Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Leadership in Medicine Program

Getting Started

What major field of study may I choose?
All Leadership in Medicine (LIM) students complete an ID Interdepartmental major that includes a math/science concentration (Biology, Chemistry, Math or Physics) and a non-science concentration in either the social sciences or humanities (includes Psychology and other majors such as Religious Studies that allow an ID option). The academic register outlines the ID requirements by department. Established interdisciplinary science majors such as biochemistry or neuroscience are not options, but you can select courses from these majors as electives or toward a minor.

Are there requirements beyond completion of an ID major?
LIM students must complete both undergraduate (B.S.) and graduate (M.S. or M.B.A.) degree requirements. At the undergraduate level, students are required to take 31 undergraduate courses, 16 in the sciences and 15 in the social sciences and humanities (LIM 500 and LIM 544 count toward the 15 Social Science and Humanities courses). Students must complete the First-Year Preceptorial (FYP 100), a course in statistics, and an international experience, all courses that can count toward the 15 required humanities/social science courses. LIM students are not required to complete the full general education curriculum, the sophomore research seminar, or Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) requirements unless they leave the program. At the graduate level, students take 12 graduate courses at Union Graduate College to earn an M.S. degree or 20 graduate courses to earn the M.B.A. degree. (Note: 11 of the courses count towards both degrees).

Are there specific science courses that I must take? Are there substitutions allowed?
All LIM students must complete the same core of science courses required of all pre-medical students: BIO110/112/225; CHM110 (or 101/102)/231/232; PHY110/111. In addition, LIM students must take a biochemistry course (CHM 382 for chemistry ID majors and BIO335 for biology ID majors) and at least one upper level science from the following options: Developmental Biology (BIO354), Comparative Anatomy (BIO332), Cancer Cell Biology (BIO378), Molecular Genetics (BIO 384), Animal Physiology (BIO330), or Introduction to Cellular Neuroscience (BIO363). Additional math/science requirements can be met by taking electives with a MTH, BIO, CHM, or PHY prefix provided they are not general education sciences. While PHY 120/121 sequence is an acceptable way to fulfill the physics requirements, the PHY 110/111 sequence is specifically geared toward premedical students and will cover topics more relevant to medicine and to the MCAT (optics, nuclear physics, fluids, sound waves, etc.) should you decide to take the test (some scholarships require the MCAT). A complete listing of the LIM requirements can be found in the Academic Register or in LIM Commons, a Nexus site in which all LIM students are enrolled.

What role does AP credit play in choosing courses and requirements?
LIM students have the option of applying scores on AP examinations for placement at Union. If scores are sent to Union prior to matriculation, LIM students may be able to bypass some introductory courses such as CHM 101, BIO 110, statistics, and MTH 110 & MTH 112. Instead, they can take either an accelerated one-term introductory course like CHM 110 or MTH 113, proceed directly to the second course in a sequence like BIO 112, or enter a more advanced course such as MTH 115 or MTH115(H).

Updated 7/2013
Remaining in good standing

What GPA is required to remain in good standing in the Program?
Since LIM students are dually enrolled as undergraduates at Union College and graduate students at Union Graduate College, they must adhere to specific standards of each participating college. Students must maintain a minimum undergraduate cumulative 3.50 grade point average overall and in their math/science courses (3.40 for class of ’13). Students may not receive a grade of “C” in two graduate courses and would likely be dismissed if this occurred in undergraduate courses as well. A grade of “D” or “F” in any course typically leads to dismissal from the program. Required course work may not be taken on a pass/fail basis and must normally be taken at the home institution. Grades of “I” (Incomplete) or “W” (withdrawal) will not be acceptable without justification involving illness or extenuating circumstances and prior approval by the LIM director.

What happens if your grades fall below the minimum requirement?
Each LIM student’s progress is evaluated by the Policy & Promotions (P&P) Committee, which consists of faculty and staff from Union College, Union Graduate College, and Albany Medical College and meets twice per year (winter/spring). If a student’s cumulative or math/science GPA is below 3.50, the committee will take into consideration several factors (prior academic record/trajectory, potential for recovery etc...), before deciding on a course of action. Most students whose grades fall below the required 3.50 for the first time are placed on probation and given a particular time frame to rectify the situation; however, the committee may vote for immediate dismissal if the student’s chances for recovery seem unlikely without great burden or undo stress. If the decision is made to dismiss a student from the program, s/he may withdraw before the dismissal is final or appeal the decision if information becomes available that was unavailable at the time of review and the new information is relevant. Students who leave the program are fully supported in their plans to pursue medical school through the traditional pathway should they choose to do so.

