

Postbaccalaureate Programs

Postbaccalaureate Programs (most often referred to as post-bacs) are essentially graduate level bridge programs for students who need to work on their academic credentials before attending medical or dental school. Some students choose these programs before applying to a professional program. Others decide to apply after not being accepted to a professional program. Several types exist: academic record-enhancement programs, underrepresented* student programs, and programs for people changing careers (offering undergraduate prerequisite courses). These programs also differ in the types of degrees awarded. Some grant certificates, others offer a traditional master's degree (generally 2 years, require a thesis, academic focus on "hard" science), and some are special master's programs (1-2 years, no thesis, and focused on either applied or medical science).

Good Websites: <http://services.aamc.org/postbac/>

Program at IUPUI: <http://www.biology.iupui.edu/PPNTBrochure.pdf>

Things to consider with post-bac programs:

- Think critically about the gaps in your application record. Is your science GPA at least a 3.3? If not, one of these programs may work for you. If your overall GPA is the problem, you may need some other undergraduate non-science credits to help your GPA.
- You might also need to consider replacing some of your undergraduate grades instead of a post-bac program.
- Would my record and my knowledge base benefit from a year or two of intensive science study?
- What can I do with this degree if I don't get accepted to medical/dental school following the program.
- Think about the timing issues. If you are applying to professional school during your first year of post-bac study, you will not have grades in time to show the professional school any improvement.
- Talk to the admissions offices at medical/dental school if you were not accepted. They are generally willing to have a frank discussion of your application and tell you what they would like you to work on.

**How is underrepresented defined?*

Programs define this differently, but they often base it on the student coming from a medically underserved community. Being medically underserved is often based on socioeconomic level and/or ethnicity. Medical and dental schools also use the concept of a disadvantaged status which they define as being from a medically underserved population and/or being on state and/or federal assistance.



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