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## I. INTRODUCTION

This brochure is intended to provide a general overview of important information for students interested in applying for admission to medical, dental, veterinary or other health profession schools. It is not intended to be an “all you need to know” packet, but may supplement the Preprofessional Advising Office’s yearly meetings and students’ individual advising appointments. We hope you find it helpful as you consider your course selection, extracurricular activities, and the application process. Do not be a stranger - come and talk to us!

The Preprofessional Advising Office is located at 100 Bay State Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. If you are considering a career in allopathic medicine, osteopathic medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or one of the related health professions (nursing, optometry, public health, physician assistant, or other health professions), you should open a file in the Preprofessional Advising Office. The Assistant Dean for Premedical Studies and prehealth advisors are available to counsel you about all matters pertaining to your professional goals. We organize informational meetings throughout the undergraduate years and maintain an extensive premedical/prehealth library and website ([www.bu.edu/prehealth](http://www.bu.edu/prehealth)).

Students may fulfill prehealth (premedical, preveterinary, pre dental, or other health related program) requirements while enrolled as degree candidates in any school or college of the University. The advising resources provided by the Preprofessional Advising Office are available to all undergraduate students in degree granting programs and alumni of undergraduate degree programs. Students who transfer to Boston University should open a file in the Preprofessional Advising Office as soon as they arrive and make an appointment to see a prehealth advisor. In order to enhance the information in their files, transfer students should submit transcripts from their previous college or university to the Preprofessional Advising Office.

As a prehealth student you should make every effort to attend the informational meetings that are held each year and to schedule appointments with a prehealth advisor to get your specific questions answered. We recommend that you meet with a prehealth advisor at least once each semester. You may schedule an appointment by calling the Preprofessional Advising Office at 617-353-4866 or by visiting the office.

Please note that we often use the term “premedical” in this brochure to refer to premedical/pre dental/preveterinary and other prehealth studies. If you have a question about a particular field do not hesitate to make an appointment with an advisor.

All information and procedures outlined in this packet are subject to change.

## II. CHOICE OF MAJOR

The premedical, pre dental, and preveterinary programs are curricular pathways and *not* majors. Students may major in any field in the College of Arts & Sciences or in another school or college at the University while also fulfilling professional school requirements. Medical and dental schools do not show a marked preference for the applicant's choice of major. Because of the variation in preveterinary requirements at individual schools, preveterinary students usually major or minor in Biology. The quality and scope of one's academic work is also very important to consider. Professional schools usually prefer students who do well and display a variety of interests in their course work. Personal qualities that admission committees deem valuable can be demonstrated in any academic field.

The core premedical science courses include one year each of biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics (each with laboratory), one semester of biochemistry, and one year of English. Many schools also require or strongly recommend one to two semesters of mathematics. Students who major in one of the social sciences or humanities may register for the required science courses as electives. However, it must be emphasized that students who only complete the minimum science requirements should maintain a uniformly high performance level in their science courses. Cell Biology (CAS BI 203/213), Genetics (CAS BI 206/216), and Systems Physiology (CAS BI 315) are additional courses we suggest for prehealth students who are not majoring in a biological science. Students should be aware that individual schools may have other requirements. This is especially true of veterinary and optometry schools. For students preparing to enter medical school, coursework in statistics, psychology, and sociology will be important to prepare for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).

Academic achievement is a very important factor in the evaluation of credentials and an important predictor of success in professional school. Although some schools state that it may be possible to enter professional school after only three years of college, undergraduates who accelerate their programs with early admission as their objective should keep in mind that the baccalaureate degree is usually required before matriculation.

## III. RECOMMENDED COURSES

The minimum recommendations for admission to most medical and dental schools are listed below. As early as possible in your undergraduate career, you should consult the Medical School Admission Requirements ([www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)) and the College Information Book ([www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org)). These resources have information about each school and lists the specific requirements for all allopathic and osteopathic schools in the United States and Canada. A comparable volume, Official Guide to Dental Schools, (American Dental Education Association, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; 202-667-9433; [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)), lists the criteria for admission to dental schools and is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office. Veterinary Medical School Admission Requirements in the United States and Canada (Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges; [www.aavmc.org](http://www.aavmc.org)), lists the criteria for admission to veterinary schools and is also available in the Preprofessional Advising Office. The

premedical library also contains publications that outline the requirements for admission to other health-related schools.

