

The Post-Bac Pre-Med Program at Messiah College:

A FAQ Sheet

The post-bac program at Messiah College is just that: A program. It can be thought of as an overlay of courses that can be taken to supplement and or enhance any previously earned college degree. Because medical programs of all types – medicine, dentistry, veterinary, PA, podiatry, chiropractic, and the list goes on – are looking for broadly-educated applicants, at Messiah we welcome students from all Bachelor's degree paths to take the courses they need to apply to medical school.

My undergraduate major was not in the sciences. Will this be a problem? - There is no single, best "premed" major. Medical schools are looking for students who have completed specific course work and who have performed at a high academic level. Whatever your choice of major was, bear in mind that medical school admissions personnel unequivocally state that the specific undergraduate major is not a consideration in the admissions process. They are interested in the courses that applicants have completed and the grades they have earned. They also are looking for broadly-educated applicants and look very favorable upon students who have taken time off to gain life experiences between college and medical school.

What are the premedical course requirements? The general, minimal pre-requisite courses that you need to take to be eligible for consideration by medical school admissions deans are:

- One year of English – (For Messiah graduates, this is satisfied by the required FYS, CCC taken in your first year and a course of your choosing that includes a writing intensive designation.)
- One year of biology **with a lab.**
- One year of inorganic chemistry **with a lab.**
- One year of organic chemistry **with a lab.**
- One year of physics **with a lab.** Either algebra-based or calculus-based physics will satisfy this requirement.
- Note: Post-bac students are required to investigate the specific academic pre-requisites for individual health professions schools to which they intend to apply.

Do I need to do research? - It is a well known fact that while research is not a requirement for application to most medical programs, it is an important "distinctive" in the application portfolio. Most of our successful applicants have done some basic bench science (research) at Messiah and/or through other academic institutions and research organizations.

Do I need to take an admission test for medical school?- Virtually every medical program requires an admission test. This is a programs way of "leveling the [academic] playing field", and strong performance on the test is a vital component of a successful application portfolio. In fact, a strong test score can override a slightly low GPA. Rather than describing each of the test individually, suffice it to say that the admission tests are difficult and require enormous preparation and the methods of preparation for these test varies by individual. Some students study on their own, some study in small groups and some take test prep courses.

"Strong Numbers Get an Applicant an Interview; Strong Co-Curriculars Secure a Place in the Class." What does this mean for a post-bac student? In addition to your GPA (especially in the sciences) and your admission test scores, medical school admissions deans are very interested in an applicant's exposure to the health care field of choice. (For example, volunteer experience in hospitals or health care clinics, community service activities, shadowing and research.) Indeed, it is your medically-related experience that indicates your commitment and suitability for a career in medicine. Additionally, your strong campus or community involvement, leadership positions and choice of co-curricular activities indicate your broad-range of interests, leadership abilities and your compassionate nature, to medical programs. So, whether you are a pre-med-medically-related-experienced soccer player or swing dancer;

Earth keeper or inventor; bass fisherman (believe it or not, Messiah placed ...) or philosopher; and the list goes on and on ... there is a place for you in the post-bac pre-med program and our co-curricular community at Messiah College!

What will [my academic timeline](#) look like?

What are the medical school acceptance rates for Messiah students? Qualified Messiah College applicants are very successful in their application to medical programs. To some extent, overall acceptance rates depend on the specific pool of applicants each year, but our acceptance rate hovers around 80%. Messiah College provides strong premedical preparation for its pre-health professions students, including the requisite coursework, medically-related experience opportunities, research, and support by the Pre-Health Professions Advising (PHPA) office and the Pre-Health Professions Advising Committee (PHPAC). Students who are successful in gaining admission to medical school have taken full advantage of the resources available to them. Participants in post-bac programs should remember that no undergraduate institution "gets the student into" the professional school. Rather, it is the purposeful post-bac student who takes advantage of all available resources, who makes a personal commitment to the process, and who applies him or herself to individual academic and co-curricular endeavors, who will ensure his or her success in the application process.

What happens if I am not accepted into a medical program on my first try? Of course, not every Messiah post-bac student is accepted to the program of their choice or the first time that they apply.

Why? Acceptance into medical or any health professions school is dependent on the qualifications of the student applying and what the particular programs are looking for, both in terms of the applicant portfolio and balancing the entire medical school class. Students who are accepted to medical school typically have performed at a high level academically (usually at a GPA of 3.5/4.0 or better), have done well on the required admission test, have demonstrated a working knowledge of the health professions through their medically-related experiences, and have demonstrated a commitment to service. Additionally, they have brought the "distinctives" that the medical program is looking for to balance the matriculating class as a whole. What happens if you find yourself in this latter category and are still committed to a medical career? Try, try again: Pre-Health Professions Advising services are available to all graduates.

Where do I start? Contact [Martha Smith](#), Coordinator of Pre-Health Professions Advising at Messiah College.