

**What do I need to get into
medical school?**

Core requirements at Most U. S. Medical Schools

- Biology (with lab) 2 semesters
- General Chemistry (with lab) 2 semesters
- Organic Chemistry (with lab) 2 semesters
- General Physics (with lab) 2 semesters
- College Mathematics 2 semesters
- English 2 semesters
- Many medical schools now require or strongly recommend additional courses such as cell biology, biochemistry, genetics, or physiology. Check the web sites for schools you are interested in applying to each year. You can purchase a book on medical school admission requirements from the MCAT web site, but it will be out of date the next year.

What else do I need?

- Competitive GPA (varies with school, average GPA for entering students at VCU school of medicine was 3.5 in 2005)
- Competitive MCAT score (varies with school, average MCAT for entering students at VCU school of medicine was 28 [VR=9.0, PS=9.4, BS=9.8, Writing Sample=M] in 2005)
- Medically relevant experience (EMT, work in medical office or ER, shadow physician)
- Campus and community involvement, ideally leadership

How do I perform better on the MCAT?

- Complete all of the required courses for medical school by the end of your junior year and plan to take the MCAT the spring of your junior year
- Start studying for the MCAT with your first undergraduate science courses (learn for retention rather than cramming for tests)
- Take a Kaplan or Princeton Review course, especially if your SAT score was below 1300
- Treat MCAT preparation as one of your courses during the spring semester of your junior year

What is medically relevant experience?

- Medical schools apparently place the highest value on experience that involves patient contact. Shadowing a physician is better than nothing, but is apparently viewed as less valuable than patient contact.
- Earning an EMT certification and running with a rescue squad counts as both experience and as community involvement, but carries the danger that it may eat up so much time that your grades fall. Many emergency rooms hire EMTs, so you can get paid along with the experience.

What are my odds of being accepted, and what should I do if I'm not accepted?

- Your best odds are as a resident applying to a state school. For example, VCU medical school accepted 104 out of 809 Virginia applicants in 2005.
- Your worst odds are as an out-of-state applicant to a state school. For example, VCU medical school accepted just 80 out of 4068 non-resident applicants in 2005.
- Have a “plan B” since fully qualified applicants are rejected for lack of space. Plan to strengthen your credentials if you aren't accepted on the first try.

Selected Additional Resources

- Medical school web sites
 - [VCU](#)
 - [UVa](#)
 - [EVMS](#)
- [MCAT web site](#)
- [AMCAS web site](#)