

Admission Policies and requirements

Medical School requirements vary from school to school. All Medical Schools have admission committees responsible for the selection of students.

Most medical schools require a Bachelor's Degree or its equivalent, from a Council on Higher Education accredited institution :

Also, most medical schools require at least:

- One year of biology
- One year of Physics
- One year of English
- Two years of Chemistry

It is expected as well that students have high SAT scores (all these scores vary by Medical School) usually above 1200 or ACT of 28, a High Scholl GPA of at least 3.5 and a GPA in college sciences higher than 3.5.

In addition, most schools expect that candidates for the MD degree should be able to perform all the essential functions expected from a medical care practitioner, and they should be able to develop skills that require the abilities of observation, communication, coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, functional use of the senses of touch and vision, and the ability to synthesize and apply complex information.

Furthermore, a number of social and behavioral attributes are also expected, like compassion, integrity and interpersonal skills.

Interviews by admission committees and experienced faculty are used to asses the prospective students on these dimensions.

Many medical specialties can accommodate practitioners with disabilities and Medical Schools admit handicapped students but after careful evaluation of the previous characteristics and in some cases after making environmental changes to help the student on his/her learning process.

Applicant must take the Medical College Admission Test, although some Schools have other alternative routes of admission that may have a different requirement .

The goal of the MCAT is to help admission committees predict which applicants will be successful in medical school.

These test is given twice annually at many Colleges and Universities
The MCAT identify medical school candidates that are broadly educated on the social sciences and humanities as well an in the natural and physical sciences.

The MCAT asses mastery of basic concepts in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. It also evaluates scientific problem solving and writing skills.

It is a 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ hour test, divided in four sections; Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences and Writing Sample. Contains multiple choice questions and writing tasks. Three different scores are prepared, one for the each of the first sections mentioned previously and reported into a 15 point scale (with 1 the lowest) .
The score on the Writing Sample is converted to an alphabetic scale from J(the lowest) to T.

Over the years have considerable been discussion about the fairness of standardized tests like the MCAT. However It is claimed that when used in combination with the other sources of information mentioned here, the MCT is a good predictor of course grades and the likelihood to progress trough medical school without academic delay or dismissal (AAMC,MCAT Student Manual, page 9,2001).

Other sources of information used by admission committees may include:

- Breadth and difficulty of undergraduate coursework.
- Letters of evaluation from undergraduate advisors or others.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities such as student government and community service.
- Involvement in and quality of health-related work and research.
- State or county legal residence

Source :AAMC Student manual 2001

There are other alternative ways to gain admission to medical school. One of them may be of relevance to the FIU situation :

Existing college/MD programs in the USA

A number of universities offer a combined college/M.D.program. The American Association of Medical Colleges identifies 28 combined college/M.D. programs on their website, ^{1,2} which are listed in Appendix 1.

The academic focus of combined college/M.D. programs appears to vary among the universities offering the programs. Some combined programs focus on a broad, liberal arts foundation for medicine by combining a B.A. in liberal arts with the traditional M.D. course of study. George Washington University, University of South Florida, and Brooklyn College–The City University of New York³ exemplify this type of focus. Other universities stress college preparation in the sciences, combining a B.S. with the traditional M.D. curriculum.

The organization and operation of combined college/M.D. programs, which typically include *medical faculty members* as professors for undergraduate courses in the combined programs, varies among universities, but include some common, basic features related to number of years to complete the program, evaluation and review of students' progress, and support services for students participating in the program.

Combined college/M.D. programs such as the Brooklyn College–The City University of New York combined program, and the program at Howard University College of Medicine program, may serve as models for examining how such a program could be operationalized at FIU.

Number of Years to Complete Combined Program

Combined college/M.D. programs typically require seven to eight years for completion. The first three years of these programs include traditional, pre-med courses in an undergraduate institution, guided by a strict program of study to ensure completion of required courses for full admission into a medical program. The program of study depends upon the orientation of the combined degree program – that is,

¹ See <http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/programs/collegemd.htm> (accessed on 4/12/02).

²The AAMC offers more information on admission requirements and application procedures in the AAMC's *Medical School Admissions Requirements* (MSAR).

³ Brooklyn College – The City University of New York combined program encourages students to major in philosophy, English, sociology, or other disciplines in the humanities or social sciences. They also require the student to minor in a non-science area, and complete three core courses: 1) *The Classical Origins of Western Culture*, 2) *People, Power, and Politics*, and 3) *Knowledge, Existence, and Values* (<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/programs/collegemd.htm>; accessed on 4/2/02).

whether it is premised upon a traditional, science-focus or a liberal arts-focus – and the requirements for admission into the medical school. Typically, students begin taking courses in the medical school during what would traditionally be their fourth year of undergraduate education. After successful completion of this fourth year, as determined by a rigorous review described below, combined program students are awarded their undergraduate degree and become full-fledged medical students at the beginning of the fifth year.

Student Evaluation and Review

Documents describing combined college/M.D. programs emphasize that students have to prove academic prowess before, and during, a combined degree program. Students admitted to the combined programs must have earned both high grade point averages in high school and high SAT/ACT scores. Throughout the first four years of a combined degree program, students are evaluated with respect to grades, MCAT scores (typically taken at the end of the sophomore year or beginning of the junior year), and overall maturity, as measured by participation in various medical and community-related activities that typically are part of the combined degree programs. Special faculty committees, comprised of both undergraduate and medical school faculty members,⁴ conduct these reviews. These student evaluations determine whether students originally accepted into combined degree programs are allowed to proceed from the “college” phase to the full-fledged medical student phase of their education.

