

## Medical School FAQs

### Q: What should I major in?

A: Medical schools do not prefer one major over another, so major in whatever subject interests you. There is no general, pre-medical major offered at Texas A&M. Science majors (like Biology, Biochemistry, and Biomedical Science) are the most common because the prerequisite courses are included in the degree plan. A non-science major does not put you at a disadvantage, but you will have to work with your academic advisor to incorporate the prerequisite classes into your schedule.

### Q: Which classes should I complete prior to taking the MCAT?

A: It is highly recommended that you take prior to taking the MCAT:

- ❖ BIOL 111 & 112
- ❖ CHEM 101/111 & CHEM 102/112
- ❖ CHEM 227
- ❖ CHEM 228
- ❖ PHYS 201 & PHYS 202
- ❖ PSYC 107 or SOCI 205
- ❖ BICH 410

### Q: When should I take the MCAT?

A: MCAT scores are part of a complete application, and they are released about one month after taking the exam. Applications open May 1 and PSA recommends you submit by early June. Our office recommends you take your MCAT no later than May of the year you plan to apply. You **never** want to take the MCAT 'just for practice' because medical schools will see each MCAT score.

### Q: Should I accept AP credit?

A: It depends. Talk to your professional school AND academic advisor before accepting any AP credit. It is not recommended to accept AP credit for any **prerequisite** course. Non-science classes are generally less problematic, but you should still speak with your advisors before accepting the credit because once you accept AP credit, you cannot un-accept it.

### Q: I want to take a prerequisite course at a community college or junior college. Is that okay?

A: It is **not** recommended you take a prerequisite course at community college. Any non-science course is okay (history, political science, English, etc). Use caution when taking any science course at community college. The grade earned at a community college does not count on your TAMU transcript, but the grade earned will be calculated into your GPA when you apply to medical school.

Students commonly want to take PHYS 201 & PHYS 202 at community college. If this is the only prerequisite course you take away from TAMU and your science GPA is strong, this should be okay. It is beneficial to check in with our advisors before you finalize this decision.

### Q: What factors do medical school application committees consider other than my GPA?

A: The two biggest factors are GPA and MCAT score. The other aspects of the application are:

- **Medical experience**
- **Volunteerism**
  - Volunteering at a local hospital (St. Joseph's, the Med, Scott & White) or a clinic (Health for All, Brazos Prenatal Clinic)
  - OPSA has a list of volunteer opportunities for all professions we advise

- **Shadowing**
  - Following around a doctor/observing surgeries
  - This is a good way to build a relationship with a doctor that can possibly lead to a letter of recommendation.
  - Try to get several different experiences in shadowing: a hospital is different from a private practice; a cardiologist is different from a pediatrician. A wide range of experience shows that you are open to all aspects of medicine.
- **Community service** (not medically related)
  - Quality over quantity. Volunteering with one organization (ex: Boys& Girls club, soup kitchen, carpool for a period of several semesters looks better than a long list of one-day or one-time service projects. Try volunteering once a month with a local charity over the course of several semesters. A long-standing relationship looks good and the time commitment is not oppressive.
- **Leadership**
  - Look to hold an officer position in one of your organizations by the end of your junior year
  - You don't need to be president of the pre-med society. You can be secretary of the Ballroom Dancing club. Any position where you are in charge of and responsible for other people.
- **Letters of recommendation**
  - Solid, positive evaluations from the professors and doctors you choose to write your letters can speak volumes to your strength as an applicant. Letters of rec are incredibly important, so be sure to take the time to build relationships with your professors so that you feel comfortable asking them for a letter.

**Q: How do I get shadowing hours?**

A: One of the best ways to get shadowing hours is in your hometown. Many student's shadow their friend's parents or their old pediatricians, etc. You can do this over winter break, summer break, or spring break – any time you are at home. In order to get shadowing hours – you have to start asking people!

Shadowing opportunities are limited in the B/CS area due to the large amount of pre-health students. PSA does offer a shadow program through ECHO. Applications open at the beginning of each semester and are available to anyone who is a member of one of the organizations under ECHO.

**Q: Do all pre-reqs have to be completed before applying to med school?**

A: No, but the science pre-reqs (along with PSYC and SOCI) are on the MCAT.

**Q: Do U.S. medical schools ever accept international students?**

A: The short answer is yes, but it's not easy. In 2018, 49 schools indicated in the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#) they accept international students. International students interested in applying to a specific program, should research that institution's specific admission requirements and whether or not they accept applications from international students.