

Pre-Health Course Selection Summary

What is Pre-Health?

At Fordham, pre-health is considered a program of study towards future application to the health professions. This program of study, on its own, does not reach the level of a major, a minor or a concentration. Pre-requisite coursework is defined by the student's choice of future health profession. **While upper division coursework varies by profession, all require biology and general chemistry as foundational courses.**

The pre-requisite coursework can lead to a science major or minor, and while not required by any profession, STEM majors are often the most direct route. However, students should be well aware that majors in the humanities and the social sciences are always welcomed by health professions admissions offices, who seek a wide range of experiences in their incoming classes. Now is the time to indulge a love of learning and expand your academic horizons if you so choose. Majors need not be declared until sophomore year, and therefore we encourage you to take some time and explore through the core curriculum. Taking a path that meets your own academic goals and interests is the appropriate route. Below are possible ways to begin in your freshman year.

Traditional Path

The traditional path, which prepares students to apply for professional program admissions after their junior year, consists of the following coursework during your first semester:

- biology plus lab
- general chemistry plus lab
- a calculus or pre-calculus course if indicated by the FCRH math placement exam*
- a core course in either theology, philosophy or composition.

**If a math course is not indicated for first semester or if AP credit has already satisfied the math requirement then two core courses should be taken.*

Beginning Slowly

Some students may opt to explore an interest in pursuing pre-health studies by beginning with just one science course. Students who choose this path may take summer coursework, at Fordham or elsewhere with approval, to "catch up" to the traditional path, or they may opt to take the full four years of undergraduate study to complete the pre-health coursework meaning that they would apply for admissions during the year after graduation. That's a personal choice and does not need to be decided immediately. First semester courses would consist of the following:

- biology with lab or general chemistry with lab,
- the math requirement that was indicated by the FCRH math placement exam*
- three core courses.

**If a math course is not indicated for first semester or if AP credit has already satisfied the math requirement then four core courses should be taken.*

Appropriate core course areas for the first semester are theology, philosophy and composition, and possibly coursework of personal interest that may lead to a major or minor outside of the sciences. Refer to the core curriculum requirements in literature, history, social sciences, and the fine and performing arts for options.

Beginning after Freshman Year

It's not necessary for pre-health students to begin their study of the sciences in the first year. Often students enter Fordham with thoughts of professional school but prefer to adjust academically and socially before taking college-level science coursework. Such a student would register for five core courses in the first semester and consider enrolling in the pre-health symposium, described below. Students who choose this option may take coursework over multiple summers if they are seeking the traditional path, or may opt to take the full four years of undergraduate study to complete their pre-health coursework.

Pre-Health Symposium

Pre-health students are also expected to enroll in the 1.0 credit **pre-health symposium**, which is graded pass/fail. The symposium is not considered a class, and does not count towards your course total. It uses upperclassmen as Peer Mentors who help first year students navigate the transition to college-level science courses and the study skills necessary to succeed, as well as providing information about a variety of careers.

Thinking Ahead

During your freshman year, we suggest that you become familiar with the requirements of your particular profession. STEM majors should be mindful that major-specific course requirements, shown on degree works guidance, must be fulfilled above and beyond pre-health coursework. For example, if your future profession does not require coursework in physics, for some majors, you are still required to take Physics I and II.

It is important to consider the possible trade-off for taking slower paths. For many, starting slowly helps facilitate success; it's how you spend your time rather than when you apply that impacts acceptances. But it may be more challenging to complete some STEM majors and the later years may be more intense. Again this is a personal choice to be considered carefully with your advisor.

Last but not least, sometimes students change their pace during freshman year. If for example you decide to drop a pre-health course, please discuss your future coursework with Dean Watts or your advisor.

Final Advising Notes

-Non-science majors should keep in mind their language requirement and discuss this in advising.

-Physics and Engineering/Physics majors may see degree works reflecting a slightly different set of courses, which is appropriate both for pre-health, and those majors.

-Pre-health students should note that "Introductory Sociology" and "Foundations of Psychology" are either required or strongly recommended for all health professions programs.

-Regardless of what path you choose for pre-health studies at Fordham be sure to keep these **keys to success** in mind during your first year.

- Recognize that this is a transition time socially, academically, and even emotionally. It can take time to adjust to your new surroundings and your new routine.
- Take it slowly and know that there are many resources in place to help all students. Please do not hesitate to seek out your advisor for assistance and connections to other helpful resources.
- Above all, commit fully to whichever path you chose, and recognize that there are many ways to prepare for professional school. Don't let anyone else tell you how you "should" proceed.