Are grades the only reason a student may be placed on probation?
Leadership in Medicine students are expected to distinguish themselves beyond the classroom through leadership, research, clinical experience, and community outreach and to keep a careful and accurate record of these experiences. Therefore, LIM students can also be placed on probation or dismissed if they have not sufficiently developed themselves outside of the classroom in both clinical and community settings, or if they are unable to substantiate reported activities. All U.S. medical schools hold these same expectations for all potential candidates for admission.

What is the sophomore portfolio? How is it submitted and when is it due?
The Policy and Promotions Committee assesses a student’s leadership and their personal and professional development through a portfolio that students begin working on when they enter the program their first year. The sophomore portfolio documents all extracurricular activities in an online format and it is submitted for initial review at the end of spring term of the sophomore year. If a student’s portfolio is considered to be inadequate and lacking in a particular area (i.e., community service, leadership, clinical experience), the student will be informed of any deficiencies and will not be promoted to the second stage of the program until the situation is rectified. A final senior portfolio is submitted for final promotion to the medical college. Inaccuracies or inconsistencies detected on the sophomore portfolio can lead to dismissal from the program.
**Looking Ahead**

**Who will serve as my academic advisor?**
Professor Weisse, Director of Leadership in Medicine, serves as all first year students’ academic advisor. Once a LIM student decides on their academic fields of interest, they complete the declaration of major form from the registrar’s office which specifies academic advisors in each of the ID majors. However, Professor Weisse is the primary contact for any questions related to program requirements. Appointments with Professor Weisse are scheduled through her office assistant Jennifer Clifford by calling 518-388-6300, by e-mailing clifforj@union.edu, or by stopping by the office in Bailey 101 between the hours of 9am-noon; or 1-4pm. Ann Nolte is the primary contact for questions pertaining to the graduate portion of the program and can be reached at 518-631-9860 or noltea@uniongraduatecollege.edu.

**Will one mini-term program satisfy the term abroad/international experience “requirement”?**
Yes, if the program occurs outside of the U.S. (some mini-terms occur in the U.S.). LIM students can fulfill this requirement in four ways. They can choose to travel abroad for an entire trimester (full term abroad) or do a 3 week mini-term school breaks. They can also choose to complete an Independent Study Abroad (ISA) experience or other foreign experience that does not fit into these three categories. Students interested in completing an ISA or non-Union experience must have the plans pre-approved first by Professor Weisse then by the International Programs Office at least 1 year in advance of departure. Mini-terms carry additional tuition costs ($3500) in addition to airfare.

**Must I do a thesis or senior writing project?**
Most departments, but not all, require students to complete a senior thesis or other senior writing project. LIM students typically complete their thesis/senior project in their humanities/social science portion of their major. For a student to graduate with honors, s/he must complete a thesis; honors at graduation is only listed in one field. If a thesis is not required by the non-science ID major, there is no general education senior writing requirement for LIM students.

**Are there class restrictions or additional course benefits for LIM students?**
LIM students may take a 4th undergraduate course for free each term excluding summers, but these additional courses cannot count toward early graduation or time off. LIM students must be enrolled as full-time students (minimum 3 courses/term) for all 4 academic calendar years and 2 summers. LIM students may only elect to take one undergraduate non-practicum course Pass/Fail over four years and it cannot be a required course or one that is in either of your declared ID major departments. The course must be approved by the Director and indicated in your course plan.

**What is the difference between the MS and the MBA schedules in terms of classes and time?**
The MBA degree requires more courses and therefore costs more money than the MS in Clinical Leadership. MBA students take 20 graduate courses including all 12 courses required for the MS in Clinical Leadership. Due to the extra 8 courses, LIM MBA students need to take four courses per term to ensure that all courses are done prior to graduation, rather than the usual three required by Union College. LIM students who opt for the MBA option usually stay an additional summer after the sophomore year summer to fit in 1-2 of the extra courses. Students are not allowed to enroll in MBA courses until the end of their sophomore year provided they are in good standing. Ann Nolte is the primary contact for questions regarding the graduate program.