What does it mean to be Pre-Chiropractic?

Students who self-identify as pre-chiropractic can consult with Pre-Healthcare Advising about matters pertaining to their academic studies, extracurricular activities, and applications. Chiropractic schools evaluate applicants holistically across multiple criteria including GPA (both cumulative and science), exposure to the profession, letters of recommendation (typically from one chiropractor and one or two professors), extracurricular activities, background checks (legal and social records), and in some cases GRE test scores. Although 135 quarter credits (three years) of undergraduate study are minimally required by chiropractic schools, many states require chiropractors to have a Bachelor’s degree in order to practice.

Pre-Chiropractic Education

Most schools desire credits accumulated across the Life and Physical Sciences as well as the Humanities and Social Sciences. Common requirements include courses with related lab work in biology, chemistry (inorganic and organic), and physics, as well as GUR areas of English, communications, and psychology. Research schools of your choice to confirm all requirements are met as admission requirements are variable.

No Pre-Chiropractic major exists at Western. This allows you to use your undergraduate years to explore many academic fields, to develop basic skills and knowledge, to demonstrate expertise, and to experience a field of study (major) of your choice. Pick a major that you enjoy and in which you excel. Pre-healthcare students have majored in diverse subjects. Although the sciences are common, other popular disciplines include Anthropology, Communications, Psychology, History, Philosophy, languages, self-designed programs, and even combined majors.

Program Checkpoints (Note: each person’s path will look different; use this as a guide ONLY)

**Freshman year:**
- Take Math Placement Test; begin appropriate math sequence to take MATH 114 (for Chemistry), MATH 115 (for Physics); continue into sophomore year.
- Begin General Chemistry series as soon as possible: CHEM 121, 122, 123 [or Honors: 125, 126, 225].
- After completing CHEM 121 or 125, begin General Biology series: BIOL 204, 205, 206.
- Work on GUR courses, including ENG 101, PSY 101 and COMM.
- Begin prerequisite courses for possible major.
- Meet with Pre-Healthcare Advisors (OM 280) to develop a plan of study.

**Sophomore year:**
- Research chiropractic programs and requirements.
- Take Statistics: MATH 240 or a major equivalent if suitable (or do junior year).
- Begin Organic Chemistry: CHEM 351, 352, 353 series with labs 354 & 355 or 356; or take CHEM 251.
- Continue work on GUR; select HUM and SSC courses based on Chiropractic program requirements.
- Declare or apply for major, if not already done so.
- Begin shadowing Chiropractors sophomore and/or junior year.

**Junior year:**
- Take Physics 114, 115, if not already started.
- Take CHEM 375 (if CHEM 251 was completed); or take CHEM 471 if required for major.
- Prepare for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), if needed, to be taken the summer after junior year.
- Draft personal statement.
- Request letters of recommendation from professors and professionals.
- Apply directly to each desired chiropractic school.

**Senior year:**
- Prepare for possible school interview with a mock interview (or do spring of junior year).
- Complete major, GUR, WP, other graduation requirements, and remaining chiropractic requirements.
- Two quarters before graduation, meet with declared major advisor and apply for graduation.

**Additionally:**

**NOTE:** Advanced Placement may not be recognized by all professional schools as college-earned credit. Check with each school. ([It is better to view any earned credits as qualifying to enroll in upper-division courses rather than as “testing out” of prerequisites.]

**GRE**—Graduate Record Exam results provide measurement of (1) Verbal Reasoning, (2) Quantitative Reasoning, and (3) Analytical Writing. GRE information is available at [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre).

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Core Courses

Course requirements for chiropractic schools vary but, regardless of your major, prerequisites commonly accepted by many schools include:

- **LIFE & PHYSICAL SCIENCES**, ½ with labs (36-48 quarter credits) selected from courses in:
  - General Chemistry with lab: CHEM 121¹ (5 credits) or Honors CHEM 125¹, [continue one of these series for most science majors and to proceed to the Organic Chemistry series]
  - Organic Chemistry and/or Biochemistry with corresponding labs: CHEM 251 (5) and 375 (4) or
    - Some majors require Organic Chemistry sequence: CHEM 351, 352, 353, with labs 354 & 355 or 356 (4, 4, 3, 3, 3 or 2) and Biochemistry sequence 471, 472 (4, 4)
  - General Biology² with labs: BIOL 204³, 205 (5, 5)
  - Anatomy & Physiology with labs: BIOL 348, 349 (5, 5)
  - Physics² with labs: PHYS 114 (5)⁴, 115 (5)
  - Statistics: MATH 240 (5) or a major equivalent stats course
  - Check each school for additional options for this section

- **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES** (24-36 quarter credits) with ENG, COMM and PSY recommended [Note: WWU GURs include 12 credits HUM and 12 credits SSC]

¹ Completion of MATH 114 or Math Placement into MATH 115 or higher is a prerequisite for CHEM 121 or CHEM 125
² Complete the series (third course) for some majors
³ CHEM 121 or CHEM 125 is a prerequisite for BIOL 204
⁴ MATH 115 is a co-requisite to PHYS 114

**NOTE:** It is imperative that students begin general chemistry as early in their program as possible.

The courses listed below apply to WWU GUR as well as some prerequisites for chiropractic schools.

- **ACOM:** ENG 101
- **BCOM:** COMM 101, 224, 235; ENG 202
- **CCOM:** ENG 201
- **SSC:** PSY 101
- **QSR:** MATH 114, 115, 240
- **LSCI:** BIOL 204, 205
  - CHEM 121, 122 [or Honors: CHEM 125, 126], 251
  - PHYS 115
- **SCI:** PHYS 114

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**DECLARING A MAJOR:** Always check with the department of your intended major for clarification about how to declare. Many programs (such as Behavioral Neuroscience, Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology, and others) do not allow students to declare a major until certain prerequisites have been met, such as having taken specific courses or maintaining a certain GPA. Many departments allow you to sign up as a “pre-major” which will keep you updated on major requirements as well as events happening within the department.

**ACCESS TO CLASSES:** Due to high student demand for many upper-division courses, especially in the sciences, many departments give enrollment priority to students who are declared in the major over those seeking enrollment for elective credit or as a prerequisite for professional school. Registration details for heavily impacted courses and programs change frequently and are posted at department websites.

**REPEATING COURSES:** In general, this is not viewed favorably by professional schools but an isolated case may be acceptable. It will likely also require an explanation on your application, so discuss your options first with a Pre-healthcare Advisor. Both dropping and repeating courses can have impact on eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, and athletic participation. Speak to an advisor in each area that applies to you when making your decision.

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**Resources**

To join the advisors’ Pre-Chiropractic Listserv, e-mail Renee.Murray@wwu.edu with SUBJECT: pre-chiropractic listserv, Last name, First name, student number, major & concentration (if declared).

**WWU Pre-health Pinterest:** www.pinterest.com/wwuprehealth/

Join Associated Students Clubs at http://as.wwu.edu/clubs/

Council on Chiropractic Education: http://cce-usa.org

Association of Chiropractic Colleges: www.chirocolleges.org

American Chiropractic Association: www.acatoday.org

Graduate Record Exam (GRE): www.ets.org/gre/

Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org

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