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21. If my MCAT or DAT is below admissions standards of professional schools, should I retake the MCAT or DAT prior to or during the course of this program?
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Requirements to Apply

- **What are the requirements to apply?**
  Applicants must have the following:
  - A bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution.
  - Have taken the following prerequisites: two semesters each of Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and Physics. *We also highly recommend students take a semester each of psychology, sociology, and statistics.*
  The Premedical Graduate Certificate Program typically seeks students who:
  - Hold a cumulative GPA ≥ 3.0 and a science GPA ≥ 3.2
  - Have earned standardized test score results of either:
    - MCAT ≥ 25 or 500
    - DAT ≥ 16
    - GRE ≥ 151 (Quantitative) and 153 (Verbal) and 4.0 Analytic Writing
  - International students must have achieved ≥ 250 (cBT), 600 (pBT), or 100 (iBT) on the TOEFL examination or ≥ 153 on the GRE Verbal section (500 on previous scale)
  - Have taken upper-level science courses.

- **Is there a minimum GPA or MCAT cutoff?**
  No, but the average matriculating has a GPA above 3.0, MCAT above 25 (old) or 500 (new), DAT above 16, or GRE scores of 151 Quantitative and 153 Verbal and 4.0 Analytic.

- **What materials do I need to submit for a complete application?**
  An application package consists of the following:
  - A completed online Graduate School application
  - Submittal of $65 application fee (new fee effective 8-1-2013)
  - Official Transcripts from all colleges attended (including community colleges and graduate schools)
  - Official Test Scores (i.e. GRE, MCAT, DAT)
  - Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose (1-2 pages)
  - Three Reference Letters or a Committee Letter Packet (Interfolio is permissible)
  - Resume outlining clinical and volunteer experiences

- **If I am approved based on my Quick Look application, am I officially accepted?**
  No, you still need to complete the official graduate application and submit all the necessary documentation to be considered for admission. The Quick Look application is simply meant to determine your competitiveness as an applicant.
How to Apply

• How do I complete an application?
  Please complete an online application at [https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=vcugrad](https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=vcugrad). Create an account and log in. Fill out the information appropriately. When completing the “Intended Program of Study,” please select the following:
  • Entry Term: Fall
  • What is your intended level of study? Certificate
  • Please select your intended program of study? Pre – Med Grad Health Sci - CERT

• What materials need to be mailed?
  Official transcripts must be mailed. All other documents should be submitted with the online application.

• Where do I mail supporting documentation for my application?
  Virginia Commonwealth University
  Graduate School
  Blair House
  408 West Franklin Street
  P.O. Box 843051
  Richmond, Virginia 23284-3051

• How do I send documents that I did not attach to the application?
  Letters of recommendation may be emailed to gradimag@vcu.edu. All other application documents should be emailed to gradmail@vcu.edu. Documents may be physically mailed to the graduate school as well.

• How do I submit my letters of recommendation?
  When completing the “Recommendations” portion of the online application, please fill out all information for each letter writer. Letter writers will only be emailed if you select “Yes” when asked “Will this provider be submitting the letter of recommendation online?”

  Via online application
  • If the letter writer is submitting the letter electronically then select “Yes” under “Will this provider be submitting the letter of recommendation online?”

  Via mail to grad admissions
  • If the letter writer wishes to mail the letter to the graduate admissions office, then please select “No” under “Will this provider be submitting the letter of recommendation online?”

  Via Intefolio
If you are submitting letters from Interfolio, please completely input the information for each letter writer and select “No” when asked “Will this provider be submitting the letter of recommendation online?” Please send your letters via Interfolio to the Graduate Admissions Office.

Committee packet

If you are submitting a committee packet, please select 3 letter writers from the packet and completely input their information. If the committee is submitting the packet by mail then select “No” when asked “Will this provider be submitting the letter of recommendation online?” If the committee chair is submitting the letter, you may add their information as one of the letter writers.

What needs to be included in the resume?
You may include information you feel is pertinent. However, be sure to include clinical experience (hands on and hands off) and volunteer experience (clinically and nonclinically relevant). Please mention how many hours in total, duration of activity, and brief description of what you did. For example:

- Shadowing Dr. De Felice, Neurosurgeon at VCUHS, 100 hrs total, July 2014-July 2015. I observed Dr. De Felice in the OR and during his clinic hours.
- Medical clinic volunteer at Fan Free Clinic, 100 hrs total, July 2014-2015. I seated patients into patient rooms, obtained vitals, and maintained cleanliness of patient rooms.