It is *not* advisable to take required premedical courses on a pass-fail basis. Also, Advanced Placement (AP) credit in a core science course may not count as one of your premedical courses, since many medical schools prefer that you take your science requirements *while you are in college*. However, most schools accept AP credit for their mathematics requirements. If you utilize Advanced Placement credit for a core science, be sure to check individual schools' policies and take another laboratory course at a *higher level* in the same discipline. Please make an appointment with a prehealth advisor if you have questions related to the use of AP credit.

Additional details about the recommended prehealth curriculum can be found in the handout that was distributed at the Premedical Perspectives session during summer orientation. Copies of the handout are available on our website, <http://www.bu.edu/prehealth/academics/prehealthcurriculum/>, and in the Preprofessional Advising Office.

**BIOLOGY:**

*A minimum of one year of biology with laboratory.* This is generally satisfied by Biology I and Biology II (CAS BI 107/108), though this may vary depending upon your major. Although only one year of biology is usually required, an additional year will better prepare students for medical school and the MCAT. Students who do not concentrate in a biological science and post-baccalaureate students are encouraged to enroll in more than the minimum requirements in the life sciences by taking at least two additional courses (e.g. Cell Biology, Genetics, or Systems Physiology).

**CHEMISTRY:**

*One year of general chemistry with laboratory.* This may be fulfilled by CAS CH 101/102, CAS CH 101/116, CAS CH 109/110, or CAS CH 111/112.

*One year of organic chemistry with laboratory.* This may be fulfilled by CAS CH 203/204, CAS CH 203/216, CAS CH 211/212 or CAS CH 203/214.

**BIOCHEMISTRY:**

*At least one semester of biochemistry.* Biochemistry is currently required by several medical, dental, and veterinary schools, and is necessary in preparation for the MCAT. Biochemistry courses include CAS BI/CH 421, CAS BI/CH 422, and CAS CH 373.

**PHYSICS:**

*One year of physics with laboratory.* You should select Elementary Physics (CAS PY 105/106), General Physics (CAS PY 211/212), Principles of General Physics (CAS PY 241/242), or

Principles of Physics (CAS PY 251/252), depending upon your preparation in mathematics and your interests.

**MATHEMATICS:**

*One year of mathematics is recommended and specifically required by some schools.* Students applying to medical school have the option of taking either two semesters of calculus or one semester of calculus and one semester of statistics to satisfy this requirement. A background in statistics will be helpful in preparation for the MCAT. The calculus requirement may be fulfilled by CAS MA 121, 122, 123, 124, 127, or 129. The statistics requirement may be fulfilled by CAS MA 113, 115, 116, 213, or 214. Students who are required to take a department-based statistics course as part of their major (e.g. Economics and Psychology) will need to consult individual schools to verify that the course will satisfy the schools' prerequisites.

**HUMANITIES/  
SOCIAL SCIENCES:**

The General Education (Divisional Studies or Core Curriculum) requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree at the College of Arts & Sciences usually satisfy medical and dental school requirements in these areas. Students *not* in CAS should consult the admission books listed on page 3 to be sure they meet the minimum requirements. Increasing emphasis is being placed on coursework in the humanities and social sciences by professional schools. Students who complete General Education requirements with AP credits will likely need to take additional college courses to fulfill professional school requirements. A background in psychology and sociology will be necessary in preparation for the MCAT. Recommended courses include CAS PS 101 or CAS PS 261 (for students with a strong background in psychology) and CAS SO 100 or CAS SO 215.

**ENGLISH:**

Many medical schools require one year of English at the college level - composition or literature or a combination of both. Courses in the CAS Writing Program (CAS WR 100 and CAS WR 150) will fulfill this requirement at most schools.

**OTHERS:**

Health profession schools may have course requirements in addition to the courses stated above. Students should always check the requirements of individual schools. The reference materials listed on page 3 discuss such requirements.

Your choice of major as well as the breadth and level of courses you select should reflect your academic interests and degree of preparation. Although you should not select courses solely with a view toward making an impression on admission committees, you should be aware that these committees give serious consideration to the quality and scope of your education.

