

## Career Changer Programs

There are multiple paths to completing the undergraduate coursework needed to apply to schools in the health professions. The route you take depends on a variety of factors including...

- Number of courses, if any, completed in the sciences already- do you need a couple of courses or do you need to take them all?
- Your undergraduate academic record- for post-bac programs with linkage agreements admission is competitive.
- Finances: while formal pb programs are ideal for completing the requirements, they are expensive and it could be difficult to secure financial aid.
- Are you able to take a full course load or will you pursue the coursework on a part time basis?

All coursework taken at the undergraduate level will be calculated into the undergraduate gpas for medical school applications.

### Undergraduate Coursework/Postbac Programs:

Informal: Candidates can opt to take coursework at any 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 the institution(s), however, Bard Alumni/ae can utilize the support offered through the Career Development Office (CDO). This path is particularly beneficial for someone needing few courses to complete the requirements. It could be difficult to complete all of the requirements in this fashion as non-matriculated students do not have first choice preferences to register for classes and are often “on their own” in terms of building their curriculum.

Formal postbac programs often lead to a certificate and offer several advantages, including access to advising, a structured learning environment, priority enrollment in courses, and, in some cases, preference in linkage agreements. These programs may also provide opportunities for shadowing, volunteering, MCAT review, and other health-related offerings. While other “formal post bac programs” simply offer access to coursework and basic advising but do not provide resources to prepare for and apply to medical school. Programs can vary greatly; Bard Alumni/ae can utilize the support of the Pre-Health Advisory committee and access advising through the CDO.

Whether or not one receives a “certificate” does not necessarily matter in terms of competitiveness in the application process. What matters is academic success in the sciences coupled with experiences that demonstrate a commitment to a career in the health professions.

**Linkage Programs** are formal agreements between specific postbac programs and specific medical schools. They enable highly qualified postbac students with a strong interest in one of the linkage schools to apply privately to that school while in the postbac program. A successful linkage applicant would matriculate in one of the linkage schools as soon as they completed the postbac program. Some popular linkage programs:

- [Bryn Mawr College](#) (PA)
- [Columbia University](#) (NYC)
- [Georgetown University](#) (Washington DC)
- [Goucher College](#) (Baltimore MD)
- [Tufts University](#) (Boston MA)