



Pre-Med Essentials Checklist for Every Year of College

You might have taken some high school courses to prepare for a future career in medicine, but now it's time for the big leagues - the ever-stressful pre-medical student life at college.

With so many requirements to check off your list before medical school, you need to map out the next four years right from the start.

So, how do you stay on the right track for your future career as a doctor and take appropriate advantage of your pre-med years? Use the following checklist to guide you through college.

FRESHMAN YEAR



Meet with your pre-med or academic advisor to figure out which courses you'll need to complete throughout college. Most medical schools require one year of biology with lab, one year of general chemistry with lab, one year of organic chemistry with lab, one year of physics with lab, and one semester of biochemistry.

Create an academic plan on your computer or planner to remind yourself of what prerequisites you need to take.

Join clubs that are relevant to medicine and STEM, such as Pre-Health Society, Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (MAPS), Biochemistry Club, etc.

Take the time for other hobbies as well - admissions officers appreciate students who have other passions besides medicine. Participate in activities and projects that distinguish you from other applicants, whether it be marathon running or a capella. You will have 15 slots in the AMCAS activities list to talk about your extracurriculars. Start thinking early about how you will fill those spaces!

Apply for lab or clinical research positions with a biology, chemistry, or neuroscience

Think about why you want to be a doctor. Let these motivations guide the extracurriculars that you pursue.

Shadow a doctor - it's important that you get as much patient exposure as possible and starting early is key.

SOPHOMORE YEAR



Continue taking pre-med courses and perform well in them! Keep track of your cumulative, major, and science GPAs.

Narrow down your extracurriculars to those that excite you most. Start applying for leadership positions.

Volunteer with a medical-related organization.

Familiarize yourself with the medical school application timeline and components.

If you plan to apply during your junior year of college: start studying for the MCAT.

Find a summer internship that grants you clinical exposure.

JUNIOR YEAR



If you're applying to attend medical school straight out of college: talk to professors you're close to about recommendation letters. Think about how you want to divide your letters between professors and supervisors. If applicable, talk to your pre-med advisor about coordinating a committee letter.

Think about which areas your application might need improvement - is your GPA low? Do you need more extracurriculars?

Revisit your courses plan and make sure you're meeting all the requirements for medical school.

Continue to conduct research, in a medicine-related track if possible.

If you feel like the extracurriculars at your college don't facilitate your interests, start your own club or organization.

Start thinking about whether you want to take a gap year before medical school: consider your work experience, grades, and whether you're mentally prepared. You will need to apply the upcoming June, so make sure you have everything you'd need!

If you don't plan on taking a gap year, register for and take the MCAT!

SENIOR YEAR



If you're taking a gap year, start looking for jobs early senior year - use your connections to STEM professors and your internship supervisors.

If you haven't applied yet: look through your courses, grades, and extracurriculars and plan out when you intend to apply to medical school.

Register for the MCAT and take the test.

Start making a list of medical schools you want to apply to.

Keeping in mind when you're going to apply, begin drafting your personal statement and activities list, and check in with your recommenders to make sure they are on track.

If your grades aren't up to the mark, start researching additional science classes you can take through a postbac program.

If you're applying the upcoming June, get all your application materials ready! It's go time!

A group of medical professionals in white coats and scrubs, standing together.

As you can tell, a lot of your to-do list depends on whether or not you decide to take a gap year before medical school. Use your judgment as well as our [Medical School Application Timeline](#) to further plan the year before your application.

It's a very cutthroat process, and starting from your freshman year is definitely a good idea. Best of luck!