What you need to know about
Accelerated Programs for Health Professions

Salisbury University has only one accelerated program, and it is for pharmacy students majoring in chemistry that meet certain criteria. It is part of a formal agreement with University of Maryland School of Pharmacy only. Other students may choose the “accelerated option” for entering certain graduate health professions. A baccalaureate degree is not always required for admission to health profession programs (pharmacy and optometry, as examples). Strong students with the pre-requisites completed, high grades and high entrance exam scores can be admitted directly into some graduate health profession schools 60 - 90 credits, depending on the school. This option is often very appealing to students (and their parents) as it allows them to save the expense of an entire year or more of college. Students and advisors need to know the following:

1. Relatively few students enter professional programs this way, and they are only the very best.

2. Grades and learning can suffer with all the pre-requisites in a short space of time. Lower grades and lower entrance exam scores will absolutely exclude students from accelerated admission. Students should consider if a more sedate pace of learning at the outset will permit them to earn their highest potential grades and make them better candidates in the long run.

3. Since the bulk of students enter these professional programs with bachelor’s degrees, accelerated students must make academic plans that would permit them to finish a degree in their third/fourth year(s) if they are unsuccessful in gaining early admission. This can be challenging because of course sequencing and upper division course offerings in fewer sections (fall only, spring only, every other year, etc.).

4. Students who are accepted without bachelor’s degrees will only get an SU bachelor’s degree if SU has an accelerated agreement in place with the school. Currently, the only such agreement is with University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, and students are awarded an SU B.S. in chemistry after they successfully complete their first year of pharmacy school.

5. Students accepted to graduate schools without bachelor’s who subsequently don’t complete the graduate schools must typically plan to come back to an undergraduate institution to choose another profession and finish a degree. Thus, accelerated students should be very sure that they have chosen the right profession for themselves. Graduate schools want to see volunteer and career exploration activities anyway, but in this population it is especially crucial.

No one wants to discourage the best and brightest from seeking accelerated admission if it is their desire. However, it is important to consider the risks and the benefits. Students often benefit from planning on four years to earn their baccalaureate in an academically sound and deliberate way, even the very good ones!

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