

Frequently Asked Questions about the WCU Master of Biomedical Sciences Program (updated 5/9/2012)

What will a Master of Biomedical Sciences (MBS) do for me?

Offered by the William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Hattiesburg, MS, the MBS program offers post baccalaureate students an opportunity to pursue graduate study in the biomedical sciences. The MBS is a versatile non-thesis Master's degree designed to thoroughly prepare participants for the professional study of medicine, dentistry, and other health-related sciences. In addition, MBS graduates are more competitive applicants for positions in science education and leadership, biomedical research careers, and doctoral (PhD) programs.

What is the advantage of having an MBS from William Carey University?

The MBS curriculum is designed to provide highly motivated students an intensive learning experience in the medical sciences. A key component of our program, core courses are taken along with the first year medical students of the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine. This feature provides students with an excellent opportunity to study the structure and function of the human body in a medical context.

How will an MBS degree help me get into professional school?

Many individuals wish to pursue professional degrees in osteopathic and allopathic medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary sciences. As a result, admission to professional programs continues to be highly competitive. While success in the MBS program does not guarantee admission to other professional programs, the degree will strengthen academic credentials and demonstrate the aptitude to succeed in professional programs. Once admitted, students have a strong foundation to build on in their professional program.

What is your success rate at entry into medical school?

The WCUMBS program is still very new and only has two years of graduates. Of the 19 MBS graduates over these two years, 16 were accepted into a medical school, mostly WCUCOM, and one went to dental school.

What courses are offered, when are they offered, and how long will it take to complete the MBS program?

Fall courses include Human Gross Anatomy, Histology, and Embryology/Genetics. Spring courses include Neuroanatomy, Immunology, Current Topics in Biomedical Science, and a choice of either Medical Physiology or Medical Biochemistry.

MBS courses will adhere to the schedule of the first year medical students in WCU's College of Osteopathic Medicine. For the upcoming academic year, orientation is

August 3 and classes begin Monday, August 6. Classes end May 17. Degrees are granted in the August commencement ceremony.

Is there a research component or thesis requirement?

This is a nonthesis degree. There is no required laboratory research but there will be components of the curriculum related to research skills and the biomedical literature. The absence of a requirement for laboratory research and thesis preparation allows us to arrange coursework into a much shorter time frame than a traditional masters program.

Is this a portal program?

No. While the MBS program is within the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine, completion of the program does not guarantee admission into the WCUCOM. However, a strong showing in the MBS program is viewed favorably by the WCUCOM admissions committee, particularly when coupled with a competitive MCAT score. Faculty members of the WCUCOM admissions committee are usually instructors for the MBS courses.

Will any of the courses allow me to waive first-year medical school courses?

These possibilities must be discussed with individual medical programs, but the norm is that courses from masters programs do not substitute for courses in medical schools. The WCUCOM does not allow any prior courses to substitute for medical courses and this includes courses from the MBS program.

May I apply to professional school and receive recommendations from the MBS faculty before completing it?

MBS students can, and usually do, apply to professional schools while enrolled in the program. Our program staff will do everything possible to support the student's application, regardless of when students wish to apply to professional school. Beginning fall 2012 we will be assisting students with the various components of the medical school application and will provide assistance with interview skills. Students interested in applying to professional schools should pay close attention to application deadlines and specific admission requirements.

Is there an application deadline for the MBS program and how do I apply?

Applications for admission are reviewed beginning in January and ending July 1 at the latest. Early applications are encouraged since later applicants may be placed on a waiting list once the 20 seats are reserved. Offers will be made to those on the waiting list as soon as a position is available.

What standardized tests are accepted?

The MCAT is the preferred test, with a minimum score of 20 required. Alternatively, a GRE score of 900 (Q+V) on the old scale or a total score of 290 on the new GRE scale will be considered the minimum, although a particularly low score in either category will be problematic. Use the major field code 0609 (medical sciences) under the WCU institution code (1907).

Additionally, a DAT score of 15 or higher will be acceptable. Other comparable standardized tests may be considered at the discretion of the MBS committee.

What GPA do I need?

An overall GPA on undergraduate coursework of 2.75 or higher is required. The admissions committee will review the entire transcript with a particular interest in your performance in science courses.

Do I need to complete all pre-medical classes?

Students will not be allowed to matriculate into the program unless they have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university and all prerequisite course requirements have been completed, including: Physics – 8 credit hours including laboratories, General/Inorganic Chemistry – 8 credit hours including laboratories, Organic Chemistry – 8 credit hours including laboratories, and Biology – 12 credit hours. Courses pertinent to mammalian biology are particularly encouraged. These could include mammalian/comparative anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, neuroscience, immunology, cell biology, developmental biology, genetics, etc. There is not a minimum GPA for prerequisites or a minimum grade for individual prerequisite courses. Prerequisite courses should be completed or in progress at the time of application.

Is an interview required?

The program does not require interviews at this time. At their discretion, the admissions committee may hold a telephone interview with candidates.

Can I just use the same recommendation letters I put in my medical school application?

Students who have applied to the WCUCOM through AACOMAS may now give permission for their WCUCOM application to be substituted for portions of the MBS application. This includes MCAT scores, personal statement, and letters of recommendation. See the MBS Application Checklist for additional details.

What is the cost of the program?

The tuition for this one year program is \$20,000, which is comparable to similar programs around the country. Students are not required to have health insurance, but are strongly encouraged to do so. Students are encouraged to purchase and wear the same scrub tops as the first year medical students. Books are extra, although the WCU library has an extensive collection of electronic medical books and databases. A book list is sent to students prior to the start of the program. A laptop computer is required.

Is financial aid available?

Unfortunately at this time the only financial aid available to MBS students is graduate student loans such as Stafford loans. Tuition waivers and graduate assistantships are currently not available.

Can the application fee be waived?

No.

Is a seat deposit required?

Since class size is limited, a successful applicant will need to make a \$750 nonrefundable deposit to hold a position in the class. The deposit will be applied to the tuition upon matriculation.

Do you offer MCAT preparation?

At this time we do not offer MCAT preparation. We encourage MBS students wishing to take (or retake) the MCAT to take it at the end of the summer just before beginning the MBS program. That gives students the summer to prepare either on their own or using one of the commercially available courses such as Kaplan or Princeton Review. This prior summer is also an excellent time to do shadowing of physicians or dentists.