Pre-Med Orientation for Sophomores

Rebecca M. Sparrow, Executive Director

Cornell Career Services
February 24, 2014
Agenda

• Setting the Stage: It’s a Competitive Landscape

• The Holistic Review
  – What schools are seeking
  – Academic Record and Preparation
  – Standardized Test Scores (MCAT)
    • 2015 changes to MCAT
  – Life Experiences: Core Competencies

• Letters of Recommendation

• Medical School Application Preview
The Future of Medicine

“No longer is it humanly possible to memorize every fact relevant to the practice of medicine. What is more important for physicians of the future is an ability to think critically and to have the necessary reasoning skills to know where to seek answers and how to solve problems in the clinical environment.”

-Darrell G. Kirch, M.D., AAMC President and CEO

https://www.aamc.org/newsroom/reporter/march2012/276772/word.html
U.S. Medical School Applicants and Matriculants

Source: AAMC, Table 7. Applicants, First-Time Applicants, Acceptees, and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools by Sex at [https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/](https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/)
# Cornell Undergraduate Medical School Applicants: Applied/Accepted Chart

## 2011-2013

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*Data are for students who have authorized AMCAS to release their outcome information to Cornell. Data does not include D.C. school applicants or the Texas school application service data.*

2/24/14 11:50:34 AM
Medical School Applicant Musts

• Demonstrate a sincere interest in:
  – Medicine
  – Public service

• Possess the ability to:
  – Analyze information
  – Solve problems
  – Establish relationships
  – Communicate with patients and colleagues
  – Display good judgment
  – Make sound decisions under pressure

Source: AAMC, The Road to Becoming a Doctor, 
Medical School Admission Staffs Assess

• **Academic background and excellence** in the comprehension and application of the natural sciences.

• **Critical thinking, analytical, and reasoning skills** that enable you to be a life-long learner of medicine.

• **Motivation and self-awareness** to become a doctor.
  - Why do you want to become a doctor; what drives you?
  - How have you become familiar with the field of medicine?

• **Qualities and behaviors** that predict success in clinical skills and patient management.
Success Factors for Admission

• Academic Credentials
  – Cornell GPA (overall and BCMP)
  – Standardized test scores (MCAT or DAT)

• Non-Academic Experiences
  – Service to others
  – Exposure/experience in the world of clinical healthcare
  – Ability to communicate well interpersonally
  – Interactions with others different from yourself
Academic Background and Excellence

• Understand and complete your prerequisites for medical school.
• But, take courses that interest you.
• Demonstrate academic ability through strong performance (GPA).
• