

Enhancing the Academic Record

Opting to take individual coursework, or participate in a formal program, should take place before applying; your application will be more competitive once grades have been posted. Some programs offer flexibility in the number of courses per term, allowing for part-time work alongside part-time classes.

Undergraduate Coursework/Postbac Programs: If one's goal is to enhance the undergraduate science gpa (BCP/M) then taking advanced classes at the undergraduate level can help to demonstrate a facility in the sciences. All coursework taken at the undergraduate level will be calculated into the undergraduate gpas for medical school applications.

Informal: Candidates can opt to take coursework at a four year institution as a non-degree or non-matriculated student. This path would not include any formal advising or support during the application process from that institution, however, Bard Alumni/ae can utilize the support offered through the Career Development Office.

Formal postbac programs at the undergraduate level, like the [Pre-Health Specialized Studies Program offered at UPenn](#), are often referred to as "non-degree" or certificate programs. They offer several advantages, including access to advising, a structured learning environment, priority enrollment in courses, potential access to loans, and, in some cases, preference in linkage agreements. These programs may also provide opportunities for shadowing, volunteering, MCAT review, and other health-related offerings.

Special Master's Programs (SMP): these programs are typically attached to a medical school and offer coursework alongside medical students and lead to a master's degree in a particular discipline. Oftentimes if one meets minimum performance criteria they are guaranteed an interview at the medical school. Some SMP programs require an entrance exam (MCAT/GRE). Entry in these programs is somewhat competitive and they are intended to bolster applications for candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to a career in medicine. These programs typically offer advising support, opportunities for clinical experience and research, MCAT prep and a committee letter of recommendation.

Master's Programs: these are graduate level programs with rigorous science coursework that can demonstrate your ability in the sciences and preparation for the demands of the medical school curriculum. Whether or not the program offers support during the application process to medical school varies by school. Bard Alumni/ae can utilize the support offered through the Career Development Office.

Grades from graduate programs or courses taken at the graduate level are considered separately from the ug gpa and comprise the graduate level gpa.

Programs for students from groups underrepresented in medicine (URM) Efforts are underway to establish a physician workforce that mirrors the demographic composition of the U.S. population. However, there continues to be underrepresentation of Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian and Alaska Native individuals among medical school matriculants. Additionally, those from economically disadvantaged areas and backgrounds are not adequately represented in the medical profession. Studies indicate that fostering diversity in medical schools and the healthcare profession has a beneficial impact on healthcare delivery and outcomes. In response to this imbalance, various programs have been created to support students from these underrepresented groups in gaining acceptance to medical school.

[Postbaccalaureate Research Education Programs \(PREP\)](#) provides an opportunity for undergraduates who hold a recent bachelor's degree and who have the desire to pursue a research doctorate (PhD or MD-PhD).