

Q: Can Pre-Health students take science courses at community/state colleges?

A: YES! But, Be Strategic.

If a Pre-Health student takes science courses at a community/state college, after transferring to a four-year university, they must:

- **Continue to earn very good grades in science courses at the four-year university (Don't let grades dip after transferring)**
- **Get a high score on their health professional school admissions test (ex. MCAT [for medical school] or DAT [for dental school])**
- **Stay at the four-year university for courses after transferring there (Don't return as a transient student back to a community/state college)**

Grades must be very strong at the community/state college and continue to be very strong at the four-year university to be a competitive applicant for health professional schools such as medical schools or dental schools.

Important Tips

1) *Mastery of upper-level science courses proves mastery of lower-level science courses.*

If Pre-Health students complete science courses at a community/state college, the health professional schools – medical and dental schools in particular – like to see **advanced coursework in the sciences** at a four-year college/university. Very good grades in science courses at both levels are key and of utmost importance.

2) *If students must complete all or most of the lower-level science prerequisite courses at a community/state college, select a science-heavy major to complete at UCF.*

Many health professional schools – medical and dental schools in particular – urge students to take as many science courses as possible at a four-year university (**see Florida medical schools' policies and preferences on 2nd page**). If a student must complete all or most of the lower-level science prerequisite courses at a community/state college, they must then prove academic mastery of that content by completing and excelling in a science-heavy major at the university level. The best way to prove academic preparedness to health professional schools and to alleviate their possible concern about lower-level science coursework is to earn almost all "A" grades in heavy course loads of a rigorous science major at the university level. (Note: Complimenting the "A" grades in the upper-level courses of a rigorous science major with a strong admissions test score [ex. MCAT, DAT, PCAT, etc.] alleviates even more possible concern by health professional schools about academic preparedness for their programs.)

NOTE: It is ultimately up to each student to decide where to take which courses. Ask a Pre-Health Advisor for assistance to make the best decision for you based on your circumstances.

~Make Informed Decisions About Your Coursework~

*A small number health professional schools may require that all courses be completed at a four-year university.

Important Tips (continued)

3) “Selectivity of the undergraduate institution” where applicants take courses is a factor considered by many health professional schools, but it is not a primary factor.

According to a survey of medical school admissions officers, GPA: Science, GPA: Total, MCAT scores, Letters of Recommendation, and Medically-Related Volunteerism are the top five ranked factors considered when evaluating applicants to offer a medical school interview. “Selectivity of the undergraduate institution” is a very low ranked factor considered, but it is still a factor that is considered.

Florida Medical Schools’ Policies & Preferences on Community/State College Courses

Medical School	Policy or Preference on Community/State College Courses ¹
Florida Atlantic University	Website: Q: Can prerequisite lower division courses be taken at community colleges? A: Yes. However, additional upper level science courses are encouraged and expected in preparation for the MCAT and success in medical school. (http://med.fau.edu/admissions/md/faqs.php) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from community college except Biochemistry and Genetics.
Florida International University	Website: Q: Can prerequisite lower division courses be taken at community colleges? A: Yes. However, additional upper level science courses are encouraged in preparation for the MCAT and success in medical school. (https://medicine.fiu.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/doctor-of-medicine/admissions/faqs/index.html) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from a community college.
Florida State University	Website: We prefer applicants to take pre-requisite courses in a traditional classroom setting at a four-year college. However, we recognize that this is not always possible, especially for non-traditional applicants, so course credit from a US-accredited institution is acceptable in most cases. (https://med.fsu.edu/mdAdmissions/faqs) Advanced Placement, CLEP, and dual enrollment credits fulfill the course requirements. However, courses taken in a traditional classroom at a four-year institution are considered to be more academically competitive. (https://med.fsu.edu/mdAdmissions/admissionRequirements) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from a community college.
University of Central Florida	The UCF College of Medicine does <u>not</u> have a policy prohibiting applicants from taking courses online or at a community college. Academic performance is one of many factors considered through the holistic review of an application. Wherever possible, a student should choose the most rigorous possible academic preparation. (https://med.ucf.edu/admissions/application-requirements/) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from a community college.
University of Florida	Website: Q: Can I take the prerequisite courses at my local community/state college? A: Yes. Keep in mind that in order to create the most academically competitive application it is helpful to demonstrate success in at least some science coursework completed at the most competitive bachelor’s degree granting institution where you can gain entrance. (https://admissions.med.ufl.edu/faq/#new-applicant) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from community college except Biochemistry.
University of Miami	Website: It is expected that the major portion of required science courses will be taken at the senior college level. An application that presents only a junior college academic record will not be considered. (http://admissions.med.miami.edu/md-programs/general-md/prerequisites) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework taken at a community college will be viewed on a case-by-case basis.
University of South Florida	Website: Q: Can I take all of my premed courses at a junior college? A: In order to create the most academically competitive application you should take all prerequisite courses at the most competitive bachelor degree granting institution where you can gain entrance. You should take your pre-requisite courses from your degree granting institution. However, if you started your academic career at a junior college those courses are acceptable for completion of the pre-requisites. In this case you are encouraged to take additional science courses at a bachelor degree granting institution. (https://health.usf.edu/medicine/mdprogram/mdadmissions/faq) MSAR: All required/recommended coursework is accepted from a community college.

¹Information compiled from the respective medical schools’ websites and the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR). (02/2021)