

# **THE MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS FROM A-Z**

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## A TO Z...

Applying to medical school is a long, arduous, challenging, and expensive undertaking. This presentation will focus on understanding the process of self assessment, applying to medical school, the preparation necessary, and executing the details.



# SOME FACTS ABOUT MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS – ENTRY YEAR 2011

## Allopathic Medicine

130+ medical schools

42,404 - applicants

18,527- accepted applicants

52% male applicants; 48% female applicants

24 – average age of beginning med students

3.53 – average cum GPA of applicants

3.68 – average cum GPA of accept students

3.43 – math/science GPA of applicants

3.62 – math/science GPA of accept students

26.4 0– average MCAT of applicants

29.3 P – average MCAT of accept students

# SOME FACTS ABOUT MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS – APPLICATION YEAR 2011

## Osteopathic Medicine

26 medical schools + three branch campuses

14,0877 – applicants

5,1577 – available seats

2.73 applicants per seat

53% male applicants; 47% female applicants

20% are in the age range 26-30

3.42 – average cum GPA of accepted applicants

3.32 – math/science GPA of accepted applicants

26 – average MCAT of accepted applicants

# WHICH PERSONAL COMPETENCIES ARE IMPORTANT TO SUCCESS IN MEDICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICIAN PRACTICE?

- Integrity and ethics
- Reliability and dependability
- Service orientation
- Social, interpersonal, and teamwork skills
- Desire to learn
- Resilience and adaptability

AAMC Innovation Lab, 2011



# SELF-ASSESSMENT

Volunteer/community experience

Medically-related experience: clinical and/or research

Grades and test scores: competitive cumulative and BCPM GPA  
competitive MCAT scores

Strong references

Solid Personal Statement: “Why do I want to become a physician?”

*Are you realistic?*

*Are your “ducks in a row”?*



# MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION SERVICES

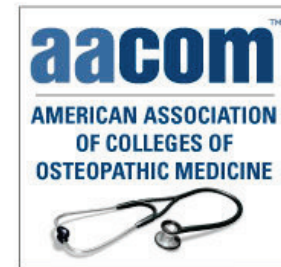
**AMCAS**—for allopathic schools

<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/>



**AACOMAS**—for osteopathic schools

<https://aacomas.aacom.org/>



**The Texas Medical & Dental School Application Service (TMDSAS)**

<http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas/>

## MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE

**May    June    July    Aug.    Sept.    Oct.    Nov.    Dec.    Jan.    Feb.    March    April    May    June    July**


|                             |  |  |                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>AMCAS/AADSAS/AACOMAS</b> |  |  |                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
|                             |  |  | <b>Medical School Interviews</b>    |  |  |  |  |  |
|                             |  |  | <b>Acceptances</b>                  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                             |  |  | <b>Acceptances off of Waitlists</b> |  |  |  |  |  |

|   |                                |  |   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>June, 2012</b>                                 | <b>Starting July 2012</b>      | <b>Mid-Sept., 2012</b>                     | <b>October 15, 2012</b>   | <b>Sept-Dec 2012</b>                   | <b>March, 2013</b>                            | <b>May 15, 2013</b>                           | <b>March – Aug, 2013</b>                     |
| <b>First Date to submit AMCAS AADSAS, AACOMAS</b> | <b>Complete Secondary Apps</b> | <b>Med./Dental School interviews begin</b> | <b>First acceptances sent out by medical schools with rolling admissions; AMCAS deadline for many schools</b> | <b>Continue work on Secondary Apps</b> | <b>Interviews end at most medical schools</b> | <b>Last Date to Hold Multiple Acceptances</b> | <b>Offers from Med/Dent School Waitlists</b> |






# MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE 2

- Early May – AMCAS and AACOMAS go online
  - Early June 2012 – First date that you can submit your AMCAS or AACOMAS application.
  - You will begin receiving secondary applications shortly after you submit your AMCAS. Try to return these within a few weeks. This will increase your chances of getting an early interview slot.
  - Interviews at most medical schools begin in mid-September and often continue through the following winter and early spring.
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# MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE 3

- While some medical schools will accept students on a rolling basis and notify them as early as mid-October, others wait to notify all of their candidates in March/April.
  - Since most schools operate on a rolling basis, it is in your best interest to submit an application well before the deadlines. Aim to submit your application in June or July.
  - May 15, 2012 is the last day that you can hold multiple acceptances to medical schools; however, you should withdraw your applications as soon as you know you are no longer interested in a particular school.
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# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

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"Are all of these letters of recommendation from your mother?"

# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Whom should I ask? (choose recommenders carefully)

How do I ask for a recommendation?

What materials do I give to the recommender?

- Resume, personal statement, transcripts, publications (if any).

What about waiving my right to see a letter?

- Medical schools prefer applicants to waive their right to see letters; this gives the letters more weight.

How many are enough recommendations?

How are my recommendations submitted?

Don't forget thank you notes!



# SENDING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**AMCAS** – Most medical schools receive letters through AMCAS. Evaluators submit letters electronically directly to the AMCAS Letter Service.

**AACOMAS** – Letters of Recommendation sent directly to colleges following the processes outlined by each college.

**Undergraduate Pre-Health Office**–You also may use your undergraduate institution's Pre-Health or Career Services Office. Contact the pre-health advisor to inquire about services for alumni.

# DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY – SLIDE 1

- Location!
- How many?
- State residency
- Balance across selectivity (reaches, realistics, safeties)
- Cost—see next slide
- Mission and curriculum—see next slide
- Size and composition of student body
- Research vs. clinical emphasis; Special programs
- Prestige (all US medical schools have “prestige”)

## KEY RESOURCES:

Allopathic: Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR)

Osteopathic: College Information Booklet (CIB)

# DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY – SLIDE 2

## Cost:

- Tuition (including in-state vs. out-of-state)
- Living Expenses (cost of living)
- Financial Aid Resources\*: need-based or a limited number of merit scholarships

## Curriculum:

- Traditional – Courses Organized by Single Departments
- Progressive – Integrated Courses Involving Two or More Departments:
  - Example – Organ Systems approach to teaching basic science
- Format – Lecture or Small Group (Case-Based, Problem Based, Discussion Groups)
- Clinical Exposure – 3rd and 4th Years of Medical School or Earlier; most schools now offer clinical exposure in the first year

\* For further information contact the financial aid offices at individual medical schools and access their websites.

# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU APPLY? – SLIDE 1

## **In the Admissions Office -**

- File created for application and credentials
- Huge backlog, do not expect a quick notification about decisions

## **Some Schools Conduct Initial Review -**


- Screening of MCAT scores and grades before sending “secondary” applications for students above the threshold; rejection those below the threshold

## **Other Schools Send a Secondary to All -**

- May include guidelines to help students determine if they are competitive



# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU APPLY? – SLIDE 2

- Complete and return supplementary applications as soon as possible; aim for a two-week turnaround time. Some schools will have deadlines—read the secondaries carefully!
  - Be sure all other required credentials, such as letters of recommendation, are sent to AMCAS or the medical schools, as specified.
  - Possible Notification - receipt of application, what is needed, completion of application. Ultimately, you are responsible for all that is needed to complete the application.
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# SCREENING

After all items are received, one or more screeners fully review each application.

Some schools may use a screening formula.

Screening factors:


- Grades and MCAT Scores
  - Most important factors during initial screening
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Essay
- The Quality (vs. Quantity) of Activities
- The Interview – has the greatest degree of weight at most schools

# THE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW – SLIDE 1


- The interview invitation: A BIG first hurdle! Your chances of admission greatly increase, confidence builder.
- Promptly schedule/confirm interview date; request change only if absolutely necessary.
- Interview is used for both assessment and recruitment.
- An opportunity to learn about the school's curriculum, resources, and environment.
- Be courteous to everyone! You are being assessed throughout the interview process.



# THE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW – SLIDE 2

- If invited to stay overnight – a good way to learn about the school, get insight about student life.
  - Interview day: usually a tour and lunch with students and/or faculty, and an information session about financial aid.
  - Meet other applicants as *colleagues* not *competitors*.
  - One or more faculty interviews, possibly a student interview.
  - A few schools have a “Multiple Mini Interview” format.
  - Go to the interview prepared to ask questions and learn more about the school; questions also show you have done your homework.
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# HOW APPLICANTS ARE ASSESSED AT THE STAGE OF THE INTERVIEW AND BEYOND

- Social and communication skills
  - Clarity and flexibility of thinking
  - Evidence of motivation for a career in medicine
  - “Isms”: professionalism, humanism, altruism
  - Probe Depth of Activities (e.g. research, volunteerism, other areas that show talent)
  - Are you a good “fit” for the school?
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# APPLICANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- May 15 - deadline to make a final decision and reduce multiple acceptances to just one. Keep schools informed of your plans.
- Immediately withdraw applications, interviews, and acceptances from all schools you do not plan to attend.
- Be considerate to medical schools and other applicants, who may be desperately waiting for an acceptance.

[AAMC Recommendations for Medical School and MD-PhD Applicants](#)

[AAMC Recommendations for Medical School and MD-PhD Admission Officers](#)

<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/recommendations/>



# KEY RESOURCES

## Medical School Admission Requirements

<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/msar/>

## The Costs of Applying

<http://www.aamc.org/programs/first/facts/applyingcost.pdf>

## Generic FAQ for MD/PhD Applicants (University of Penn)

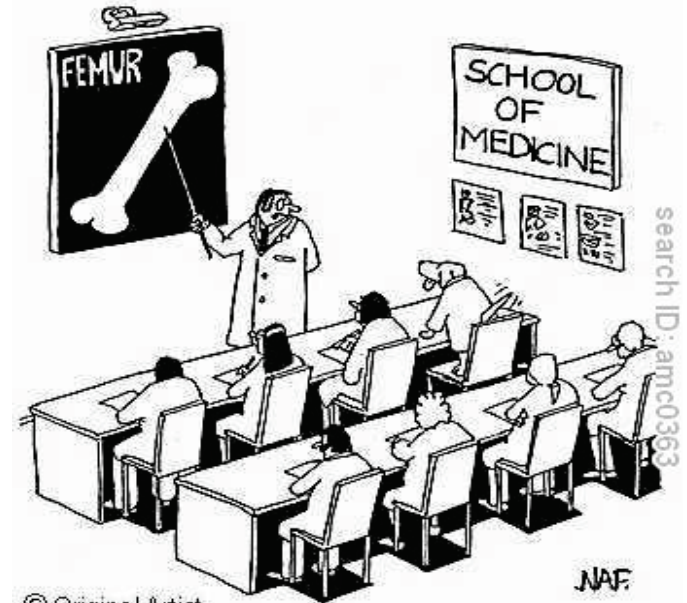
<http://www.med.upenn.edu/mstp/applicantfaq.pdf>

## AMCAS - The American Medical College Application Service

<http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/>

## AMCAS instruction booklet (full version)

<http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/amcas2009instructionmanual.pdf>



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