# Pre-Health Sciences

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Santa Clara University has an excellent reputation for preparing students for careers in the health sciences. Most incoming students tend to be focused on either allopathic medicine or dentistry, but a much broader spectrum of careers can be equally or more attractive including osteopathic medicine, physical therapy, optometry, pharmacy, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, public health professional, and others. A Santa Clara education provides ample opportunity to acquire the academic foundations in natural science required by medical schools, and its broad liberal arts Core Curriculum also serves to develop the communication, personal interaction, and analytical skills needed both during medical school and in one’s subsequent medical practice.

Although Santa Clara does not have a pre-med major, the courses prescribed by the Council of Education of the American Medical Association can be incorporated into several academic majors.

Most medical schools require:

* One year of general chemistry (CHEM 11, 12, and 13)
* One year of organic chemistry (CHEM 31, 32, and 33)
* One year of biology (BIOL 1A, 1B and 1C)
* One year of physics (PHYS 11, 12, and 13 or PHYS 31, 32, and 33)
* One year of mathematics, typically calculus (MATH 11 and 12), and a statistics course

In addition, many students become more skilled and competitive by enrolling in two or three upper-division science courses, often but not exclusively in biochemistry, genetics, and human physiology, which are helpful in preparing for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). The combination of Core Curriculum requirements with the University’s focus on community involvement and issues of diversity will prepare students well for the recently revised MCAT 2015, with its greater emphasis on social, economic, and psychological determinants of health. The choice of academic major is much less important than completing the coursework above; however, many pre-health students select a natural science major such as biology, biochemistry, chemistry, neuroscience, or public health science. Students should thoroughly examine the [Pre-Health Advising website](https://www.scu.edu/pre-health/) and should maintain regular contact with the pre-health advisor throughout their undergraduate years for assistance with adjusting to college academic rigor and social life; developing an appreciation of the wide array of available health care careers; achieving a balance between academics, social life, work, health community volunteering, and internships; selecting the relevant entrance examinations; and applying to graduate health science programs.