## **IV. MODULAR MEDICAL INTEGRATED CURRICULUM**

The Modular Medical Integrated Curriculum (MMEDIC) is an early assurance program to the Boston University School of Medicine. Founded in 1977 as a collaborative effort between the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Medicine, the MMEDIC program is now open to students enrolled in undergraduate degree granting programs at all Boston University schools and colleges.

The MMEDIC program admits a limited number of qualified students who have completed two years of undergraduate study at the University. It offers an integrated curriculum composed of undergraduate and medical school-related courses, enabling students to enhance their transition to the curriculum at the School of Medicine. The MMEDIC program thus introduces certain preclinical subjects into the last two years of the undergraduate program. In order to achieve curricular integration, students enroll in courses in the fields of medical science (Biochemistry & Cell Biology, Cellular Organization of Tissues, or Physiology), public health, philosophy, and medical anthropology. Students must also complete electives in the humanities and all requirements of their undergraduate college.

The MMEDIC program does not accelerate the premedical-medical sequence but rather permits an enhanced educational transition from undergraduate to graduate professional study. Students must be registered in an undergraduate four-year degree program, of which at least three years must be taken at Boston University; the last two years of undergraduate study, including at least 64 course credits, must be completed in the MMEDIC program at Boston University. Students must also register at the School of Medicine for at least four years for a total of eight years of combined study.

Students who are interested in applying to the MMEDIC program should pursue a rigorous premedical course of study and demonstrate superior performance in and out of the classroom. Coursework must include one year of general chemistry, one year of organic chemistry, and one year of biology by the completion of sophomore year. Engineering students complete the biology requirement through ENG BE 209 Principles of Molecular Cell Biology and Biotechnology and additional engineering courses. After an initial review of applications, well-qualified applicants are invited for personal interviews with members of the admissions committee.

Additional information about the MMEDIC Program may be obtained from the on-line Boston University Undergraduate Programs Bulletin <http://www.bu.edu/academics/busm/programs/modular-medical-integrated-curriculum/>. Students interested in the program should meet with a prehealth advisor during their freshman year.

## **V. CONSIDERATION OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOLS**

In the United States, there are two types of fully licensed physicians: allopathic physicians (MD) and osteopathic physicians (DO). Osteopathic medicine has been practiced in this country for over a century, and the number of osteopathic medical schools has been rapidly increasing over the past few years. Currently, more than twenty percent of medical school students in the United States are enrolled at osteopathic medical schools. The following information about osteopathic medicine is taken directly from the Osteopathic Medical Information Book (2016) published by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) and is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office or can be downloaded for free via the AACOM website <http://www.aacom.org/news-and-events/publications/cib>.

“Osteopathic medicine is a distinctive form of medicine. Osteopathic physicians use all of the knowledge, skills, tools and technology available in modern medicine, with the added benefits of a holistic philosophy and a system of hands-on diagnosis and treatment known as osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM). Doctors of osteopathic medicine (DOs) emphasize helping each person achieve a high level of wellness by focusing on health promotion and disease prevention.”

“DOs work in partnership with their patients...DOs are licensed to practice the full scope of medicine in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other territories of the United States, as well as in more than 65 countries abroad. They practice in all types of environments, including the military, and in all specialties, from family medicine and obstetrics to surgery and cardiology ... Because of their whole-person approach to medicine, approximately 56 percent of all DOs choose to practice in the primary care disciplines of family practice, general internal medicine, and pediatrics. The remaining 44 percent go on to specialize in any number of practice areas.”

Additional information about osteopathic medicine and schools of osteopathic medicine is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office and at the website of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine ([www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org)).

## **VI. PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ADMISSION TESTS**

### Allopathic and Osteopathic Medical School

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is required by almost all medical schools in the United States and is an integral part of your application to professional school. This standardized test is designed to compare applicants with different educational experiences.

