

Important notes for Science majors who would like to study abroad:

As a science major, you will need to plan ahead, and plan carefully. It is never too early to start considering off-campus study, and it is possible to go abroad. In fact, we recently had a bio major who studied on not one, but two off-campus programs. **Notes:** Studying off-campus automatically fulfills one diversity requirement. It not possible to take sequence courses (bio, chem, etc.) in 2 different places- you must take both semesters in the same place. If you plan to attend medical school, see below. Otherwise, consider these options:

Senior year:

This is a good option for people who want to finish most or all major requirements before they go.

Junior Year:

If you choose to double up your sophomore and/or senior year, you will create an opening in your junior year. Make sure you fit in all of your requirements, and double up when you prefer. No need to go in the fall specifically, unless there are tests, fellowship, and grant applications due at that time. The program you're interested in may be offered only in fall or spring, or course selection could change every semester. Research that ahead of time.

Sophomore Year:

Want to go abroad before you dive deep in the sciences? This is certainly an option, although you must be aware that programs which offer science courses abroad have prerequisites, so you may run into trouble getting any courses to count toward your major. If, however, you're pursuing a minor, or another interest while abroad, and you've planned your academic career accordingly, that will not be an issue. Some programs give preference to juniors and seniors, but that is not always the case. Check the program eligibility.

First-year:

The only program designed to accommodate first-year students is our "Spring in the French-Speaking World" semester. The pre-requisite is 1-3 semesters of college French, or up to 2 years of high school French. Courses are taught in English and French, and there is an FYS offered every spring. The program starts in Quebec City, then moves to Rouen, France, and includes a week in Senegal, West Africa.

Want to go to medical school?

What you should know about MCATs:

Test on: General Chemistry, General Biology, General Physics, and Organic Chemistry

Test Dates: 3rd week in April, 3rd week in August (twice per year)

Scores are good for 3 years

What you should know about medical schools:

Applications are accepted starting May of junior year

Interviews begin in the fall following application

Acceptances are offered starting October 15

Average GPA of accepted applicants: 3.6

Average age of applicant: just under 26 years old

What you should know about taking required courses in summer:

Summer courses are not seen (by medical schools) as being equivalent to semester courses (they are perceived to be less rigorous, and there just isn't enough time for labs, etc.) This may not be as much of an issue for someone with a strong record, but it isn't advised, especially for organic chemistry.

With that, there are 3 possible ways to manage MCATs, medical school applications, and study abroad.

Plan #1 The well-planned, early bird plan:

Students who come to campus knowing that medical school is their goal should take 2 of the required (year-long) science courses in the first year. Some medical schools also require bio-chemistry, but that can be worked in later.

The ultimate plan, then, is as follows:

- First year: general chemistry
 General biology or physics (at SLU, most take bio first because that's their major)
- Second year: organic chemistry
 General biology or physics

You can then choose to take the MCATs at the end of your second year or in August before your junior year. If you do well on the MCATs, you have that out of the way and you can study abroad, as long as you are not off-campus the semester after you submit your medical school applications. If you don't do well, you can take it again later.

Plan #2 The plan for those who decide later that medical school is a possibility:

- First year: Most take biology (but not general chemistry)
- Second year: General Chemistry
 General Physics
- Third Year: Organic Chemistry

You can take the MCATs at the end of your junior year. This leaves study abroad an option only for second semester senior year, which is possible, but requires one extra petition. If you choose to study abroad first semester senior year, you will miss interviews, and will have very slim chances of acceptance for the following year, as most spots will be filled already.

Plan #3 The less time-crunched option:

If you aren't determined to go to medical school directly after graduation, and would prefer to gain some experience before entering medical school, you could take the MCAT at the end of your senior year, apply to medical school for the following year, and interview after graduation. This would create more flexibility, and allow study abroad. There are people who don't go directly to medical school. Most want to gain experience or raise their grades, etc. If study abroad will contribute to your medical career, it would be a valid reason for waiting.

Note: To think that this is an economic decision - take a year to make money to pay for medical school - is not a good argument. To use the year to gain experience and confirm that medical school is the best choice for you would be a good reason.

Dental students would use the same plan

Veterinary students can take the MCATs, or the GRE, or the Veterinary Aptitude Test, but should take general chemistry and biology in the first year because there are additional science requirements.

No matter when or where you intend to study, it is important that you make contact with CIIS, your academic advisor, and if necessary, also the department chair of your intended major. If you are considering medical school, you should talk to a member of the Health Careers Committee here at St. Lawrence. It is never too soon to get started, and there are never too many questions. We are here to help you.