When should I submit my application?
The application cycle opens in January and closes at the end of July. It is ideal to submit your application as early as possible and before the July 1st deadline. Applications submitted after July 1st will be evaluated based on space availability.

If I am planning on taking the MCAT, DAT, or GRE in a few months, should I wait to apply for CERT until I have my scores?
No, you should submit your application and all possible materials as soon as possible. When you submit your graduate application, indicate that you plan on taking the MCAT/DAT/GRE in the future and include the anticipated test date. Once you receive your score, email the Program Administrator with a copy of the unofficial score report in addition to following the steps below to submit an official score report.

How do I submit my MCAT score when I am applying to the program?
You cannot electronically send your scores to the VCU Graduate School. Instead, you must send a score report as a PDF. This is accomplished by visiting the AAMC MCAT website at https://services.aamc.org/30/scoreReportingWeb/. After logging in, click on “My
Reports” in the header and then click on “Print Score Reports”. Click on the “next” button to preview your score report.

The next page will have your newly created score report. There will be a 16-character verification code underneath your name at the top of the report. The Graduate Office uses this verification code to confirm your score with the AAMC.

Click on the “Print Report” button on the top right hand side of the page. When the print dialog window comes up, choose to print the page as a PDF document. Email the PDF document of your score report to gradmail@vcu.edu.

- **How do I submit my DAT score when I am applying to the program?**
  An application package consists of the following:
  - Go to Step 5: Score Reports.
  - Scroll down the page to Request Score Report and click
  - Login to account with DENTPIN and password
  - Scroll down to the bottom of the page and check alternate Institution
  - Click Continue
  - The next screen will allow you to enter a name and address.

- **How long does it take for the admissions committee to reach a decision?**
  Once all application materials are received and processed, decisions are made within 2-4 weeks depending on number of applicants.

- **I have transcripts and test scores from my undergraduate career. Can I meet with someone prior to applying to the Certificate program to have my questions answered?**
  We would gladly schedule an appointment if you feel your questions cannot be answered clearly through email or telephone.

**Is This Program For You?**

- **If I recently decided to change my career and I want to apply to medical or dental school, will this program help me fulfill the prerequisites required?**
  No. This is a graduate program designed for students who already have completed the pre-requisites. It is not a program for those who have few or none of the pre-requisites and wish to complete courses not yet attempted. Professional schools want to see progress in graduate level course work if you already attempted undergraduate course work but have not performed at the “A” or “B” level. This program is to help improve your application if you lack the competitive grades necessary to enter graduate level programs in the health sciences.
VCU Premedical Graduate Certificate Program

Frequently Asked Questions

- If I have fulfilled the prerequisites required but have not taken the recommended upper division courses for medical or dental school (i.e. Biochemistry, Physiology, Genetics), would you recommend this program for me?
  No. Due to the rigorous course load and volume of material presented in the graduate courses, this program is not recommended for students without prior exposure to upper division science courses such as Biochemistry and Physiology. It would be ideal for applicants to take the undergraduate level courses before applying to the CERT program.

- If it has been years since I have taken a science course, is this program for me?
  No. The courses in this program are graduate level courses that are both rigorous and comprehensive. It would be better for you to take undergraduate level upper division science courses.

After Being Accepted

- What should I do before the program begins?
  A professional school application is composed of many aspects such as GPA, MCAT/DAT, personal statement, letters of recommendation, clinical experience, volunteer experience, etc. Work on other parts of your application especially clinical experience and volunteer experience.

- If my MCAT or DAT is below admissions standards of professional schools, should I retake the MCAT or DAT prior to or during the course of this program?
  Generally, we recommend that students wait until completing the program to retake the standardized exam. The exposure to basic sciences and MCAT/DAT prep course are likely to improve your scores. We only recommend students take the MCAT or DAT before the program if they have sufficient time to study and are scoring within their target range on practice tests.

- If I apply to the medical school while attending VCU CERT program, does VCU School of Medicine automatically hold my AMCAS application for Fall semester grades?
  Enrollment in the CERT program does not guarantee VCU SOM will hold your application for Fall semester grades. Generally, VCU SOM will place CERT student applicants on hold for grades if they have qualifying attributes, such as strong upward trend in GPA over past one or two years, competitive MCAT score of 30+, and significant clinical experience.