The MCAT includes four sections: Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems, Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems, Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior, and Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills. Our recommendation is that students incorporate the following courses, in addition to the traditional premedical curriculum, into their curricula at some point before taking the exam:

- A course in Statistics - MA 113, 115, 116, 213, 214, EC 305, NE 212, or PS 211
- An introductory course in Psychology - PS 101 for students without a strong background in Psychology or PS 261 for students with a strong background in Psychology
- An introductory course in Sociology - SO 100 or SO 215

The MCAT is a computer-based test and is administered numerous times each year. It is advisable for students to take the test no later than the spring of the year of application. Schools usually will not act on an application until all credentials have been submitted; thus, later test dates may postpone the evaluation of your application and put you at a selective disadvantage. Also, taking a spring test may permit students whose scores are low to retake the MCAT during the early part of the summer. For students completing the required science courses during the summer right before applying, August and September test dates are available, though some schools may not accept the September test results for entrance in the following year. Students may take the MCAT three times per year, but may only be registered for one testing date at a time. Additional information about the MCAT may be found on the AAMC website, <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/>.

### Dental School

All United States dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admission Test (DAT). The DAT is a computerized exam and tests the following areas: (1) knowledge of natural sciences (biology, inorganic chemistry, and organic chemistry), (2) reading comprehension (dental and basic sciences), (3) quantitative reasoning, and (4) perceptual ability (two and three-dimensional problem-solving). The DAT may be taken on almost any date, but may not be repeated until ninety days have passed. We advise students to take the DAT during the spring of the year of application. Additional information about the DAT may be found on the DAT website, <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>.

### Test Preparation

Students are encouraged to defer taking the MCAT or DAT until they have completed *all of the recommended core science courses*. Taking these examinations prior to the completion of the coursework on a “try-out” basis is strongly discouraged and rarely fulfills any useful purpose. It is important that students authorize the forwarding of the MCAT or DAT results to the Preprofessional Advising Office for their inclusion in the student’s file.

We strongly recommend that students allow sufficient time to prepare adequately for these tests. (Actually, one begins preparation when one enters college through course choices that support the development of reading, analytical, and test-taking skills.) Since calculators are not allowed in the test centers, it is advisable to get comfortable not using one. These skills cannot be developed overnight. It is essential to carefully plan your studying for these tests by first identifying the broad areas that need to be strengthened and then organizing your time appropriately. Weak SAT/ACT scores may be an indication that additional preparation will be required.

Resources for the MCAT and DAT are available through the Association of American Medical Colleges (<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/prepare/>) and the American



Dental Association (<http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test/>), respectively. There are also many MCAT and DAT preparation books available at bookstores. The Preprofessional Advising Office also has guidebooks. In addition to self-study, there are a number of commercial review courses, the expense of which is one of the major disadvantages of this type of preparation. Each student should carefully consider whether taking these commercial preparatory courses is warranted in his/her particular case.

#### Veterinary School

Most veterinary schools require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Information regarding the GRE is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office and at [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre).

#### Physician Assistant

The standardized test requirements for Physician Assistant programs vary from school to school. Some require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), a few will also accept the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), while some programs have no standardized test requirements. A list of programs and admission requirements is available on the Physician Assistant Education Association's website at [www.paeonline.org](http://www.paeonline.org).

#### Optometry School

Information about the Optometry Admission Test (OAT) is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office and on the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry website at [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org).

#### Pharmacy School

Information about the Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT) is available in the Preprofessional Advising Office and online through the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy at <http://pcatweb.info/>.

## **VII. SELECTION FACTORS**

The academic record is one of the most important factors in the application to professional school. Applicants with strong grades and standardized test scores have a distinct advantage in gaining admission. Without a competitive grade point average, your letters of recommendation will not be especially helpful except in unusual circumstances. Although professional schools value the subjective comments contained in letters of recommendation, they are not particularly interested in candidates who have weak academic records.

Successful applicants are usually highly motivated, have experience in clinical settings, and exhibit outstanding personal qualities. Evidence of genuine concern for others through volunteer work and community service as well as knowledge of and exposure to the healthcare field are important. Successful applicants have personal qualities such as maturity, integrity, compassion, leadership, creativity, perseverance, and dedication. Those selected stand out from other applicants and have been involved, whether it be in research, as a volunteer in community

projects, as candidates for degrees with honors in a major, as a volunteer in clinical settings, as an athlete, etc.

