VCU Premedical Graduate Certificate Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the history of students completing the CERT program and getting into Medical School?
   • The **graduating class of 2015** consisted of 63 students. Of those who reported their current status, **80%** have been accepted to medical or dental school, and **87%** remain involved in healthcare/biomedical science.
   The **graduating class of 2014** consisted of 60 students. Of those who reported their current status, **81%** have been accepted to medical or dental school, and **98%** remain involved in healthcare/biomedical science.
   The **graduating class of 2013** consisted of 62 students. Of those who reported their current status, **85%** have been accepted to medical or dental school, and **100%** remain involved in healthcare/biomedical science.

2. Will we have an opportunity to meet with the Deans of Admission from the Medical and Dental schools?
   • Yes, the Program Coordinators and Administrators will organize a time for all pre-medical and pre-dental students to hear the respective Deans of Admissions speak. Additionally, all pre-dental students will have a time where they meet with staff/faculty in the Dental Admissions Office one-on-one for application counseling. Due to the close relationship between the CERT program and VCU School of Medicine/Dentistry, our students have the opportunity to contact each Dean of Admission to schedule a time to meet and discuss their application.

3. How closely does the curriculum match the first year of medical or dental school?
   • Our curriculum very closely mimics the first year of medical school or dental school regarding material and level of rigor. Many of the same professors who teach in the CERT program teach in M1 or D1 courses at VCU. Additionally, many of the professors use active learning methods in the course, which is highly recommended by the LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education).

4. What is the timeline for a typical CERT student applying to professional school after CERT?
   • Typically, CERT students will apply to professional school the following June after completing the program in early May. We encourage students to submit their application early to AADSAS or AMCAS, but can take the DAT or MCAT after submitting their primary application. We suggest the latest you take the admissions exam is the end of June.
   • It is essential that MD applicants apply to the VCU School of Medicine through AMCAS early so that the MD Admissions Office can review the application and schedule an interview for the reserved interview slots if eligible for a guaranteed interview. Applicants that apply later in the cycle will still get an interview if they meet the requirements, but will be in the regular scheduling pool.

5. What does a typical CERT student do in their glide year?
   • CERT students engage in a multitude of activities during the glide year. In most cases, students will do something that will enhance their application to professional school. We have a large number of students who continue into the M.S. Program, as well as many that
spend a year working as a medical scribe. Students will also continue to be involved with volunteering opportunities which they began during the CERT year.

6. **What is the average increase in MCAT/DAT scores after completion of the CERT program?**
   - The average increase in MCAT score after completion of the CERT program is 7 points. The average increase in DAT score after completion of the CERT program is ~2-3 points.

7. **What does “guaranteed interview/early file review” mean exactly?**
   - Students who successfully finish the program in two semesters with a GPA of 3.5 or higher and an MCAT score of 505 or DAT score of 20 are guaranteed either an interview at VCU School of Medicine or early file review at VCU School of Dentistry. These are both able to be used only one time and must be used within two years following completion of the CERT Program.

8. **Can I get a letter of recommendation from the CERT program?**
   - Every student will receive a letter of recommendation from the program advisor.

9. **What are the application deadline dates?**
   - For Fall Matriculation the application deadline is July 15. Any applications received after July 15 will be review on a space-availability basis. Due to rolling admissions, the class may fill before application deadlines. For Spring Matriculation, the application deadline will be November 15th. Applicants are encouraged to apply early. Please be advised that there is a short delay between when the VCU Graduate School receives and processes your application documents and when we can view and review your materials for a decision.

10. **What are the average MCAT/DAT scores for CERT Applicants?**
    - Average MCAT for matriculation for the class of 2019 was a 505.
    - Average DAT for matriculation for the class of 2019 was 19.

11. **Is there a difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition?**
    - The difference for in-state and out of state is roughly $330 per semester.

12. **Is the MCAT/DAT prep course price included with my tuition, what is the format?**
    - Yes it is included in the tuition, and it is an online course. We are currently using the Kaplan online course.

13. **Are classes recorded?**
    - All of the required courses are recorded and can be accessed 24/7 through Blackboard. However, we strongly encourage our students to attend class so that they can expose themselves to the material in a multitude of ways.

14. **What does clinical shadowing entail?**
    - To enhance clinical experience, we offer a clinical shadowing elective in which students can shadow physicians or dentists in various specialties within the VCU Medical Center. The Clinical Coordinator matches pre-medical students with physicians in their specialty of interest and, for pre-dental students, organizes rotations with dentists at VCU School of Dentistry or within the Richmond community.

15. **Does the CERT program accept international students?**
    - Yes, the CERT program does accept international students. However, you will need to contact the school of medicine/school of dentistry admissions office regarding their policies on accepting international students.

16. **How do I complete an application?**
• Please complete an online application. Create an account and log in. Fill out the information appropriately. To find the program select the following:
  
  i. School: School of Medicine
  ii. Start Term: Fall
  iii. Program Level: Certificate
  iv. Campus: MCV
  v. Then select Pre-Medical Graduate Health Sciences

17. What is the average price of living for Richmond?
• Follow the link below for the average cost of living for the city of Richmond, VA. https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/city/virginia/richmond

18. How do I establish in-state residency for Virginia?
• Eligibility for in-state tuition privileges is governed by Â§23-7.4 of the Code of Virginia. The provisions of this law are set forth, defined, and discussed in the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia’s Domicile Guidelines

  Twelve months of continuous residency in the state of Virginia. Students who are living in Virginia for educational purposes only are unlikely to qualify for in-state tuition rates. During the period of residency, proof of residency must be documented.

19. Does the CERT program offer any scholarships?
• No.

20. Is there a way to get a campus tour?
• Prospective and accepted students alike can contact the CERT office to schedule meetings and tours at premedcert@vcuhealth.org.

21. How do I get in contact with other people in my CERT class before school starts?
• The CERT administrative staff will set up a Facebook page for the incoming class. The link will be sent in your acceptance email.

If you have a question that is not listed on the FAQ, please contact the CERT office via phone (804) 828-9501 or email premedcert@vcuhealth.org.