

# Preparing for Professional School

Dental School

Medical School

Pharmacy School

Optometry School

Veterinary Medicine School

## SWENSON COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

**Driven to Discover™**

### Professional School Admissions Factors

Professional schools base admissions decisions on many factors. Each school has a unique set of criteria, but they all seek students who demonstrate excellent academic preparation, intellectual potential, and personal attributes.

In general, professional schools look for:

1. Evidence of the intellectual and personal credentials that predict success in the study and practice of medicine or professional career
2. Aptitude in the biological and physical sciences during their undergraduate years, and also in the humanities and social sciences
3. Activities consistent through your university career
4. An understanding of a life and career in the chosen profession

Admissions Committees also consider:

1. **Accredited Institution:** Applicants must be or have previously been in attendance at an institution on the database list titled "Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs," UMD is such an Institution.
2. **Standardized Testing:** Scores from the specific Professional School exam required.
3. **Course work:** Required pre-requisite course work and college transcript with strong GPA.
4. **Performance in a personal Interview, letters of recommendation, personal statements and volunteer service.**

### Explore Resources: Professional Associations

**Medical Schools** – American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) –

[www.aamc.org/medicalschoools.htm](http://www.aamc.org/medicalschoools.htm)

**Pharmacy Schools** – American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) – [www.aacp.org](http://www.aacp.org)

**Dental Schools** – American Dental Education Association (ADEA) – [www.adea.org/dental\\_education\\_pathways](http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways)

**Optometry Schools** – Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) – [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)

**Veterinary Schools** – Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) – [www.aavmc.org/](http://www.aavmc.org/)

### Time Line: Professional School Admissions

#### Freshman Year/ Sophomore Year

Take a variety of courses including professional school prerequisites. **Investigate** majors and careers, understand degree requirements for graduation and declare your major. **Explore** professional fields and careers through job shadowing, informational interviewing, volunteering and/or working in the field and participate in campus pre-professional clubs. **Develop** disciplined study skills for strong academic excellence. Familiarize yourself with the professional school application process.

#### Junior Year/Senior Year

**Begin review** for the admissions test of the your chosen professional school; **research** schools to which you will apply (use resources on this handout). Take admissions test in spring or summer of junior year and begin application process in summer.

**Write** application essay or personal statement; arrange for recommendations; complete and submit application by fall deadline.

**Complete** undergraduate degree requirements and **participate** in undergraduate research.

**Wait for offers** to interview; be patient! Replies will come starting in late fall, depending upon the professional school and the application deadlines.

### Professional Schools attended by Recent UMD graduates: Medical School

UM Duluth, Mayo Medical School,  
Medical School UM Minneapolis,  
University of Alabama,  
University of North Dakota,  
St. Catherine University Physical  
Northwestern Chiropractic School,  
Feinberg School of Medicine,  
Veterinary School Virginia Tech,  
Physician Assistant School University of



UM Duluth, Mayo Medical School,  
Pennsylvania State, St. Louis University,  
Stanford University, Johns Hopkins,  
University of South Dakota,  
Therapy, University of Vermont,  
Physical Therapy Northwestern University  
College of Veterinary Medicine UMTC,  
Illinois College of Optometry,  
Wisconsin, Wake Forest University

## Academic Preparation: Professional School Course Requisites

Professional schools usually require a set of prerequisite courses for admission. The prerequisite course requirements vary from profession to profession and school to school, but most professional schools of medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, optometry, and dentistry **require or recommend** a combination of the following courses:

Professional school prerequisite	Possible courses at UMD
One year of Biology	General Biology I and II
One year of General Chemistry	General Chemistry I and II
One year of Organic Chemistry	Organic Chemistry I with lab Organic Chemistry II with lab
One year of Physics	Intro to Physics I and II <i>or</i> General Physics I and II
College level Math and Statistics	Pre Calculus or Calculus I Statistical Methods
One year of English	College Writing, Advanced Writing or English courses
Humanities and Social Sciences	Courses from psychology, sociology, ethics, philosophy, arts, cultural studies, history, etc.
Often recommended courses depending upon professional school	Genetics, Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology, Sculpture, Studio Art, Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology

These courses also help students prepare for the professional exams – MCAT, PCAT, OAT, DAT, or GRE – required for admission to most professional schools. Because the exact course prerequisites vary from school to school *students should consult the websites of their schools of interest to ensure they are taking the appropriate courses.*

## Academic Preparation: Choosing Your Major

Preparation for medical, pharmacy, dental, optometry, or veterinary medicine school begins with your undergraduate education. Terms such as Pre Med or Pre Dental are only descriptive labels. Student may choose a B.S. or B.A. in any area of study and also complete the prerequisite courses required for professional school.

*(A study at Harvard Medical School has shown that students are successful in their medical studies regardless of undergraduate concentration, providing that they have had adequate science preparation. Students are urged to strive for a balanced and liberal education rather than specialized training. No preference is given to applicants who have majored in the sciences over those who have majored in the humanities.)*

At UMD the Swenson College of Science and Engineering majors of biology, cell and molecular biology, and biochemistry and molecular biology incorporate many professional school course requisites. Students choose these majors to meet pre-professional goals, but also because they enjoy sciences and have shown strength in these subjects.

**Do you want to work in the health professions but are not sure professional school is for you? Explore these resources:**

Careers in Medicine: <https://www.aamc.org/cim/349634/newcim.html>  
<http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

## Admissions Exams for Professional School

Most Professional Schools use entrance or admissions exams to help demonstrate an applicant's academic knowledge.

Exam preparation is imperative. Most students need to spend 10-20 hours per week over several months studying for their admissions exams.



**For specific information on Professional School entrance exams, visit the following links:**

[MCAT \(Medical Admissions Test\)](#)

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

[DAT \(Dental Admissions Test\)](#)

<http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>

[PCAT \(Pharmacy College Admissions Test\)](#)

<http://www.aacp.org/resources/student/pharmacyforyou/admissions/Pages/PCAT.aspx>

[\(Veterinary College Admissions Test\)](#)

VCAT is no longer administered, and is not required by any Veterinary School. AS OF February 26, 2013. Go to AAVMC to learn which test is required for specific schools:

<http://www.aavmc.org/testdeadlines.aspx>

[OAT \(Optometry Admissions Test\)](#)

<http://www.opted.org/about-optometric-education/professional-o-d-programs/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-optometry-admission-test-oat/>

[GRE \(Graduate Record Examination\)](#)

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