Most admission committees try to accept an entering class with a broad range of skills, interests, and abilities. They desire a diverse class of interesting and talented people. Therefore, students should pursue academic and extracurricular experiences that have meaning and value to them. Successful applicants, as varied as their backgrounds may be, have all provided compelling evidence to admission committees that they are high achievers and that their achievements have been accomplished with excellence. The successful applicant has shown a realistic grasp of his/her strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for wanting to be a health professional.

Dental selection committees look for exactly the same characteristics as other health profession schools, with the exception that they also look for applicants who demonstrate some degree of manual dexterity. Be sure to mention any hobbies or extracurricular activities that involve manual dexterity, such as playing a musical instrument, painting/sculpture, jewelry making, and the like.

## **VIII. EXTRACURRICULAR, VOLUNTEER AND WORK EXPERIENCES**

The Preprofessional Advising Office maintains extensive resources for information regarding volunteer opportunities and internships. Additionally, information is available on enrichment programs for students who belong to groups that are underrepresented in medicine and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These resources can be found on our website at [www.bu.edu/prehealth](http://www.bu.edu/prehealth).

Admission committees will take into consideration your participation in extracurricular activities when evaluating your record. You should participate in outside activities that have meaning and value to you and that demonstrate your leadership qualities, initiative, perseverance, and compassion. When applying to professional schools, do not just list a number of these groups or organizations; list those in which you have actively participated, have made a significant contribution, or have assumed a leadership role. Your reflections on your activities will be important.

The importance of exposure to, and firsthand experience in, health care settings cannot be overly emphasized. Admission committees want to know what steps you have taken to find out about the health field of your choice. Although there is no “magic” number of hours of hospital experience as far as acceptance is concerned, working in such an environment can provide valuable experience. You will be able to see the role and responsibility of the physician or healthcare professional. Volunteer work in clinical settings or action-oriented community projects can demonstrate your ability to relate to all kinds of people and your problem-solving skills. Health profession schools expect you to be familiar with your field of interest and schools may require that you obtain a letter of recommendation from a practitioner.

Research during undergraduate study can also provide a medium by which you can demonstrate your dedication to intellectual pursuits as well as your problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. However, we recommend that research not be done in lieu of obtaining experience in a clinical setting.

## **IX. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Letters of recommendation are an important component of the application process for students applying to health profession schools. Students who qualify may request that the Preprofessional Advising Office submit a packet of letters of recommendation to certain central application services of health profession schools. The Letter Packet may include up to five letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation must be received by the Preprofessional Advising Office by the stated deadline.

It is important to request letters of recommendation from individuals who know you *well*, since a vague and noncommittal letter is of marginal value. Admissions committees are interested in evaluators who are knowledgeable and experienced in assessing your academic abilities, character, interpersonal skills, and professional potential. The most useful letters are those related to your academic work, experience in clinical settings, community service, research activities, leadership roles, and employment. Letters of recommendation from faculty, research mentors, volunteer supervisors, and employers play an important role in your application. Letters from faculty are usually afforded more weight than letters from teaching fellows or discussion leaders.

The most effective letters of recommendation are those that stress the context in which the writer knows you, the duration of his or her acquaintance with you, and your performance level as compared to other students in similar settings. Your communication skills, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, teamwork, initiative, integrity, resilience, and capacity for improvement are among the areas that your recommenders may discuss. Cited examples of these qualities make for effective letters of recommendation.

Guidelines that you may wish to provide to your recommenders are available on the Association of American Medical College's website at: <https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf>

Letters of recommendation should be written on letterhead stationery, must include a signature, and must be accompanied by the Preprofessional Advising Office's Recommendation Waiver Form. Recommendation Waiver Forms, available in the Preprofessional Advising Office and on our website (<http://www.bu.edu/prehealth/>), should be given to each of your recommenders and submitted by them to the Preprofessional Advising Office. We strongly encourage recommenders to submit their letters and the waiver form electronically as PDFs to [hlthrecs@bu.edu](mailto:hlthrecs@bu.edu). Alternatively, physical copies of recommendations may be mailed to:

Boston University  
Preprofessional Advising Office  
100 Bay State Road, Room 428  
Boston, MA 02215

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Boston University students are entitled access to letters of recommendation contained in their permanent educational records at Boston University. However, a student may waive this right of access to letters of recommendation. If this right of access is waived, letters of recommendation will be considered confidential and will not be available to the student. Schools generally prefer to receive letters for which applicants have waived their right of access. If you have questions about the waiver, please schedule an appointment with a prehealth advisor.

