

## **If you plan to go to medical school...**

The selection factors considered by all medical schools are similar. It is important to demonstrate academic excellence, have acquired health profession experience, performed community service, and have demonstrated leadership skills. The average G.P.A. for applicants is 3.5- 3.6 and admissions committees will take into account the relative level of difficulty of the applicants' undergraduate degree program.

Specific course requirements do not vary widely for different medical schools. UAMS will NOT accept AP credit, CLEP credit or correspondence courses for the pre-matriculation requirements listed below.

For UAMS the following courses *must* be completed prior to matriculation:

- **2 SEMESTERS BIOLOGY** (Introductory Biology plus one other)
- **2 SEMESTERS GENERAL CHEMISTRY** (University Chemistry I & II)
- **2 SEMESTERS ORGANIC CHEMISTRY** (Organic Chemistry I & II)
- **2 SEMESTERS PHYSICS** (\*College Physics I & II)
- **2 SEMESTERS MATHEMATICS** (College Algebra, Trig, Precalculus, or \*\*Calculus)
- **3 SEMESTERS ENGLISH** (English Composition I & II, and Fundamentals of Communication)

\* Advanced College Physics I and II is also acceptable.

\*\* Calculus is not a specific requirement for UAMS but most medical school applicants complete at least Calculus I

**Courses recommended for MCAT** (Medical College Admissions Test). Many students who are not Biology majors choose to take more than the minimum 2 semesters of Biology required by medical schools to be better prepared for the MCAT exam. Some recommended classes include the following: **Anatomy and Physiology I and II, General Microbiology, Cell Biology**

Other courses that could be helpful are: **Philosophy (Logic or Ethics), Psychology, Sociology, Cultural Anthropology, American Government, and Interpersonal Communication, World Literature, and Foreign Language**

## **How to choose a major?**

Premed is not a major but a curriculum that fulfills the requirements of medical school candidates while making sure that premed students are prepared to be successful when they take the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) before their final year.

The best choice of a major is an area of study that interests you and that can also lead to other career options in that field or discipline. Many premed students are "undeclared" and only decide on a major in the later part of their first year or mid-way through their second year. Many students need time to explore different disciplines and determine where their strengths and interests lie. We recommend that you see a career counselor.

A general guideline for three or four semesters at NWACC is:

Freshman year: Chemistry I and II, Biology 2 semesters, English Comp I and II and 2 semesters of college level Mathematics

Sophomore year: 2 more semesters of Biology, core classes and Mathematics classes if you still need them

**IMPORTANT: Health Care Experience.** It is essential to acquire some form of health profession experience before applying to medical school. This serves to demonstrate your commitment to a career in medicine but also provides you with necessary exposure to the practice of medicine. It is no longer good enough to just have a desire to be a physician you must understand the commitment you are making and have a realistic idea of what awaits you.

Some examples of how to get health profession experience:

- Get a part-time job at a local hospital. (You may have to start by doing clerical work but often that leads to other positions.)
- Volunteer at a local health clinic (Some clinics providing free health care for uninsured individuals need help from volunteers.)
- Shadow a physician either in the community (shadowing physicians from a variety of specialties such as Family Practice, Radiology, or Surgery can provide you with very different views of a physician's daily routine)

**IMPORTANT: Community Service.** Even the most competitive candidates for medical school will have a difficult time explaining to members of an Admissions Committee that they are willing to dedicate their professional life to caring for people if they have never made an effort up to that point to help people in need. You need to show a commitment to helping people in need by volunteering your time. The more experience you have in this area the more you will have to draw on when it comes time to write your personal statement.

**IMPORTANT: Keep a record of what you have done.** It will be easier to compile your information for your medical school application. You may forget some important details so write them down.

- The name of the clinic, hospital or charitable organization.
- How frequently you volunteered and for how long.
- What your responsibilities were.
- Name(s) of individuals in charge.

Note: If you are going to attend the University of Arkansas in the premedical program, contact a premed advisor before transferring. You apply for medical school after your junior year so you need to be prepared. Dr. Jeanne McLachlin, premed advisor, has detailed information about all U.S. and foreign medical schools. (479) 575-5348