Student Support Services

A number of combined college/M.D. programs have developed over the years as a means for filling unmet need areas, such as the lack of diversity among the physician population, the lack of physicians practicing in inner-city and rural areas, and so forth. In such a context, student support services play an important role in the development and support of students progressing through combined degree programs. Hence, many combined programs include an array of student support services, including features such as pre-enrollment summer enrichment programs, intensive advising, counseling, and educational support.

⁴ Specifically, faculty members participating in the student evaluation process may represent a variety of university committees such as the University Honors Program, Pre-professional Sciences Committees, Medical Student Selection Committees, and so forth (<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/programs/collegemd.htm>; accessed on 4/2/02).

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A BS/BM program for FIU:

An alternative to a college/MD program is a BS/BM degree for students interested in health careers.

The nation as a whole,⁵ is attempting to increase the diversity of the health professions workforce. One way to increase the number of minorities in the health professional workforce is preparing minorities, early on during their undergraduate education, for post-graduate careers in medicine.

Research shows that Hispanic students in particular do not perform well on the entrance examinations for professional education in the Health Sciences. This appears to hold true for FIU graduates.

In order to help FIU students improve their chances for admission to health professional schools, it is proposed the implementation of a BS/BM program at FIU.

A BS/BM program is a required set of experiences that enhance the FIU General Education Requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree by introducing students to the broad area of health. Students will focus attention to preparatory courses typical to those required for entrance into medical school programs.

The objectives of the BS/BM program are:

- a) Acquisition of competency in the pre-clinical medical sciences and an introduction to the clinical phase of medical education.

⁵ For example, at the national level, Healthy People 2010, which is sponsored by the federal agency, the Health and Human Services Administration, addresses health care and workforce diversity issues. And, private foundations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others, have sponsored similar projects. At the state level in Florida, the 2000 legislature passed legislation to address racial and ethnic health disparities (CS/HB 2339) that appropriated moneys, emphasized partnerships, targets health interventions, and provides other means for reducing the disparities in Florida (Health Council of South Florida, 2000). Locally, Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas has implemented a project called the “Mayor’s Health Care Initiative” that focuses on many aspects of access to health care, including disparities with respect to accessing health care services and health profession workforce issues in Miami-Dade County.

- b) An appreciation for the social context of medicine.
- c) An understanding of health care needs and health care systems.
- d) Advanced scholarship.
- e) An understanding of professional practice issues and lifestyles

As part of the BS/BM (or BS/N) program, eligible FIU Juniors who are interested in a health professions career will have the opportunity to receive guaranteed admission to FIU nursing and medical schools, (and perhaps to other schools in the state), provided that during their Junior and Senior years, they meet the requirements of the respective programs.

Proposed requirements for admission are:

SAT score of 1300 or ACT of 28

High School GPA of 3.7

Completion of the first and second year at FIU with a GPA of no less than 3.5 in the sciences

During the last two years students will take a combination of courses including some of those listed below

Microbiology

Human Physiology

Human Anatomy

Genetics

Organic Chemistry

Biochemistry

Calculus

Physics

Epidemiology and statistical methods

Spanish

Writing for the technical professions

Introduction to medicine and nursing

Health policy and health systems

Seminar in Medicine

Clinical care experience (60 hours minimum, not credit hours but actual hours in the clinical environment)

Research requirement

MCAT exams for those selecting medicine (not a requirement for graduation).

Electives will be available on:

Medicine and the Humanities
International Health
Ethics and public policy
Health care needs of Special Populations
Financing of medical care
Medical anthropology

About a third of the previously listed coursework will be in the form of independent studies and/or internships in health institutions focusing on health care issues.

Applications for admissions to the program will occur during the spring of the sophomore year.

Students that have completed the requirements above, as well as FIU General Education Requirements, will receive a Bachelor of Science from FIU.

Rules and regulations of FIU remain applicable for all students of this program.

Faculty mentors (clinicians involved in patient care in the community) and teaching staff will participate in the program. Faculty at FIU and clinicians at affiliated hospitals who may be interested in an early faculty appointment at FIU will provide the mentor roles.

FIU has impressive faculty, curricula, and facilities to support the teaching of this program. The existence of the Schools of Health and Nursing and the experience of the Premed Advising program are of great value to a future BS/BM program. Also the teaching and research activities of the departments of Biological Sciences (which includes Anatomy, Physiology and Microbiology and Pharmacology), Biochemistry, Nutrition, and Psychology will be priceless for this group of students.

A BS/BM program could be implemented in the year 2003. Achieving such a feat will involve much planning including the evaluation of existing courses (to select those most appropriate for a BS/BM

program), the development of between 4 to 6 new courses, and the establishment of the research and community based experiences.

Commencing a BS/BM program also will require the appointment of a physician medical educator as course director, the appointment of 8 new clinical faculty with an MD degree (some of whom already have appointments at FIU, such as medical staff at the Student and Wellness Center and in the soon-to-open University Health Clinic), and the collaboration of faculty within the departments mentioned previously.

The four clinical partners working with FIU on the development of the new medical school, including Mount Sinai Medical Center, Mercy Hospital, Children's Hospital, and the Baptist Health Care System) have been consulted and are enthusiastic about this proposal. They indicate a strong willingness to cooperate in the development of a BS/BM program.

Based on the experience of the Pre-med Advising program, and data on the number of FIU applicants to medical schools, it is estimated that 100 to 120 students may be interested in participating in a BS/BM program each year.