

# THINKING ABOUT APPLYING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL?

Medical School Admissions Committees vary, but there are some near-universal truths for those thinking about applying to medical school. Below, members of our Admissions Committee share their insights.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

Get exposure to the field. Interact with patients, observe doctor/patient interactions, and spend time in various health care settings. Medical school and residency training are a big undertaking. Exposure to the field will help confirm whether or not a career in medicine is the right “fit” for you. You will also need to be able to clearly articulate “why medicine” – in your application and in an interview. The more clinical experience you have, the easier it will be to articulate your “why” and convey a good level of career awareness.

## EXPERIENCES MATTER.

Admissions committees are looking for experiences that reflect qualities such as career awareness, commitment to service, research experience, leadership, and time management.

## QUALITY VS. QUANTITY.

Don't look at experiences as something to check off a to-do list. Find a few things and do them well. Commit your time to experiences that you enjoy, are relevant and that make you a well-rounded applicant.

## SEEK ADVISEMENT.

Medical students and physicians can shed valuable insight as to what it takes to succeed in medical school and in the profession. Premed advisors and admissions officers can advise you regarding opportunities, requirements, the application process and how to strengthen your application. Ask questions. Attend information sessions and campus events. Make use of online resources such as the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) and the AAMC.org.

## FIT.

Not all medical schools are created equal. Private vs. public? The cost of attendance can vary greatly. Is the curriculum systems based or non-systems based? Is teaching problem-based, traditional, or a combination of both? What type of experiences and electives are available? Are board passage rates and residency match rates high?

## GRADES & MCAT.

Yes, they matter. The admissions committee considers a range of scores and looks at both in order to evaluate your preparedness to handle the rigor of medical school and your ability to perform well on a standardized exam like the boards.

## APPLY STRATEGICALLY.

Apply early in order to be considered when the applicant pool is smaller and the number of interview spots and available seats are greater, and apply broadly. Keep a spreadsheet to stay on top of various deadlines and requirements and track status of your applications.

## ADDRESS DEFICIENCIES.

If there are weaknesses in your application (i.e. a declining GPA, a weak MCAT, or a lack of relevant experience), take the time to address them in order to present an application that is as strong as possible and accurately reflects your abilities. Applying to medical school is competitive, expensive and time consuming and you want to avoid having to reapply. Don't apply before you're ready.



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