

Brandeis University: Pre-Health Advising

<https://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/health/>

Pre-Health Team

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STAY INFORMED: Subscribe to the Pre-Health listserv at <https://lists.brandeis.edu/www/subscribe/premeds>

MEET WITH US:

Appointments, please call 781-736-3470 or schedule online at phabrandeis.youcanbook.me

Quick Questions Drop-In Appointments

Available Monday-Friday 3-4pm

REQUIRED COURSE WORK FOR PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS:

Most Fields (Medical, Dental, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Podiatry, Optometry):

2 semesters General Chemistry with Lab (Chem 11a/11b and Chem 18a/b)

2 semesters Organic Chemistry with Lab (Chem 25a/25b and Chem 29a/29b)

2 semesters of Biology with Lab (Bio 14a, Bio 15b, Bio 18a, Bio 18b)

2 semesters of Physics with Lab (Physics 10a/10b and Physics 18a/18b)

1 semester of Biochemistry (BCHM 88b or BCHM 100a)

1 semester of Statistics (Math 8a – Intro Stats, Bio 51a – BioStats, or Psych 51a – PsychStats)

2 semesters of “English” or writing (UWS and a humanities or social science writing intensive course are often accepted; the writing intensive Biology Lab and writing intensive courses in a language other than English are not.)

*1 semester of Calculus – for optometry, pharmacy, and some medical schools. (Some medical schools require 2 semesters of math.)

Allied Health Fields (Nursing, Physician Assistant, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy):

Requirements vary widely. Other courses may include:

1 semester of Human Anatomy with lab (not offered at Brandeis)

1 semester of Human Physiology with lab (Bio 42a/42b)

1 semester of Microbiology with lab (Bio 132a; Bio 159a may count towards lab requirement at some programs)

1 semester of Introductory Psychology (Psyc 10a)

1 semester of Abnormal Psychology (Psyc 32a)

1 semester of Developmental Psychology (Psyc 33a)

1 semester of Medical Terminology (not offered at Brandeis)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC FIELDS:

- **Medical School:** 1 semester of Intro Psychology and 1 semester of Intro Sociology
- **Veterinary School:** Biology 16a (Evolution and Ecology); some vet schools require animal nutrition

PRE-HEALTH FAQS

1. Q: I have AP credit. Can I use that for medical/dental school?

A: It depends, as schools vary in their AP policies. Some schools will accept them, some will only accept them for certain classes (statistics, physics), and some won't accept them at all. A good rule of thumb is that if Brandeis gave you credit for a specific course (like calculus), then schools will honor that. If you are using AP credit for a core science prerequisite, you should plan on taking more intermediate/advanced coursework in the same discipline. (For example, if you place out of chemistry, you should plan on taking an additional chemistry class beyond what's already required.)

2. Q: Can I take summer courses? Can I take courses at another institution?

A: Yes, summer courses are fine. When you apply, you will need to get a transcript from everywhere you've taken courses, and these courses will factor into a total undergraduate GPA. You can take courses at another institution with the following caveats:

- Don't split sequences. For example, don't take first semester organic chemistry back home and second semester at Brandeis. There will inevitably be gaps or overlaps in the material.
- Schools strongly prefer you to take coursework at a 4-year institution.

3. Q: I'm thinking of dropping a course after the deadline. Does that "look bad"?

A: No, as long as there is not a developed pattern of doing so; there will be opportunities during the application process to explain your decision.

4. Q: I didn't do as well my first semester/first year as I wanted. Should I give up on my dream?

A: No! Many students have their worst semester during their first year. If you show consistent improvement going forward, it will assuage concerns about your ability to handle coursework in the professional program.

5. Q: Is calculus required?

A: The majority of medical and dental schools do not require calculus, but some require 2 semesters of math. Calculus can be helpful for Physics, especially if you didn't have physics in high school. Calculus is required for pharmacy and optometry. *Note: The University of Massachusetts Medical School requires 1 semester of calculus.*

6. Q: I want to gain "hands on" experience, so I'm thinking of going on a short term medical missions trip with an on campus or off campus group. Is this a good option?

A: Admissions committees are very wary of these sorts of trips, because many times students do things they aren't legally or ethically able to do in the U.S. Committees have told us that this can actually hurt rather than help your application. If you want to gain clinical experience, they would rather have you gain that experience in the U.S., since you'll be primarily practicing here. If your goal is just to spend time abroad, meet with Study Abroad to discuss your options. It's definitely possible to fit it in!

7. Q: I heard it's hard to get into medical school as an international student. Is that true?

A: Yes. Non-US citizens/Non-US permanent residents face significant challenges. Not all medical schools accept international students and those that do generally do not admit very many. In the 2015-2016 cycle, 15% of international students were admitted compared to 43% of US citizens/permanent residents nationally.) Other health professions are more accessible, such as pharmacy and dentistry.

8. Q: Does taking a glide year look bad?

A: No. 65-70% of Brandeis applicants take a glide year before starting their programs. This coincides with the national trend as well. The average age of a first year medical student is 24. You're always more competitive if you take a glide year, because you have more time to gain experience.