

Admissions Prerequisites: Eliminating Barriers for Applicants and Programs

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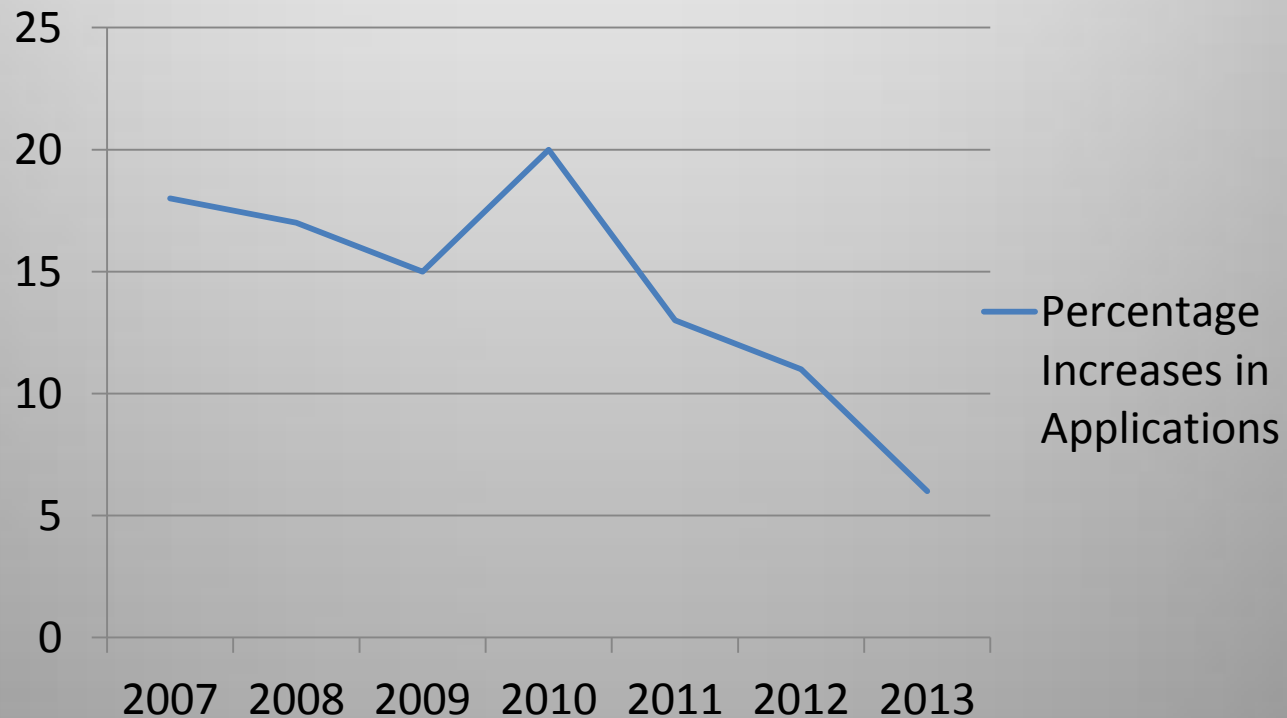


Session Objectives

- Discuss the varying level of prerequisites among PA programs and the barriers this produces for programs and the profession
- Identify general prerequisite requirements that may produce a barrier to applicants, specifically those with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Analyze available data from health profession on specific prerequisite practices including the acceptance of online, advanced placement
- Formulate questions to allow programs to thoughtfully analyze and consider the relationship of prerequisite courses to the educational outcomes for students and program graduates

Why do we need to worry about barriers in the admissions process?

Percentage Increases in Applications



Definition and Purpose of Prerequisites

- The purpose of prerequisite courses is to ensure that students have sufficient backgrounds to understand the terminology, theory and practical applications of information.

Variety of Prerequisites

- Difficulty for applicants to fulfill requirements of multiple programs continues.
- We continue to hear negative feedback from health professions advisors regarding the issue.
- Many programs continue to express the difficulty in application review or having additional standardization of the reporting within the CASPA application.

