



PRE-MEDICINE: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

As you explore the option of Pre-Medicine as an international student at Concordia College, it is important to be aware of what is involved in obtaining a post-graduate degree in medicine in the United States. This fact sheet is intended to provide answers to some (but not all) questions. It is your responsibility to thoroughly research your options. We are here to support your decision.



While healthcare can be a rewarding career choice, there are several potential barriers for international students pursuing Pre-Medicine. Prior to coming to Concordia College, it is critical to work with your admissions representative. Once on campus, you will work closely with a team of people including your academic advisor, the Global Studies Office, the Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC), the Career Center, and the Registrar's Office. Oftentimes, Canadians are not considered international students when applying for medical school.

Frequently Asked Questions

While at Concordia, how can I prepare myself for potential acceptance into medical school?

As soon as you begin to explore your interest in Pre-Medicine, you should talk to your academic advisor and/or a member of HPAC. The earlier you have these conversations, the better. Concordia does not offer a "Pre-Medicine" major. Instead, students typically major in one or more of the sciences (Biology and Chemistry are common choices) but majoring outside of the sciences is also possible with careful planning. You should talk with your academic advisor to ensure your course plan aligns with your major. Throughout your four years at Concordia, you will need to obtain significant health-related job shadowing/volunteering/work opportunities, gain teamwork and leadership experience, and plan to achieve a minimum 3.7 grade point average (GPA).

How competitive is medical school for international students?

While some international students do pursue Medical School following their four years at Concordia, it is extremely competitive, and matriculation into medical school straight out of an undergraduate program is not common. Each medical school has its own policies on accepting international applicants – it is in your best interest to research and understand the policies for schools to which you hope to apply. In 2021, international students represented only 1.4% (328) of all allopathic medical school matriculants (22,666).

Can I apply for financial aid to pay for medical school?

You will need to talk to the Financial Aid Office at the medical schools to which you may apply. In some situations, loans may be available. In other situations, medical schools require foreign applicants to prove they have sufficient financial resources to pay for all four years of medical school. The cost of medical schools varies but could range anywhere between \$160,000- \$240,000 US dollars.

What is the medical school completion rate for accepted students?

If accepted into a US medical school, the completion rate is fairly high. The overall medical student graduation rate typically ranges from 81-84%.

How does residency work as an international student?

In 2021, international students held 17.6% of the 121,035 total residency spots. Like medical school acceptance, residency selection is competitive and US citizens/permanent residents are given a strong preference for these positions.

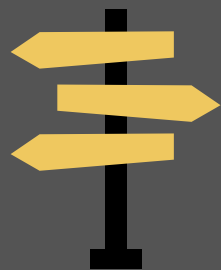
Can I stay in the United States after completing medical school?

To work in the US following degree completion, an international student needs to have a green card, and therefore would need to obtain Sponsorship from their employer.

Can I use my medical degree in my home country?

Many, but not all, countries will recognize a US medical degree; however, the laws that govern the ability to practice medicine in another country varies considerably. Some countries require a minimum level of experience (e.g. three years of practicing medicine in the US), some require additional exams and/or training in their country. It is your responsibility to research the requirements of your home country to know whether or not a US medical license will allow you to practice upon your return.

If I decide to pursue Pre-Medicine, what opportunities do I have at Concordia?



In spite of potential barriers for international students pursuing Pre-Medicine in the US, Concordia has an exceptionally strong science program. In addition, Fargo-Moorhead serves as a regional healthcare hub. If you decide to pursue Pre-Medicine, you should talk with your advisor to ensure your course plan aligns with an appropriate major. During your years at Concordia, you will need to work hard to maintain a strong GPA and gain as many health-related job shadow/volunteer hours as possible. After two full semesters on campus, you may pursue work off-campus in the healthcare field as part of your CPT. The Career Center can assist with job or internship searches. You will work with the Global Studies Office to track your CPT hours.

What other health related career options do I have?

If an international student decides it is too complicated to pursue a US medical degree, there are a number of other career options to consider, including research, community health, and other health professions such as optometry, dentistry, physical therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy and physician assistant. You are encouraged to visit with your academic advisor, any member of HPAC, and the Career Center to identify your professional and personal goals.

If I choose to pursue Pre-Medicine, what research do I need to do?

Start early!

Your academic advisor and the Office of the Registrar will help ensure you have the right classes to graduate from Concordia College.

The Office of Global Studies will track your CPT hours as you report your work experiences.

It is your responsibility to keep your GPA strong, research which medical schools accept foreign applications, research how you will pay for medical school, your long-term probability of obtaining a medical residency and medical career in the US, and determine which specialty fields require additional training.

The Health Professions Advisory Committee will support you with any questions along the way, and work closely with you on your medical school applications and associated components such as your personal statement.

Resources

- <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-international-applicant>
- <https://choosedo.org/international-students/>
- HPAC members:
 - Dr. Julie Rutherford (Director) – jrutherf@cord.edu
 - Dr. John Flaspohler – flaspohl@cord.edu
 - Dr. Drew Rutherford – rutherf@cord.edu
 - Dr. Emily Huber-Johnson – ehuber@cord.edu

