PRE-PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE

Overview

This is a one-year, full-time Pre-Professional (PP) Graduate Certificate Program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health San Antonio). The program is designed to offer qualified individuals with baccalaureate degrees aspiring to be admitted to medical school an opportunity to enhance their academic credentials. The program is designed to strengthen the biomedical knowledge of participants, enhance professionalism skills, and improve qualifications for future application to, and competitiveness for, admission to medical school. In addition, because of the similarity of the coursework in this proposed program to the preclinical coursework in medical school, the program is intended to enhance performance in medical school once they gain admission and enroll.

The Pre-Professional (PP) program is approved to start in Fall 2021 and is intended for two types of students: those that have a non-pre-med, science undergraduate degree who wish to switch focus from a previous major and transition to medical school (career-changers) and/or those with a pre-med background who require grade and/or Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) enhancement of their competitiveness for admission to these schools (career-enhancers). Although not designed exclusively for students from groups underrepresented in medicine (URs), the program will make every attempt to encourage participation of URs.

Students in the PP program will have the opportunity to:

- Enhance their academic record and build/strengthen credentials as well as experience clinically based learning designed to provide an introduction to medical terminology and clinical reasoning.
- Be exposed to a rigorous and immersive basic foundational biomedical science curriculum. They will have an opportunity to take core courses that cover many of the same topics in human gross and microscopic anatomy (with full cadaveric dissection), biochemistry, cell and molecular biology, physiology, pharmacology, and microbiology as in the first-year medical curriculum. Courses will be taught by the same outstanding Long School of Medicine (LSOM) faculty who teach medical, dental and other health professional students.
- Have access to a hands-on and dedicated Program Director and Co-Director as well as to individual faculty advisors and mentors to provide personalized guidance with respect to improving medical school applications.
- Interact with LSOM faculty members selected for their ability to work effectively with students.
- Be provided help with professional development, profile enhancement and socialization.
- Start gap year program immediately after spring term graduation and upon completion be ready to apply for admission to medical or osteopathic school as desired the following year.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the PP program will be selective, and applicants’ prior records will be evaluated in the light of the requirements of the program. All of the required application information, including Official Transcripts from all institutions attended, must be submitted for an applicant to be considered by the PP Program Admissions Committee. To be eligible for consideration, all applicants would be expected to meet general graduate admissions standards as well as program-specific admissions standards listed below. On a case-by-case basis, specific admission requirements may be waived by the Graduate Faculty Council. In addition, competitive applicants will have demonstrated motivation to apply to and attend medical school evidenced by past activities, e.g. volunteering or shadowing, in a health-care-related setting. Only qualified and eligible applicants who have been interviewed by the PP Program Admissions Committee will be selected for the program.

Graduate Admissions Standards

All applicants must:

- have completed a baccalaureate degree in a relevant discipline (e.g. chemistry, physics, psychology, biomedical engineering) from an accredited college or university at the time of matriculation into the program. College seniors may apply and be offered admission to the program before they have earned their degrees. However, a final transcript must be submitted to the program upon graduation before any student can matriculate into the program.
- have successfully completed one year each of General Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Physics, with accompanying labs as appropriate, with a grade “B” or better. Although not required, a minimum of one semester of Biochemistry is preferred.
- be U.S. citizens or have U.S. permanent resident status.

Program-Specific Admissions Standards

All applicants must:

- submit a completed application that will include a Statement of Purpose with career goals clearly stated.
- submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. A minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours of major coursework completed is required. Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be submitted in the original language and must be accompanied by an acceptable evaluation agency translation for each course (NACES®, WES® or ECE®).
- provide official AAMC transcripts for the Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®) taken in the 12 months preceding submission of an application to the program. While no minimum MCAT score is prescribed, scores of 500 or above are considered to be competitive.
- complete any prerequisite courses (where required) with a grade of 3.0 or better. The PP program requires specific undergraduate prerequisites and these courses must be completed by the time the student begins the program.
- submit a curriculum vitae/resumé of educational background, volunteer, and work experience.
- request three letters of recommendation from science or math college-level faculty qualified to judge the student’s academic and professional potential and who are knowledgeable about the quality of the applicant’s scholarly activities and/or work experiences. The letters must attest to the applicant’s readiness for graduate level studies. Recommenders must have taught the applicant for at least one semester-long didactic undergraduate/graduate level course. All letters should be sent directly to the program by the deadline date.
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• be willing to submit additional information or other materials about themselves if requested by the program.

Certificate Requirements
Students must complete 21 semester credit hours in order to graduate from this graduate certificate program.

Sample Plan of Study
The Pre-Professional (PP) Graduate Certificate Program provides advanced preparation in two core areas. The first is graduate-level coursework in subjects that are relevant to the medical school curriculum and that provide fundamental understanding of the function of the human body during normal and disease states. These include gross anatomy, neuro-anatomy, histology, physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology. Students must complete all 21 credit hours of course work as approved by the program’s oversight committee (i.e., Committee on Graduate Studies); there are no electives. The second core area involves preparation for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). In addition to the coursework, the plan of study includes a requirement to complete a preparatory (Kaplan) course for the MCAT and to take the MCAT. Non-credit activities will include workshops on applying to medical and osteopathic schools, enhancing learning skills, alternate healthcare professional and biomedical research careers as well as academic advising.

Objectives/Program Outcomes
The objectives for the PP program are as follows:

• Demonstration of an in-depth understanding of the biological basis of health and disease
• Preparation for achieving minimum standards on the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)
• Provision of access to one-on-one advisement on applying to medical school and the medical profession as a career
• Participation in learning outside the classroom through extracurricular activities including workshops and volunteer opportunities

Three Student Learning Outcomes have been established to identify and develop direct measures of student assessment. Students will be expected to:

• Achieve national average standards on the MCAT
• Develop a Personal Statement that clearly delineates rationale/interest in attending medical school
• Acquire a fundamental understanding of the function of the human body during normal and disease states