

# PRE-MEDICAL SCIENCES

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**Mark A. Pershouse (Director and Associate Professor)**

Health care continues to be one of the most rapidly expanding areas of our society. Careers in the health professions have expanded, both in numbers and in the variety of opportunities. The rewards of a career in health care include excellent salaries, stability of employment, geographic mobility, and the opportunity to help other people. The Pre-Medical Sciences Program is an advising program that helps students become well-informed, well-prepared applicants to programs in allopathic medicine, osteopathic medicine, chiropractic medicine, dentistry, naturopathic medicine, optometry, physician assistant studies, podiatry and veterinary medicine.

Pre-Medical Sciences is not a major at the University of Montana. The Pre-Medical coursework will help students to gain admission to a professional school or program while completing a degree in a field of study. Students may select any major as a field of study, but specific pre-professional courses must be completed. When selecting a major, remember that a science major is not required for admissions into professional schools. It is more important to perform well in your chosen major. Professional schools are most concerned with the overall quality, scope and difficulty of undergraduate work rather than the major.

Pre-professional courses are designed to provide a strong foundation in the sciences, highly developed communication skills, and a solid background in the social sciences and humanities. Curriculum guides outlining minimal course requirements established by professional schools are available from the Pre-medical Sciences office and from the Pre-Medical Sciences website (<http://umt.edu/premed>). Because many majors within the sciences, social sciences and humanities can provide strong preparation for medical school, the Pre-Medical Sciences Advising Program gives students the opportunity to interact with advisors from diverse disciplines in addition to their advisor for their major.

The minimal requirements for professional school should be completed by the end of the third year of study or prior to taking the admission test required by professional schools. Since specific subject requirements vary among institutions, students should discuss their academic plans with their Pre-Medical Sciences advisor.

Admission to a professional school is very competitive. Students must maintain a high grade-point average in college if they expect to be admitted. All required courses must be taken for letter grades. In addition, the applicant must score well on the appropriate professional admissions test. These tests are designed to measure basic academic ability in the natural sciences, reading ability and problem solving skills. These examinations are usually taken during the third year of study.

Besides academic accomplishments and admission exam scores, acceptance by a professional school is also dependent upon letters of recommendation, volunteer experience, job shadowing, and personal interviews conducted by the professional school. It is important that students consult with a Pre-Medical Sciences advisor and with an academic advisor in their major each year to make sure that they can satisfy the necessary requirements for graduation within the time available. The Pre-Medical Sciences Director will also discuss procedures, advise and assist the student during the process of applying to a professional school.

## High School Preparation

High school students contemplating a career in the health professions should have three to four years of mathematics, courses in chemistry and physics and a solid background in literature and social science.