Applying to Medical School: Are You Ready Now?

Lauren L O’Neil, Ph.D.
(llo7@cornell.edu)

Cornell Career Services
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Success Factors

• Timing of application
  – Application components

• Readiness for holistic review
  – Quantitative and qualitative factors
  – Core competencies

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Benjamin Franklin
Success Factors: Timing

• Timing of application
  – As early as possible
  – Must complete all portions in a timely fashion
    • Standardized tests
    • Primary application
    • Secondary application(s)

• Timing of application must allow fulfillment of schools’ holistic admissions standards
  – Applicant readiness suggests whether an application is appropriate
  – Your application needs to demonstrate your readiness
Timing of the Application Components

- **MCAT or DAT**
  - January MCAT scores available mid-February
  - MCAT2015 – April and May
    - Scores will take longer than the usual 30-35 days
    - From AAMC, “MCAT scores from the April and May 2015 administrations will be reported to examinees prior to the date when AMCAS first sends applications to medical schools for the 2016 application cycle.”
    - Preliminary estimates of percentile rankings will be provided two to three weeks after testing to aid application decisions.
  - DAT scores officially reported 3-4 weeks after test date
Success Factors: Readiness for Holistic Review

- **Quantitative Readiness**
  - Academic
    - Cornell GPA (overall and BCMP)
    - Transcript should not contain any “incomplete” courses
    - Standardized test scores (MCAT or DAT)

- **Qualitative Readiness**
  - Applicant’s writing and interpersonal communication
    - Personal statements
    - Interview skills
  - Letters of support from supportive recommenders and evaluation services
Success Factors: Readiness for Holistic Review

- Non-Academic Readiness
  - Service to others
  - Exposure/experience in the world of clinical healthcare
  - Ability to communicate well interpersonally
Core Competencies

- **Interpersonal**
  - Service Orientation
  - Social Skills
  - Cultural Competence
  - Teamwork
  - Oral Communication

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
  - Reliability and Dependability
  - Resilience and Adaptability
  - Capacity for Improvement

An observable behavior that combines knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes related to a specific activity.
Core Competencies

- **Thinking and Reasoning**
  - Critical Thinking
  - Quantitative Reasoning
  - Scientific Inquiry
  - Written Communication

- **Science**
  - Living Systems
  - Human Behavior

An observable behavior that combines knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes related to a specific activity.
The Well Prepared Applicant

• “Comfort level”
  – Science GPA above 3.4 MCAT score above 32; no individual score below 9
    • Check with advisor on exceptions

• Primary application complete within a few weeks of earliest submission date and secondary applications within two weeks of receipt

• Application to at least 10 schools with matriculated applicant GPA/MCAT score means equivalent to one’s own, and about 15-20 schools total
Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR)

https://services.aamc.org/30/msar/home
The Well Prepared Applicant

• Produces compelling personal written reflections on individual journey leading to application

• Presents references in a timely way from individuals who can speak confidently and intelligently to personal competencies

• Stays in good standing with HCEC (if using) and adheres to its timeline
Challenges to Readiness

- Overall Cornell GPA below 3.3
- MCAT below 30 (check with advisor for DAT and GRE targets)
- No standardized test score available at time of application
- Little, if any, clinical and/or service experience
- Institutional action in academic year preceding the current application cycle
- Incomplete grades on the transcript
- Single-semester GPA below 3.0 within two semesters of current application cycle
The Gap or Bridge Year

• Increasingly common for medical school candidates to take time after college before applying
  – to take a break
  – to allow more time for application process
  – to address readiness factors

• 66% of the 2014 Weill Cornell Medical College first-year class took (at least one) gap year
  – Average age of 2014 entering class – 23.9 years
  – Statistics are similar at other medical schools
The Gap or Bridge Year

• Factors to consider
  – Academic
    • GPA can reflect coursework from Senior year if an application is delayed
    • More options for MCAT timing (be fully prepared to take the exam ONCE)
    • More time to develop relationships for LoRs

• How to strengthen your application during a gap year
  – Clinical exposure
  – Research
  – Professional opportunities

• For more information attend the briefing “Increasing Your Chances of Admission with a Gap Year”
  – Tuesday, December 2nd at 5pm (122 Rockefeller)
“Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out.”

John Wooden

Questions?