Freshman Year

- Get to know your pre-major advisor, your instructors, and Professor Beverly Sher, William & Mary’s premedical advisor. Schedule an appointment with her during your first year on campus. (email: btsher@wm.edu)
- For announcements of interest to premeds, subscribe to the healthcareersadvising@lists.wm.edu listserv. Instructions are available on the front page of Professor Sher’s website, http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/btsher/home
- Join the Health Careers Club. At HCC meetings, speakers provide information on topics of interest to premeds, as well as to students interested in other health careers. Meetings will be announced via the listserv.
- If you’re interested, sign up for the Health Careers Club’s premed mentor program, which will pair you with an experienced student who can answer your questions about the premed track. The signup procedure will be announced on Dr. Sher’s listserv in early September.
- Talk to medical school representatives when they come to William & Mary. Their visits will be announced via the listserv.
- Get involved in extracurricular, service, and clinical activities. School breaks are good times to do some shadowing, and you can volunteer in clinical settings at home during breaks or here in Williamsburg during the school year. See the Handouts section of Professor Sher’s website for a list of Williamsburg-area clinical opportunities.
- Get to know the nice people at the Cohen Career Center. See the handout on what the Career Center has to offer premeds on Professor Sher’s website.
- Read the AAMC website’s student pages, which will be useful to you throughout your undergraduate and medical school years. See https://students-residents.aamc.org/ to get started.
- Start reading the health-related articles in a good national newspaper, such as the Washington Post or New York Times. Swem Library subscribes to The New England Journal of Medicine, Health Affairs, JAMA, and other medical journals, too, and the policy articles and opinion pieces these journals publish might be of interest.
- See https://www.aamc.org/admissions/dataandresearch/477182/corecompetencies.html for a description of the AAMC’s core competencies for entering medical students. Well-chosen coursework and extracurricular activities can help you develop these competencies, which you need to be able to demonstrate by the time you apply to medical school.

Sophomore Year

- If you are interested and qualified, apply to the EVMS and VCU early assurance programs. A handout describing these programs is available on Dr. Sher’s website. EVMS program applications will be available outside Dr. Sher’s office in ISC-3, room 2283 at the end of fall semester (watch for the announcement on the listserv) and due on Valentine’s Day; VCU program applications will be available outside Dr. Sher’s office right before spring break (watch for the announcement on the listserv), and due in late March. Both applications require three recommendation letters from professors who have taught you: two science, one non-science.
- Continue contact with Professor Sher – review your progress to date.
- Continue your involvement in the activities described in the Freshman Year section of this handout.

Because many people now spend a year or more between college and medical school doing non-academic things, such as full-time medical scribing, research, or volunteer work, the premedical track is no longer tightly coupled to the undergraduate track. Thus, the best way to think about the culmination of the premed track is as follows:

Pre-Application Year

- Schedule an appointment with Professor Sher in the fall semester to review your program and plans. Alumni who are no longer in Williamsburg are welcome to schedule phone appointments.
- Give yourself at least four months to study for the MCAT. Health Careers Club hosts a panel on MCAT prep in September in which students who have done well on the exam talk about their study strategies; notes from that meeting are posted outside Professor Sher’s office. The AAMC website has a useful guide to building a study plan: see http://offers.aamc.org/mcat-study.
- MCAT registration information is available at www.aamc.org. Test center spaces are limited, so register early.
- To avoid delaying your medical school applications, you should take the MCAT no later than June of the year in which you intend to start applying to medical school (and earlier would be better.) Do not take the MCAT until you have finished the courses that cover the material on the exam!
- Continue your involvement in Health Careers Club and your service, clinical, and other extracurricular activities.
- Prepare for interviews by scheduling a mock medical school interview at the Career Center.
Application Year

- Attend Professor Sher’s annual presentation on the application process in mid-April (this will be announced via the listserv.) The handouts from the meeting will be available outside her office afterwards, but going to the meeting will allow you to participate in the discussion and, most importantly, hear your fellow students’ questions.
- Visit the AAMC website to familiarize yourself with the AMCAS application process; begin filling out the AMCAS application when it becomes available in early May. If you’re planning to apply through AACOMAS or TMDSAS, learn about those processes by visiting the appropriate websites.
- By the end of the final exam period in May, make sure you have done the following:
  o Requested letters of recommendation; asked recommenders to write their letters before they leave for summer vacation, as the letters will be needed by admissions committees as they review secondary applications and decide whether to interview applicants. Professor Sher finishes writing her letters (at least, those that are requested in a timely way!) by the end of July.
  o Prepared a brief summary of extracurricular activities and honors for your recommenders, listing your clinical, service, research, and other activities (be sure to include physician shadowing!)
  o Prepared a statement answering the question, “Why do you want to become a doctor?” for the use of your recommenders
  o Requested that transcripts be sent to AMCAS by our Registrar’s Office; be sure to request that your transcript not be sent to AMCAS until spring grades are available.
- Complete a Letter of Recommendation Background Information form, if you want Professor Sher to write a letter for you (highly recommended by the medical schools). These forms are available outside Dr. Sher’s office in ISC-3, room 2283.
- Apply to medical schools (10-12 would be fine; no more than 15) over the summer. The earliest you can submit your AMCAS application is early June; students who file their applications in the first week of June generally start receiving secondary applications by the end of the month. VCU advises applicants to file the AMCAS application by August 1, and UVA says that AMCAS applications filed after September 1 are considered late.
  Don’t wait until the medical schools’ fall AMCAS deadlines to submit your medical school applications! As a UVA admissions official has memorably said, the reason that they’re called deadlines is that if you wait that long, you’re dead...
- Complete secondary applications within two weeks of the date that they arrive in your email in-box. Do not wait until all of your recommendation letters are available to submit your portion of the secondary application.
- Keep an eye on your junk mail- occasionally, secondaries and interview invitations can end up there.
- Discuss your application progress with Prof. Sher. She will be happy to answer your questions.
- Continue your extracurricular activities, including Health Careers Club.
- Maintain your academic standards – it’s not over yet!
- Keep up your HOPE. Waitlisted students may be accepted well into the summer, right before medical school starts.