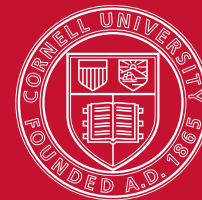


Undergraduate Admissions Office

Admissions Bulletin

Preparing for a Health Career



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Question: Which of the following majors do you suppose recent Cornell students have used as a foundation for successful advanced study in human or veterinary medicine: animal science; biological sciences; biology and society; chemistry; computer science; government; history of art; human development; natural resources; Near Eastern studies; nutritional sciences; philosophy; biometry and statistics?

Answer: *Every single one.* It's perfectly acceptable to think of all of those majors—and dozens of others at Cornell—as suitable preparation for premed or prevet programs. The way to put together a first-rate premed or prevet program at Cornell is to go right ahead and study whatever interests you most and—at the same time—complete the preprofessional undergraduate courses that schools of human or veterinary medicine require for admission.

You won't be alone. Close to one out of six undergraduates at Cornell University intends to pursue a career in either human or veterinary medicine. Premed students are the most numerous, but there are also a great many prevet students. And you will find these students in all seven undergraduate colleges at Cornell, studying English, textile science, physics, and entomology while they take all the prerequisites for medical or veterinary school.

In 2008, 42% of biological sciences majors, 47% of physical sciences majors, 50% of humanities majors, and 44% of social sciences majors who applied to medical schools nationwide matriculated at a medical school.

—The Association of American Medical Colleges

What Medical and Veterinary Schools Look For

Admission to schools of human or veterinary medicine is based largely on three factors: your academic record, your scores on standardized admission tests, and your individual qualities, as seen in part through faculty evaluations and interviews.

Grades are important when you seek admission to a medical or veterinary school. But you're also expected to be a well-rounded person; your other interests and achievements are important, too. Although schools of human and veterinary medicine do require you to take certain courses as an undergraduate, you'll be a much more attractive candidate for admission if, in addition to your science courses, you've taken courses in the social sciences and humanities.

True, a premed or prevet program of study is rigorous. But that's due more to the type of courses required than to the number. If you're set on a premed or prevet path from the start, you'll probably be able to complete the minimum number of required courses at many health professional schools by the end of your sophomore or junior year in most of the colleges at Cornell.

Prerequisite courses for medical school

General or Intro Biology (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
Advanced Biology	one course
Intro Chemistry (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
Organic Chemistry (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
General or Intro Physics (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
English Composition	6 semester credit hours
Mathematics (required by some schools; recommended by others)	

Prerequisite courses for veterinary school

Biology or Zoology (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
Intro Chemistry (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
Organic Chemistry (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
Biochemistry	4 semester credit hours
Physics (with lab)	8 semester credit hours
General Microbiology (with lab)	3 semester credit hours
English Composition	6 semester credit hours

Some Statistics

Applicants to allopathic medical schools (schools that grant an M.D. degree) reached an historic high in 1996 with 46,968 applicants. In 2008, there were 42,231 applicants, so competition for admission obviously remains keen. Nationally, 43 percent of the applicants to allopathic medical schools in the United States were accepted in 2008. Cornell students fared far better.

Of the Cornell students who applied for 2008 admission to medical schools, 70 percent were accepted by at least one United States school of allopathic medicine. And that's not counting the students who were accepted by schools of osteopathy, dentistry, optometry, or podiatry, or by foreign medical schools. For the same year, Cornell students with a grade point average of 3.4 or above had an acceptance rate of 80 percent.

Admission to veterinary schools is also competitive, partly because there are fewer veterinary schools than medical schools, and the majority of veterinary schools have state residency requirements for most of their applicants. The College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell enrolls roughly 10 percent of each year's applicants. In recent years, 25 to 30 percent of its entering classes have come from undergraduate colleges at Cornell. That percentage is due in part to the fact that large numbers of Cornell undergraduates apply to the school, and many of them are New York State residents. (By the way, it's important for you to remember that attending Cornell as an undergraduate does not automatically guarantee you admission to either the College of Veterinary Medicine or Weill Medical College of Cornell University.)

Cornell students with equivalent academic credentials from the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Engineering, or Human Ecology are equally successful in gaining admission to medical schools. Similarly, although most prevet students major in biology or animal science, applicants to veterinary schools aren't required to complete a specific undergraduate degree program or a designated prevet major. However, because veterinary medicine is an animal-oriented profession, you should

be prepared to present evidence of firsthand experience with animal care and some understanding of the duties and responsibilities of veterinarians and the scope of veterinary medicine.

To Help You Along

To help keep you on track as you prepare for your health career, Cornell offers a wide range of informational and advising resources, including professional counselors and a full schedule of orientations and briefings.

The Health Careers Program sponsors annual health careers orientations for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors that cover what students can expect during the coming year. There is also an applicant orientation and regular premed and prevet briefings—informal sessions that address topics such as “Interviewing at Medical/Dental School” and “Summer Opportunities for Health Career Students.” The Health Careers Program also sponsors meetings and programs with representatives of medical and veterinary schools, health-care practitioners, and alumni. The Health Careers web site offers resources for finding clinical, research, and service opportunities in Ithaca and beyond (www.career.cornell.edu/healthcareers). Individual advising sessions are available, too.

Career Library. Undergraduates considering health careers are encouraged to investigate the many different health-related materials in the Career Library, including books, directories, school catalogs, and surveys completed by Cornell students about their internships, medical/dental school interviews, and application outcomes. You'll also find information about standardized tests you'll need to take. The Cornell Career Services home page (www.career.cornell.edu) has links to a wide variety of information about preparing to apply to a health professional school.

Health Careers Program Advisory Board. Cornell's Health Careers Program Advisory Board reviews medical school course requirements and compiles a list of Cornell courses that will fulfill them. The board also recommends the sequence in which you should take required courses. For prevet students, the board makes a list of Cornell courses that will satisfy the requirements of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell, and it helps provide information about the requirements of other veterinary schools. This information enables you, in consultation with your academic advisor, to plan your program and course schedules within your major.

Health Careers Evaluation Committee. In addition to certain pre-requisite or preprofessional courses, most schools of human medicine require, or strongly recommend, that you submit a letter of evaluation with your application. That letter, often written by a faculty evaluation committee, outlines your personal and academic qualifications. Cornell's Health Careers Evaluation Committee will write a letter of evaluation for any Cornell student who has taken the required courses and followed the proper procedure for obtaining such a letter.

Alternative careers. As a Cornell premed or prevet student, you'll be encouraged from an early date to investigate the variety of options other than human or veterinary medical school. Other branches of human medicine you might choose require going to different kinds of medical schools—for example, schools of dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and osteopathy. The Health Careers Program and the Career Library have information on those fields and on the application procedures for the appropriate schools as well as information about programs in areas such as nursing, public health, animal science, and pharmacy.

Double registration program. If you're accepted after your junior year by the College of Veterinary Medicine, you may be able to participate in the double registration program. Admission to the program is highly competitive and selective. (Cornell does not offer a combined or accelerated BA-BS/MD/DVM program.)

No matter what health career you're considering, your work during your undergraduate years will have a lot to do with the breadth of understanding and the maturity of judgment you'll bring to your professional life. Acquiring factual information and technical proficiency is one thing; developing a more integrated understanding of people and ideas is another. We think Cornell offers you a great environment for doing just that!



For Further Information

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