

WHAT ABOUT CLAIMING AP/IB CREDIT?

While we generally recommend that as a Pre-Health Professions student you not “claim” AP/IB credit for prerequisite courses such as Biology, Chemistry, English, Physics, and Mathematics, these are important decisions that you must make and that require your careful consideration.

It may seem like a convenient way to eliminate hours from your degree plan and accelerate your path to professional school, but claiming credit can be detrimental to your preparation for success on entrance exams and in professional studies. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses vary in rigor and generally are not equivalent to the rigor of UT Austin courses. However, your AP/IB courses can be good preparation for UT Austin courses, providing the opportunity to master the material, enhance your GPA, and demonstrate your academic ability and readiness for advanced study in health professions schools.

Unless you are academically very well prepared, it is best to start with the introductory courses. Please consult with your academic advisor for help in determining your readiness for higher level science courses. Most schools that accept AP/IB credit will expect you to take additional upper-division course work in that area of study.

Note: *Baylor College of Medicine* does not accept AP, IB or other credit-by-exam for any prerequisite courses. The prerequisites for BCM include specific requirements in Expository Writing as well as the Humanities and Social/Behavioral Sciences. See details on [Specific Requirements: Baylor, TCU, and TMSAS on the Pre-Medical Pathway Page](#).

Here are our recommendations.

SCIENCE COURSES

Biology and Chemistry

If you claim credit in courses like BIO 311D and BIO 311C you may not be adequately prepared for the rigorous upper-division biology courses here at UT Austin. CH 301 and CH 302, your first college level chemistry course at UT Austin, prepare you for both CH 320M (Organic Chemistry I) and professional school entrance exams that test in chemistry.

Biology and Chemistry honors students may claim test credit, register in the honors sequence for Biology or Chemistry, and take additional upper-division credits in those areas, making up for the lack of first-year hours in those disciplines.

Your UT Austin faculty will expect you to be prepared to learn and understand the material conceptually and theoretically in order to understand test questions well enough to earn As on your exams. They will teach material beyond the textbook that was not presented in your high school courses. You will be in second year courses with many students who took General Biology and General Chemistry here and are well prepared to handle the exams in the more advanced courses. They will set the standard for the grade scale or curve in your classes.

Physics

Physics is required to prepare for some health professions schools. In some cases, you will be tested on Physics in your professional school entrance exam. We strongly recommend taking physics at the college level if you are preparing for a professional school that requires physics.

Calculus and Statistics

For the Texas medical schools, if you take statistics in the classroom here at UT Austin, you can use statistics to satisfy the math prerequisite. Then if your degree plan or any of your science courses require calculus, you can decide with your academic advisor whether to use credit-by-exam or take the course(s) in the classroom.

For all health professions schools, both in Texas and out-of-state, it is important to check their admissions web sites for any restrictions and preferences on credit-by-exam.

NON-SCIENCE COURSES

It is usually acceptable to claim credit-by-exam for general education or core curriculum requirements such as history and government. Claiming this type of credit may give you time to take other courses that will prepare you for professional school and school entrance exams. On the other hand, critical thinking skills and an understanding of ethics, society, community, cultures, history, and human behavior are important for your success now and throughout your professional and personal life. Taking college level courses is a good way to develop these areas of knowledge.

Verbal skills are extremely important to your success in your undergraduate course work, your entrance exams, in professional school, and as a health care professional. You must be able to read efficiently, at a good rate, with high comprehension and critical thinking skills. You must develop and maintain a good vocabulary. Many admissions deans recommend reading well-written novels in addition to your textbook material.

***English Literature, Rhetoric, Writing**

If you claim credit for freshman writing and literature courses, we recommend taking additional courses in the classroom at the college level. Even if your high school verbal skills were strong, this type of academic skill weakens over time if you do not use it.

***Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities**

Most health professions schools require or recommend course work in these areas. Health care professionals must have a good understanding of social and behavioral sciences, ethics, policies and regulations, and procedural information.

***Please see note about *Baylor College of Medicine* above**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Although the public Texas medical and dental schools accept AP credit for admission, the Baylor College of Medicine and some out-of-state schools do not. Schools vary in their policies and perspectives on credit-by-exam. Schools that accept AP highly recommend taking additional upper-division courses in the same subject area to make up for using AP credits for prerequisite courses. The credit-by-exam policies vary among the health profession disciplines (such as pharmacy, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, etc.) and from school to school within each professional area.

See details in the online on the [Pre-Med Course Requirements](#) on the Pre-Medical Pathway page. It is also important to check individual school admissions web sites or contact their admissions offices to be sure about each school's expectations. Taking courses in the college classroom will help you to compete for admission and to succeed in professional school. We strongly recommend that you use these courses as building blocks that will be the foundation for your future career.