Orientation to the medical school application process
September 16, 2013

For 2015 matriculants

For juniors and seniors
Applying to medical school before graduating from college

Two big questions:

How do medical schools choose their classes?

Am I now a viable candidate and ready to apply this year?
How do medical schools pick?

1. Online application
2. Letters, including the HCEC Letter
3. Personal interview
4. Follow-up information
How do medical schools pick?

The online application demands a structured response to MANY questions. Together they address three elements of selection.
How do medical schools pick?

The three elements of selection:

1. Academic achievement
2. Doing function
3. Being function
How well did you balance academics with extracurriculars?

The relevant facets of grades and the GPA

Science vs non science grade achievement
Trajectory over the college years
Rigor and range during each semester
Credit-bearing research, teaching, travel
When and where courses were taken: the context
MCAT score: consonance or dissonance?
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

Relevant facets of extracurricular activity:

What did you do outside the classroom and what personal development has the activity fostered in you?
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

Packaging the relevant facets of extracurricular activity:

Service

Clinical

Personal Interest
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

Service to others is a highly examined aspect of the application.
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

You are expected to understand _service_ in its capacity as outreach for your specific gifts and skills.
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

How to develop and demonstrate **clinical experience:**

Observation of healthcare providers
Reading books on healthcare experience and policy
Volunteering in clinical settings
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

You are expected to have developed an understanding of how healthcare is delivered in real-life settings.

Clinical exposure ≠ clinical experience
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

Personal interests

Movement: athletics, dance, working out
Cultural exploration and outreach: music, cultural promotion clubs, foreign travel/study
Spirituality: faith community, personal practice
What activities distinguish you as an applicant?

Personal interests: How do they count?

Degree of leadership, teamwork, cooperation.

Intensity of commitment: length and duration

Contribution to your personal happiness, balance, and stability
Who have you become through your college years?

Personal competencies
Who have you become through your college years?

Personal competencies

- Integrity and Ethics
- Reliability and Dependability
- Service Orientation
- Social and Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork
- Capacity for Improvement
- Resilience and Adaptability
- Cultural Competence
- Oral Communication
How do you tell your story?

The more structured the admissions process, the more holistic it is.
How do you tell your story?

The more holistic it is, the fairer it is to all applicants.
How do you tell your story?

The more holistic it is, the more it depends on your ability to exhibit the nine personal competencies.
Applying to medical school before graduating from college

The second of our two big questions:

Am I now a viable candidate and ready to apply this year?
Twenty Questions (20Q)

To evaluate your own candidacy with objectivity requires honest personal reflection and courage.
Twenty Questions

The Health Careers Evaluation Committee will evaluate your candidacy next summer if you register with it.
Twenty Questions

These two evaluations, yours and your university’s, should agree with each other.
Twenty Questions

Completing the 20Q will give you an open-ended examination of your own candidacy. It will prepare you for all future activities related to application.
Twenty Questions

It will take you at least ten hours to complete and save you huge time expenditures later.
Twenty Questions

After you have filled it out in good faith, you will know how strong a candidate you are and what questions to ask your advisor.
Twenty Questions

If you cannot find the time to complete it, how will you find the time to fill out the online application, the secondaries, and all the other preparation needed for a successful candidacy?
Twenty Questions

Start early and be sure to ask family and friends to help you answer relevant questions. It is time to seek help freely.
Components of your application

1. Online application (primary and secondaries)
2. Grades + MCAT
3. Letters, including the HCEC Letter
4. Personal interview
5. Follow-up information
What do I need to know about the MCAT?

1. Your application is not complete until you have an MCAT score.
2. It is faulty strategy to prepare a list of schools when you do not know your MCAT score.
3. The verbal section typically takes longer to prepare.
What do I need to know about the MCAT?

4. Optimize the MCAT administration date:
   • Try not to take it after the May administration at the latest.
   • Only take it more than once if absolutely necessary. Repeating the test is not something to plan for as a default.
   • The verbal section typically takes longer to prepare.
   • Do you want/need a prep course? Which one?
What is the HCEC?

The Health Careers Evaluation Committee prepares Cornell’s institutional letter of evaluation. The process of registering begins October 30, 2013, with its orientation.
What is the HCEC?

It has an online registration that candidates complete between the HCEC Orientation and the middle of January. It takes about 25 hours, including the 20Q.
What is the HCEC?

It includes securing three letters of recommendation to support your candidacy that the HCEC will use to inform its letter and send to the medical schools with the letter. These letters are typically due before Spring Break.
What is the HCEC?

After you complete the HCEC Registration, your final step of commitment is to pay a non-refundable fee of $190. Some candidates can get a fee waiver through the financial aid office.
What is the HCEC?

If you are not ready, it’s a good idea to back out before the fee is due at the beginning of Spring semester, 2014. The HCEC will save everything for a subsequent year if you do decide AT ANY TIME to withdraw.
The timeline

These elements must be scheduled into busy lives:

1. AMCAS FAP if relevant
2. MCAT
3. HCEC
4. Advising briefings and appointments
5. Choosing schools
6. AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS
7. Interviews
8. Follow-up actions
The budget

These elements must be scheduled into busy lives:

1. AMCAS FAP if relevant
2. MCAT and MCAT Prep: $225 + $2000
3. HCEC: $190
4. Advising briefings and appointments
5. Choosing schools
6. AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS > $1000
7. Interviews ~ $500 each
8. Follow-up actions
Q & A