Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
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MEDICAL SCHOOL INFORMATION PAGE

Special programmatic emphases, strengths, mission/goals(s) of the medical school: Vanderbilt’s mission is to produce highly knowledgeable, compassionate and competent physicians who use an evidence-based approach to clinical care. Throughout the four years, we stress the need for the development of professional attributes, including altruism, integrity, and an awareness of the ethical issues facing physicians. As a premier research institution, Vanderbilt provides all of its students with the opportunity to perform independent research during their four years. We encourage our students to be creative and scholarly, and hope that we will nurture them for leadership positions in academic medicine, community practice, health policy or any other area related to medicine.

Special characteristics of the medical school’s educational program: Since the fall of 2004, all students in the first and second years have been required to participate in the Emphasis Program which allows them to conduct a research project in any one of nine areas (Bioinformatics, Community Health, Education, Health-care and Public Health Research and Management, Humanities, International Health, Laboratory-Based Research, Law and Policy, and Patient-Oriented Research). The students do the majority of their research during the summer between the first and second years. All students are required to participate in an Emphasis Program poster presentation at the end of their second year of training. During the first two years of medical school, Vanderbilt requires that students take at least three electives. Students may use their elective time to learn about the ethical, legal, social and historical context of medicine, to work on their independent research projects, to further their clinical experience or to advance their understanding of the biomedical sciences. The overall effect of the elective program is to enrich the education experience of the pre-clinical years. During the third year, all students are required to take their six core clinical clerkships at Vanderbilt University or its affiliated hospitals. They also participate in four intersessions which occur between major clerkship blocks and cover material such as palliative care, communication skills, systems-based care, and women’s health – topics which have importance in a medical school education, but which may not receive the attention they deserve in core clerkships. During the fourth year, students are required to take eight four-week rotations. These include Emergency Medicine, Primary Care, a subinternship, either a Capstone course or an Immersion course, and four electives. Many of our students will take electives at other institutions, and many will seek international elective experience. In addition, our students are encouraged to consider additional scholarly and educational opportunities. Through the Medical Scholars program, students may take a year’s leave of absence to pursue independent research. We also offer numerous joint degree opportunities, including the MD/MBA, and the MD/PhD in Biomedical Research.

Average length of enrollment at the medical school: Four years (not including joint degree students or those pursuing additional research). Approximately 15% of the 2006 graduating class spent at least one extra year pursuing additional studies and areas of interest.

Description of the evaluation system used at the medical school: Until July 2003, Vanderbilt employed a traditional (A-F) graded evaluation system throughout the four years, except for first and second year electives, which were pass/fail. Beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year, we changed our method of evaluation to a modified pass/fail system in all academic years. The first year is pass/fail only. The second year is honors/pass/fail. The third and fourth years are honors/high pass/pass/fail, with a recommended maximum of 25% honors. In all years, the attributes of professionalism are evaluated in two major categories: Professional Values and Professional
Development. Professional Values include the core values and attributes of physicians, such as honesty and trustworthiness, which we hope all students have upon entering medical school. Professional Development includes the skills that are acquired and nurtured during medical school, such as communication skills.

**Medical school requirements for successful completion of USMLE Step 1, 2:** Students are required to take these examinations, but a passing score is not required for graduation.

**Medical school requirements for successful completion of Objective/Observed Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) at medical school:** An OSCE was required of the 2008 graduating class at the end of the Medicine Clerkship.

**Utilization by the medical school of the AAMC “Guidelines for Medical Schools Regarding Academic Transcripts.” This medical school is:** Completely in compliance with Guidelines' recommendations.

**Description of the process by which the Medical Student Performance Evaluation is composed at the medical school:** MSPE's are composed by the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs unless the student chooses to have another associate or senior associate dean as their MSPE author. They are written in the months of June, July, August, and September. Each is composed after an hour-long interview with the individual student.

**Students are permitted to review the MSPE prior to its transmission:** Yes

**Explanation of Histograms:** The first two histograms represent grades in the pre-clinical years only for those students who matriculated in August 1999 or after. For those students who matriculated prior to that date, these histograms are not available. The third histogram represents performance in clinical clerkships. The histogram shown represents the grade distributions for the year in which the individual student took the clinical clerkships. The final histogram is a representation of overall academic performance. Those students in the top 25% of the class, as determined by grades, were included in the “Distinguished” category. **THIS HISTOGRAM DOES NOT REPRESENT OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VANDERBILT MEDICAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND THE INFORMATION IN THIS HISTOGRAM SHOULD BE EVALUATED WITH THIS MAJOR LIMITATION IN MIND.** Many of our students have had distinguished careers at Vanderbilt that will not be adequately represented by the narrow scope of this histogram.