

Considering a Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program

What is a postbaccalaureate premedical program?

The term “postbaccalaureate” describes programs that begin after an undergraduate degree and are designed specifically to support the transition from an undergraduate to a professional school, such as a medical school, as well as enhance an applicant’s competitiveness for admission. There are several types of programs available designed to address a particular need or deficiency, such as academic record enhancement, career change, MCAT® exam prep, as well as programs for underrepresented or disadvantaged students.

Will a postbaccalaureate program improve my chances of getting into medical school?

It depends on the strength of the program, whether the program has a linkage agreement with a medical school, and most important, how successfully you complete the program. If you do well, you’ll demonstrate successful completion of premedical requirements, as well as a continued commitment to your goal of a career in medicine. If you have the opportunity, take upper-level course work to show that you can handle advanced material. According to Grace M. Hershman, director of Postbaccalaureate Premedical Programs at Temple University, “Competition for admission to medical school is intense, so performing extremely well in an intense premedical postbaccalaureate program will demonstrate to medical school admissions committees that you are able to sustain a high-level of academic achievement.”

How do I find the program that’s best for me?

It’s a good idea to talk to your pre-health advisor or the admissions dean at the medical schools you’re interested in about whether a postbaccalaureate program would enhance your application. If you have a specific weakness, look for a program that specifically addresses it. There are programs available to enhance the various types of deficiencies many applicants face. You can search by program type in the AAMC’s free Postbaccalaureate Premedical Programs database at <https://services.aamc.org/postbac/>.

What are the financial considerations involved with this type of program?

Postbaccalaureate programs can be expensive and may require you to finance some or all of the tuition through loans. If you continue directly from the program to medical school and residency, be sure to remember that interest from these loans will continue to accrue throughout your education and residency and result in substantial education debt. Speak to the financial aid officer at your school or the institution you plan to attend to learn the full financial implications involved.

How long does it take to complete a program?

There are several different types of programs. Most range from one to three years depending on the type of degree awarded at the end of the program.

What degree will I get after I complete the program?

Degrees awarded vary from program to program. Some programs offer a certificate of completion while others offer a master’s degree. There are advantages to seeking programs that lead to a master’s degree, especially if you decide ultimately not to pursue medical school. The AAMC’s Postbaccalaureate Premedical Programs database reports on degree information for each program listed.

What are “affiliations” or “linkage agreements?”

When researching programs in the AAMC’s Postbaccalaureate Premedical Programs database, the “affiliations” row describes any health professions program or medical school that has a relationship with a postbaccalaureate program. Some profiles may mention a linkage agreement with an institution. In this case, there may be an agreement for conditional acceptance into a medical school based on the level of performance in the program.

MORE INFORMATION

FIRST fact sheet on postbaccalaureate programs:

https://www.aamc.org/services/first/first_factsheets/112310/postbacprograms.html

What it’s Like to Do a Postbaccalaureate Program:

<https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/experience/358536/postbaccprogram.html>