

This is a quick guide meant for advising first-year students on the pre-medical course requirements.

Please note: **our office advises students interested in the full range of careers in health, not just medicine**. Students and faculty with questions should contact a member of the Health Professions Advising team.

Chemistry

- 1 year of general chemistry with lab
CHEM 151/155 and CHEM 161/165
- 1 year of organic chemistry with lab
CHEM 221 and CHEM 231
- Biochemistry with or without lab
CHEM 331 or CHEM 330, respectively

Biology

- 1 year of biology with lab
BIOL 181 and BIOL 191

Physics

- 1 year of physics with lab
PHYS 116/123 and PHYS 117/124

Mathematics and Statistics

- 1 semester of calculus
*MATH 105 and 106, or
MATH 111, or
placement out of MATH 111**
- 1 semester of statistics
STAT 111/135 or PSYC 122

*Taking or placing out of MATH 111 meets the math requirement – no additional math course is required

English

- 1 year of English department courses, or courses in another department where the focus is reading and writing about **literature** in the English language

we strongly urge students to take courses **beyond their First-Year Seminar to meet this requirement*

Some Key Considerations

There is **no one “correct” academic schedule** nor is there a major that is expected or “looks better” for medical schools. **You DO NOT have to major in STEM if you don’t want to.**

There is a lot of flexibility and openness in how and when a student completes the pre-medical courses, including by taking some courses after graduating from Amherst.

Exploration of the open curriculum is a vitally important part of a student’s preparation for medical school.

It is essential that students proceed through the pre-med coursework at **the pace that is right for them** and not simply as fast as possible.

It is far more important that students do as well as possible in the pre-med courses than that they complete them quickly.

Some students may feel ready to double up on laboratory science courses in their first semester or first year, but it is not required or even, for most students, recommended. You can go at your own pace and do so when you feel ready.

Please note that behavioral/social science courses like psychology are **NOT** requirements like the courses listed to the left are.



This is an “at a glance” guide to the classes that medical schools generally require.

More detail is provided in the Health Professions Office’s Pre-Health Guide.

Scan the QR code here to learn more.

Additional Information for New Students

- Dean Aronson and Becca Tishler lead **pre-health small group sessions** for first year and new transfer students through September and the first week of October. These sessions will provide an orientation to pre-health advising and resources. Attendance at one of these small group sessions is **mandatory** for scheduling a future one-on-one appointment with Dean Aronson and/or Becca.
Please write to Becca if you have not already been contacted about signing up for a session.
- Make sure to read our office's **Pre-Health Guide Part I** at some point soon. It is an important source of information and will answer many questions you may have about scheduling courses, getting clinical experience, and eventually applying to health professions schools.
- The **pre-health community** at Amherst is exactly that—not just pre-med, but welcoming of the whole community of students interested in pursuing any health profession. **There are many other careers in health beyond becoming a physician**; it is essential to learn about them as **they may be a better fit for you** and your goals.
- It is normal and expected for you to **be uncertain** about your interest in a career in health/medicine—especially in your first year at Amherst, but also throughout your undergraduate education. Again, everyone goes at their own pace, and there is absolutely no expectation that students will be committed at any given time, much less upon first starting in college.
- Give your best effort to your courses, and try to find some clubs or groups on campus that interest you, but also take time to prioritize developing friendships, meeting new people, and learning more about yourself. Try and **resist the pressure to “be productive” all the time**. The periods where it feels like we are “doing nothing” are usually the most meaningful for our growth and development as people. It cannot be easily quantified and yet it is essential for those interested in careers in health.
- Some students are interested in getting an internship after their first summer at Amherst, but it is not required nor expected. You will not be behind in your journey to medicine if you spend the summer after your first year at Amherst being with family, working at the job you had in high school, etc. If you do want to find an **internship**, the Loeb Center at Amherst has a number of workshops and events designed to help you prepare for an internship—take advantage of them!
- The overwhelming majority of applicants to medical school **DO NOT** apply to matriculate straight into medical school after graduating. Among Amherst applicants matriculating in medical school in fall 2027, there is not a single applicant matriculating immediately after graduating from Amherst. In fall 2026, there was only 1.

The time they spend instead is referred to as “**gap years**”—a phrase we wish were different, as “gap” implies something empty or disrupted, which could not be further from the truth! This can be an incredibly meaningful and rich time, and people make use of these post-grad years in all sorts of valuable ways.

You will not be at a disadvantage in the admissions process if you take this time—to the contrary, medical schools tell us over and over how much they appreciate applicants who have taken this additional time to grow as people and future medical professionals. This bears out in the average age of first-year medical students in the US right now, which is between 24-25.

Health Professions Advising team

Dean Richard Aronson raaronson69@amherst.edu

Professor Will Loinaz waloinaz@amherst.edu

Becca Tishler rtishler@amherst.edu

While there is no rush to be certain or committed, it is essential that students interested in careers in health/medicine connect with someone in the Health Professions Advising office at some point, ideally early on in their time at Amherst.