**Important points to keep in mind:**

- It is your responsibility to know individual school's requirements, as requirements for letters of recommendation vary from school to school.
- It is your responsibility to know how many submissions the central application service permits for each applicant.
- Many schools require two letters of recommendation from faculty members in the sciences.
- Schools may require a letter from non-science faculty members. For allopathic medical school applicants, this may be an example of a letter that becomes part of your customization process.
- Schools may require a letter of recommendation from a health professional in the field (e.g. a physician, osteopathic physician, dentist, veterinarian).
- For individuals who have enrolled in a graduate program, many schools require a letter from the student's advisor.
- If your prehealth file contains an old letter of recommendation from someone with whom you have continued to work or with whom you have taken additional courses, we strongly suggest that you request an updated letter from that individual.
- If you have changed the type of program to which you are applying (e.g. from MMEDIC to traditional pathway) or your career goals (e.g. from medicine to dentistry), your old letters of recommendation may no longer be useful. Meet with a prehealth advisor to discuss this.
- Letters of recommendation from high school teachers, administrators, or guidance counselors are generally not helpful unless you have completed additional projects with them as a college student.
- Personal letters from clergy, family physicians/dentists, public office holders, peers, or friends of the family are generally not helpful.

You are responsible for determining that your letters of recommendation are received by the Preprofessional Advising Office's stated deadline. In some cases, you may need to apply tact and diplomacy to remind your recommenders to submit their letters. You may call the Preprofessional Advising Office at 617-353-4866 to determine whether we have received your letters.

The Preprofessional Advising Office does not accept letters of recommendation that are hand-delivered or emailed to us by applicants. The Preprofessional Advising Office submits Letter Packets only to certain central application services and health-related scholarship programs. The Preprofessional Advising Office does not submit letters of recommendation to other programs or to anyone else for other purposes, including master of medical science and other graduate programs, job applications, and internship programs.

## **X. THE PORTFOLIO OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REFLECTIONS**

In the year preceding your application to health profession schools, you will submit the Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections to the Preprofessional Advising Office. The Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections will provide you with an excellent opportunity to thoughtfully reflect upon your accomplishments and organize much of the material required for your primary applications. It will provide prehealth advisors with important information that will help them assess your preparedness for the application process.

If you are applying to enter health profession schools, you may request that the Preprofessional Advising Office submit a packet of letters of recommendation to certain central application services. In order to qualify for a Letter Packet and a comprehensive advising appointment during the Spring semester, you must submit your completed Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections by the stated deadline. The Preprofessional Advising Office will schedule a comprehensive advising appointment during the spring semester for students who complete the Portfolio by the deadline.

Students begin applying to professional schools approximately fifteen months before their intended date of matriculation. Each September, the Assistant Dean for Premedical Studies holds a meeting for students considering applying to professional schools the following year. At that meeting, he reviews the application process and the office's requirements for students to obtain a Letter Packet. The application for the Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections is made available after the September meeting. Portfolios will not be considered complete until all required materials are received.

Students who have completed a Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections (with all supporting documents) by the appropriate deadline and have achieved at least a 3.20 cumulative GPA and a 3.20 science GPA for courses taken at Boston University will be offered the opportunity to have an interview with a member of the Premedical and Predental Advisory Board. The Boston University Premedical and Predental Advisory Board is a committee composed of faculty members from departments in the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Engineering, the College of General Studies, and Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. Prehealth advisors in the Preprofessional Advising Office may also conduct Advisory Board interviews. The Assistant Dean for Premedical Studies serves as Chair of the Advisory Board.

## **XI. ADVISORY BOARD INTERVIEW**

Your interview with a member of the Premedical and Predental Advisory Board provides you with an opportunity to practice your communication skills and provides us with valuable additional information. The interview is a valuable source of information about you. The interviewer will have a copy of your Portfolio of Accomplishments and Reflections and transcripts. Be prepared to discuss your reasons for choosing a particular profession, your academic record, your employment record, and your goals and aspirations. If you have had academic problems or inconsistencies, the interview may provide an opportunity to explain them. Be candid and honest, and be yourself. You should also be ready to discuss your extracurricular activities, research experiences, and hobbies, since your activities may provide additional information for prehealth advisors to help you evaluate your preparedness as an applicant and develop your application for health profession schools. The interview is not intended to be stressful or a mock professional school interview, nor is it intended as a means of subjecting you to pressure in order to evaluate your response. Rather, it is the time to discuss yourself and an opportunity to express who you are to your interviewer.