Potential Barriers

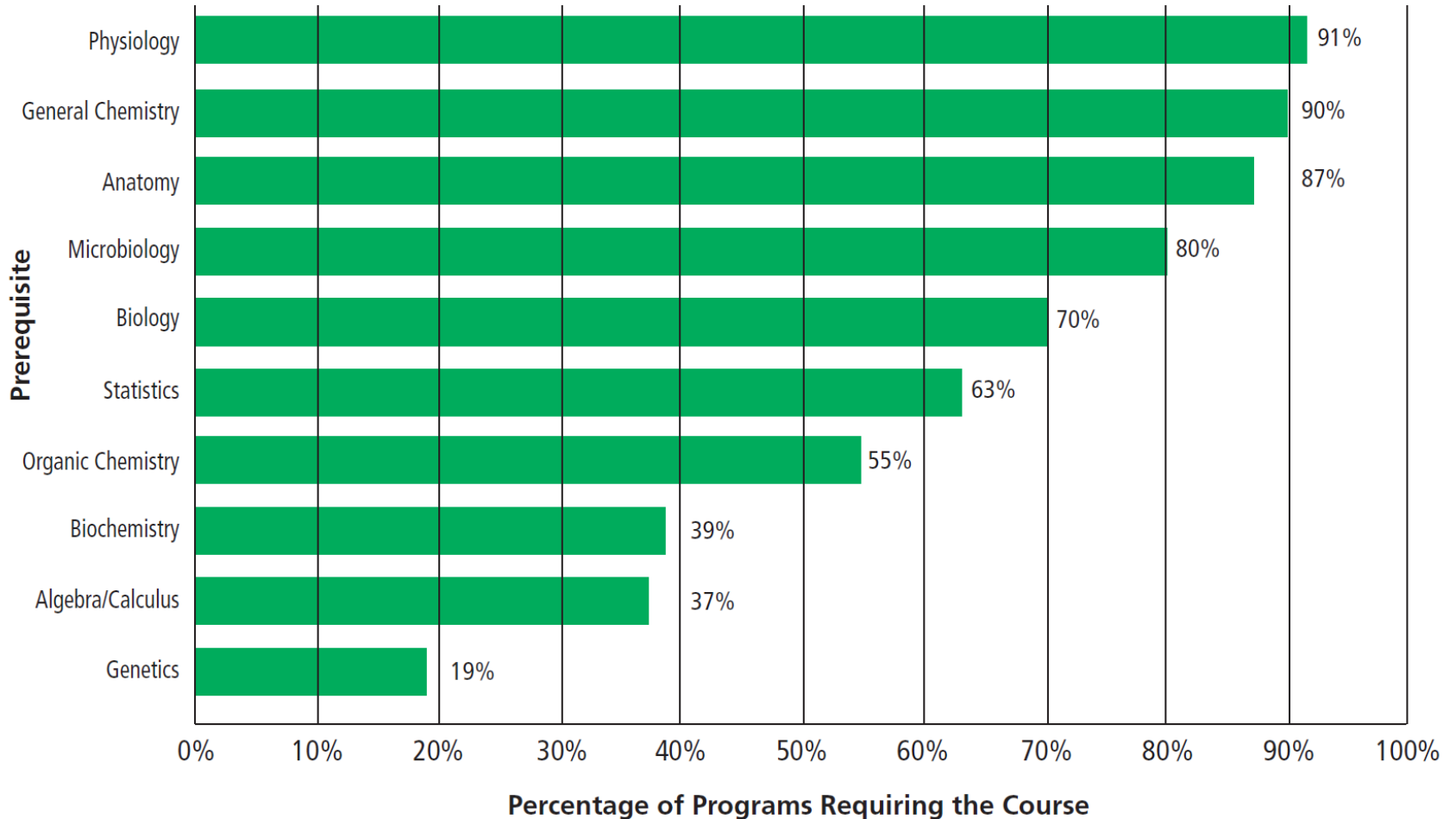
- Limiting the applicant pool for both the profession and individual programs
- Limiting diversity with the applicant pool for both the profession and individual programs
- Time spent in application review for several or specific courses may be better utilized in other areas of application review

Applicants of diverse backgrounds and methods of course delivery

- Do requirements limit the ability of those that may be non-traditional students, serving in the armed forces, lower economic status, geographically diverse areas, or racial/ethnic diversity from easily obtaining coursework?
- What is the evidence for AP, online, or accelerated course formats?

Summary of Prerequisites

Figure 11. Prerequisites for Application to PA Programs



Some Food for Thought.....

- How does your program determine the predictive validity of required courses? Content? Rigor?
- Is knowledge tied to specific courses or competencies?
- Have poor student outcomes been due to cognitive or noncognitive issues?
- Are courses/methods of delivery selected based on evidence or opinion?
- Are the courses based on specific mission or educational values of the program that are different from other programs?
- Are we keeping the “bigger picture” in mind when we are designing our program admissions prerequisites?

Focused Discussion

- How can programs effectively evaluate the predictive value of prerequisite courses and the method of delivery?
- How can prerequisites be designed to allow for variations in undergraduate institution curriculum structure?
- How can PAEA work to improve admissions practices and eliminate the barrier of the variety of prerequisite requirements?

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