office so the Pre-Professional Recommendations Committee can write a more complete and supportive letter for you. Also, turn in a list of the medical schools to which you are applying, and tell this office which of these need the committee letter. Otherwise, *ONLY* Loma Linda School of Medicine (LLUSM) will receive it.

SENIOR YEAR

JUNE

Complete your application for AMCAS with your final personal essay. This process takes a while, so start early!

JUNE - JULY - AUGUST

1. Study hard. Be prepared. You only want to take the MCAT once. Successfully conquer it.
2. Make sure you have requested personal letters of recommendation from those who will support you in your medical school application.

OCTOBER

1. Make an appointment with the Student Success Center to interview with the representative from LLUSM.
2. Be patient, interviews will come.
3. Update your application to the schools as you accomplish more in your senior year.
4. Send a thank you note to recommendation writers.

DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

1. Try to schedule interviews during winter break for convenience.
2. Send updated transcripts if requested by schools.
3. If you have no responses by mid-February, speak with your pre-medical adviser.

MARCH

If wait-listed, send a letter expressing continued interest.

APRIL - AUGUST

A few acceptance letters are still sent out as late as August, so stay calm. Make sure medical schools can reach you or a family member by phone at all times.

YOU ARE ACCEPTED!

Be sure to let your major department and adviser know. A thank you letter for all that was done on your behalf is very appropriate and appreciated.





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