## **XII. THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW**

The personal interview is an extremely important step in the process of being admitted to a health profession school. The granting of an interview means that you have passed through the initial screening process, and the results of your interview will play a large part in whether or not you will be accepted.

The purpose of the interview is to exchange information between the candidate and the school. Although it is routine for the applicant to respond to a variety of questions, the candidate may also show an active interest in the school by asking pertinent questions of the interviewer. Substance as well as manner of presentation is important when speaking with the interviewer. You should respond to questions in a sincere, articulate manner. Sincerity is a quality valued highly by admission committees. Be prepared to discuss why you have chosen a particular profession. You may also be presented with questions regarding contemporary and/or controversial issues. You should be familiar with current social, legal, ethical, economic, and political aspects of your future profession and problems related to the delivery of health care. The point of view that you present, even if it differs from that of the interviewer, is generally less important than the manner in which you support your position. Also, be prepared to discuss any problems or inconsistencies in your application with your interviewer.

The interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions, the answers to which are not readily available on schools' websites. It is wise to have done some research and to have formulated good questions ahead of time regarding a school's curriculum, special programs, or particular areas of emphasis. This type of information can be obtained by visiting a school's website and by speaking to alumni or currently enrolled students.

Dress conservatively, be confident and calm, maintain poise, and answer questions to the best of your ability. Use logical thought, and if asked a question to which you do not have a

good answer, stop and think a moment before answering. Never answer in a hostile, abrasive manner and do not hesitate to tell the interviewer that you do not have an answer to a particular question. Stress your positive qualities without being pretentious; discuss your achievements (for example, research, volunteer work, and leadership responsibilities) fully and accurately.

There are certain basic interviewing skills about which one should be aware before the interview. Be aware of speaking too rapidly or too slowly, harshly, loudly, or in a garbled, high-pitched, or very soft manner. Try to avoid nervous gestures and other distracting mannerisms. Eye contact is important - look at your interviewer. Above all, try to maintain a relaxed attitude. Do not attempt a slick or contrived demeanor, since it is artificial and easily discernible. It is natural to be nervous on such an occasion; interviewers are aware of this and usually try to put you at ease. The interview should confirm the applicant's credentials to the admissions committee and should reflect the applicant's overall experience, maturity and motivation, interpersonal skills, communication abilities, common sense, adaptability, sincerity, and intelligence.

The Center for Career Development, at 100 Bay State Road, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor (617-353-3590), offers resources related to general interviewing skills. While the Preprofessional Advising Office does not provide mock interviews, the office sponsors a meeting entitled "The Interview" in the fall to help prepare you. It includes a panel composed of recent Boston University alumni who are enrolled in local medical/dental/veterinary schools. They discuss their experiences in interviews with time allotted for a question-and-answer period. Additionally, the AAMC has online resources pertaining to medical school interviews, <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/medical-school-interviews/>, and our office has books with chapters that discuss interviewing strategies.

### **XIII. POST-BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS**

There has been a marked increase in the number of applications to professional schools submitted by post-baccalaureate students. These are often applicants who have returned to college primarily to fulfill requirements for health profession schools, having completed other types of undergraduate programs at Boston University or at another institution.

Boston University has a post-baccalaureate program in Metropolitan College. Students in the program fulfill their required basic science courses through Metropolitan College and/or the College of Arts & Sciences. All post-baccalaureate students interested in professional school should open a prehealth file in the Preprofessional Advising Office upon coming to the University and periodically meet with the Assistant Dean for Premedical Studies.

Post-baccalaureate students are cautioned against the practice of accelerating the completion of the premedical requirements in the shortest possible time. This may be counter-productive, since taking a highly compressed science program may result in poor grades. It is more advisable to start by taking one or two science courses with the possibility of accelerating during the ensuing semesters.