

Office of Pre-Professional Advising

Information for Orientation Advisors
Summer 2026

This information is for advisors to use in counseling students interested in preparing for application to allopathic medical schools (MD programs), osteopathic medical schools (DO programs), dental schools, and physician assistant programs.

- 1. Required Coursework:** Most health professions programs require some college mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics as part of their specific course prerequisites, but many also have requirements related to statistics, psychology, social sciences, and upper division sciences.
 - Health professions programs typically speak in terms of “a broad liberal arts preparation with completion of the core math and science prerequisites.”
 - Students should major in the area(s) they are most interested in; they do not have to major in one of the sciences or health science related programs, but they have to do well with their math/science coursework.
 - While we encourage students to pursue their passions, it is **important to note** that some majors are more difficult to complete in addition to the required coursework for health professions. One example is Nursing. With the differences in course requirements PLUS clinical requirements for the nursing major, it is extremely difficult to squeeze everything in. Additionally, health professions programs may question motivation for pursuing MD, DO, PA, etc...if they committed to pursuing a major/career in Nursing.
 - For specific information regarding course requirements and expectations, please visit the [Course Requirements](#) page on our website.
- 2. Breadth, depth, and rigor:** Each student’s program should achieve a mix of sciences and other subject areas within each semester so that they take a good balance of humanities, social sciences, and sciences.
 - See our page on [Breadth, Depth, and Rigor Expectations](#) for more information.
- 3. Suggested Courseload:** Our general rule of thumb is to have a student begin with **two** math/science selections per semester and then move to three math/science selections once the student has established a strong performance record.
- 4. AP Credit:** Health professional schools **differ in their policies** related to Advanced Placement credits; for more information, visit the [AP Credit Policies](#) page on our website. **Most** health professions schools will accept AP credit if it is **supplemented by upper-level coursework** in that discipline.
 - **General rule of thumb:** Advise students to use AP credit if the student has:
 - Achieved a 4 or 5 on the AP exam,
 - Taken the course in the junior or senior year of high school, **and**
 - Reports a very strong laboratory component for the high school course taken.
 - In instances where all of these conditions are not met, talk through the student’s comfort level and strength of high school preparation and make your best call.
 - In cases where the student/family argues that AP credits are earned, they will need to understand the implications of doing so **as it relates to medical school requirements** and admissions policies. We encourage you to refer them to our [AP Credit Policies](#) page.
- 5. ECE Credit:** Early College Experience courses will count to fulfill requirements for medical school admission.
 - **IMPORTANT:** Regardless of whether students accept the ECE grades to count for their undergraduate degree, they **WILL BE CALCULATED** in their medical or dental school applications!

6. **A final note about AP and ECE:** We are here to help create a comprehensive and challenging collegiate experience for our students; *we do not want students repeating work when they have demonstrated competence* and are well equipped to move on to other challenging upper-division work. Advisor judgment is key.
7. **Community College and Summer Coursework:** Some professional schools do not accept community college credits, and some caution against pursuing the course prerequisites as summer courses. Refer to the AMCAS MSAR Reports' [Premedical Coursework Chart](#), the [Community College Coursework Information](#), and specific schools' websites for more information.
8. **Applying to Health Professions Schools:** Health professions schools engage in holistic admissions. This includes consideration of the following elements as they assess and review applicants:
 - **Academic metrics:** Strength of overall GPA; strength of science GPA; score on MCAT, DAT or other qualifying exam; [breadth, depth, and rigor](#) of coursework
 - **Involvement in health-related [clinical experiences](#),** including shadowing and direct patient care experience
 - **Demonstrated leadership and service experience**
 - **Clear motivation for pursuing this field, and not other healthcare roles**
 - **Familiarity with current issues in health care**
 - **Investment in and demonstration of proficiency in the [Core Competencies](#)**
9. **School-Specific Guidelines:** To explore course prerequisites of specific medical or dental schools, visit consult each school's catalog and/or the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#) (MSAR), [Choose DO Explorer](#), [ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools](#), or the [CASPA Program Directory](#).
 - For most advising situations, it is best to identify the traditional core requirements of most schools and to note that each school may have some additional course selections they require or prefer. We are happy to work with students throughout their process.

Finally, while we note the basics needed for medicine, dentistry, and physician assistant programs below, we also encourage you to visit our [website](#) for more information and resources:

Medicine

English (year)
 Math/Calculus (varies)
 Statistics (varies)
 Principles of Biology (year)
 General Chemistry (year)
 Organic Chemistry (year/varies)
 General Physics (year)
 Biochemistry (semester)
 Other advanced biology (varies)
 Behavioral/social sciences(varies)

Dental Medicine

English (year)
 Math/Calculus (varies)
 Principles of Biology (year)
 General Chemistry (year)
 Organic Chemistry (year)
 General Physics (year)
 Biochemistry (semester)
 Microbiology (varies)

Physician Assistant

English (year)
 Statistics (varies)
 Principles of Biology (year)
 General Chemistry (year)
 Organic Chemistry (semester)
 Anatomy & Physiology (year)
 Biochemistry (semester)
 Psychology (year)
 Genetics/Cell Biology/
 Microbiology (semester)

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any further questions!

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Learn more about our advisors [here](#).