

UIS Career Development Center

Medical School Timeline

This timeline serves as a general guideline for ways to prepare for graduate and/or professional school during your undergraduate career. Depending on each person's unique academic and career goals, the order and information of the steps given may vary. For a more comprehensive plan of preparing for graduate and/or professional school, consult a career counselor at the UIS Career Development Center.

First Year

- ◆ Visit the Career Development Center to determine whether the medical field is right for you and what areas you may want to pursue.
- ◆ Start taking general requirements and prerequisites:
 - Meet with an academic advisor and faculty members to arrange a class schedule that will prepare you for higher level classes and graduate school.
- ◆ Start thinking about an undergraduate major:
 - Talk to a Career Counselor at the UIS Career Development Center about the different options to meet your career goals, or just to figure out your career goals!
 - Don't rule out majors other than biology or chemistry, as they can be supplemented with elective coursework, but can be more challenging to accomplish.
- ◆ Consult other Pre Med students for information on the program.
 - What classes do they recommend taking?
 - Which professors were the most useful and interesting?
 - Which medical schools are the best?
 - What information do they know about the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)?
 - What they wish someone would have told them. . .
- ◆ Begin volunteering and/or looking for a part-time job or internship where you can learn valuable skills to benefit your psychology profession. Getting a better sense of the field and networking to build new relationships is essential to a successful career!
 - This will allow you to get your foot in the door with different organizations.
 - Maintain a strong professional relationship with people who could write you recommendation letters and serve as references.
 - Working with professionals in this field will allow you to learn some of their personal experiences in the field. They can also inform you on grad school options and answer questions that you may have.
 - Even if you do not get a job or opportunity you apply for, keep in contact with the people. You never know when something may arise!
 - Conduct informational interviews with professionals in the field to gain their insight and advice on the psychology field!
 - Throughout your undergraduate career, it is important to network not only with others in your classes, but professors and other professionals in the field. Join student clubs and community organizations whenever you can to gain valuable connections and experience! Also, consider memberships to organizations as most have student discounts!
- ◆ Many "summer school" camp programs exist specifically for young individuals who want to enter the medical field. Check with local medical organizations, hospitals, companies and universities, as well as a career counselor, for more information.

Second Year

- ◆ Continue taking prerequisites and general elective classes. Talk with your academic adviser and career counselor frequently to ensure that you are continuing an appropriate path. If you become overwhelmed, taking summer classes is an excellent way to spread out your workload.
- ◆ Continue your preparation for the MCAT. Typically, it is taken around April, May, or June of your third year. This is when you should begin more serious considerations for the MCAT. There are a multitude of practice and mock exams available for the MCAT. Consult your career counselor about different preparation opportunities.
- ◆ Choose on an undergraduate major:
 - Complete the appropriate paperwork through Records and Registration.
 - In a professional manner, follow-up to make sure the paperwork was processed.
- ◆ Research medical schools:
 - Which degree do you need? Is it offered there?
 - What location? What's the job market like in that location?
 - Evaluate the size of the school.
 - Research tuition cost.
- ◆ Find a pre-medical advisor to guide you along the process of preparing for medical school and a medical career.
 - Talk to faculty and academic advisors, professors in and outside of your department, Upperclassmen, and the Career Development Center.
- ◆ With your career counselor, consider what areas of medicine you may want to pursue (i.e. research, clinical, geriatrics, pediatrics, infectious disease, neurology, etc.)
- ◆ Start paying attention to different issues in your field, such as Public Health issues, cancer, AIDS, ethics, patient confidentiality, and legal issues.

Third Year

- ◆ Continue researching schools and programs:
 - Narrow down your choices and discuss with friends, family, and your Career Counselor.
 - Call, write, or email schools to request catalogs and other information.
- ◆ Start visiting schools to get a feel for the campus, students, and classes.
- ◆ Determine what area(s) of medicine you want to pursue (i.e. research, clinical, geriatrics, pediatrics, infectious disease, neurology, etc.).
 - Consider and decide on a specific program with your career counselor and others.
 - Seek out certifications that you can receive to further enhance your resume and portfolio.
- ◆ Find out the requirements of the schools and programs you are considering:
 - MCAT scores.
 - Other Tests? Dates?.
 - Application Deadlines.
 - Early Decision.
 - Transcript and course requirements/prerequisites.
- ◆ Start preparing for the MCAT:
 - Get your hands on some prep materials and sign up for a preparation course.
 - Start studying in your free time!
- ◆ Register for the MCAT:
 - Take it as early as possible to allow time to retake it, if necessary!
 - Schedule your test 60-90 days prior to taking it, allowing time to prepare.
 - Find testing locations near you.
 - Find out how/where you'll receive your scores.
 - Consider the scheduling, rescheduling, and other costs.

- ◆ Because the interview for medical school can be very stressful and intense, be sure to schedule mock interviews with the Career Development Center very early to enhance and prepare your interviewing skills!

Summer after Third Year

- ◆ Think about those applications!
 - Start gathering information needed for your applications.
 - Make sure you get organized so that you complete all applications on time!
 - A chart of all the schools and information usually works well in addition to check lists.
- ◆ If you are waiting to take the entrance exams in the beginning of your senior year use the summer to prepare!
- ◆ Continue with your summer internships, research, and jobs!! Not only will you learn beneficial information, gain experiences, and continue networking, but you also can save money for those expensive applications and tests!

Fourth Year

First Semester:

- ◆ Meet with your advisor to make sure that you are on the right track to graduation and have fulfilled all necessary requirements for all certifications.
- ◆ If you have not already done so take the GMAT, or other exam depending on your career path.
- ◆ Contact faculty members and other professionals to ask if they are willing to write recommendations.
- ◆ Begin working on your vitae or resume and stop by the Career Development Center to have it critiqued!
- ◆ Begin working on a draft of your personal statement of academic and professional goals. Need help? Come to the Career Development Center and get one-on-one advice! Also, share your personal statement with professors to get their input.
- ◆ Offer recommendation forms to the faculty members; remember to include the addressed and stamped envelopes as well, always following the exact instructions of the university you are applying to.

Second Semester:

- ◆ Complete all applications with January deadlines in December and request for transcripts to be sent out.
- ◆ From January to April, contact the department you applied to and be sure they have received all paperwork and test scores.
- ◆ Schedule and prepare for interviews. Come to the Career Development Center and do a mock interview. There are numerous resources available to take advantage of!
- ◆ Once you have heard from schools and evaluated all options, notify the school you will be attending, and let other schools know that you are declining your acceptance.

Resources

Academic Prep for Med School

<http://www.knox.edu/premedpreparation.xml>

American Medical Association: Medical School

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/12851.html>

AspiringDocs

<http://www.aspiringdocs.org>

Association of American Medical Colleges: Medical School

<http://www.aamc.org/medicalschools.htm>

Liason Committee on Medical Education, Directory of Accredited Medical Education Programs

<http://www.lcme.org/directry.htm>

MCAT Website

<http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/>

Medical News Today

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/>

National Medical Association

<http://www.nmanet.org/>

Path to Med School

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/articles/majors/collegePathMed.asp>

Pre Med Preparation Timeline

<http://www.medicalhelpnet.com/content/view/30/48/>

Preparing for Medical School

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2371.html>

Student Doctor Network

<http://www.studentdoctor.net/>

WebMD

<http://www.webmd.com>