Post-baccalaureate Programs

Post-baccalaureate 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 health professions programs. 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).

**Searchable Database of Programs:** [http://services.aamc.org/postbac/](http://services.aamc.org/postbac/)

**IUPUI Program** (not on database) [http://biology.iupui.edu/sites/default/files/binder1.pdf](http://biology.iupui.edu/sites/default/files/binder1.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.
- Depending on the program you are interested in, you might also need to consider replacing some of your undergraduate grades instead of a post-bac program.
- Would your record and your knowledge base benefit from a year or two of intensive science study?
- What can you do with this degree if you don’t get accepted to a professional program following the completion of the degree.
- 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 (or at least only 1 semester of grades).
- Talk to the admissions offices at professional schools if you were not accepted. They are generally willing to have a frank discussion of your application and tell you what they would like for you to improve.

*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.