



What to do in university to prepare for med school

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Preparing for med school is a long process. If you know it's what you want before you even get to university, good for you! You have four full years to lay some solid groundwork and prepare for your eventual application. Here is a (non-exhaustive) guide to some things to think about in each year of your undergraduate education to set yourself up for medical school further down the road.



Medical Mentor Community

FRESHMAN YEAR

PICK APPROPRIATE SCIENCE COURSES

Freshman year can be pretty overwhelming, there's so much new activity and responsibility. Making sure you're set up from a coursework standpoint goes a long way. Many medical schools will have prerequisite courses (some university level English, organic chemistry, certain number of credits of biology, etc) so getting a good balance of science is important right off the bat. Lots of these courses are tough so you don't have to take them all at once, but you probably want to take some courses in the disciplines that get tested on the MCAT before you're finished second year.

FIND A MENTOR OR RESEARCH INTEREST

This might seem early but developing a relationship with one of your professors who seems interesting or who has work that you might find exciting will be helpful. This way, when you ask for a recommendation letter in later years, the prof will know you on a personal and professional level and can write that outstanding letter that will set you apart! Bonus – you might find an area of research that you're interested in.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

FIND A VOLUNTEERING CAUSE THAT YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT

It's ok if you don't know exactly what you're interested in but volunteering with various causes is a great way to figure it out! Charitable organizations and social programs are almost ALWAYS looking for people with positive energy to help out. It's a great way to meet like-minded people and find an area where you want to make a difference. Med school admissions staff love to see continued dedication to a specific cause, even if it isn't necessarily a medically related organization. Get in there and get familiar with the work they're doing and have fun while making a positive change!

MAINTAIN PERSONAL INTERESTS

This is a big one! You should never feel like you're totally sacrificing the things you want to do in favour of your volunteering/research/ community involvement. Merge them together! If you love painting and board games, try to infuse an aspect of that into your volunteering! If you can't get enough sports, look for research that involves athletes or sports medicine or see if coaching junior teams might interest you. Whatever it is that you like to do, keep doing it! It's good for your mental health, and it's often possible to mix those interests in with activities and commitments that will help with your med school application!



JUNIOR YEAR

WRITE THE MCAT

Junior year is the perfect time to write the MCAT, for a couple of reasons. The first is that all your science coursework (see our first bullet point) has just recently finished so it's fresh in your mind. The second is that this gives you enough time to see your scores and determine if you need to take another crack at it over the summer between Junior and Senior year.

ASK FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

This is the time that all those relationships you've been building over the first 2-3 years will pay off! Hopefully your profs or mentors will write glowing reviews about you and you can use those letters to showcase how great you are to medical schools.

SENIOR YEAR

APPLY!

You should research application deadlines for all the schools you want to apply to over the summer between third and fourth year. Most schools have application deadlines sometime around October, so you'll want to be sure that you get all your paperwork in well before the deadline. Writing your personal experiences, detailing all of your volunteer work or research, and organizing all your letters of recommendation can take a good amount of time so don't wait until a couple weeks before to start the process!

PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS AND KEEP YOUR PERSONAL INTERESTS

This year can be one of excitement and looking into the future. Getting interview invites is always a big step but make sure that you stay on top of your schoolwork and manage your stress with activities that you love. Remember the painting, board games or sports we talked about earlier? This year is a good one to really use them for their stress relieving potential, so that you can crush those interviews!

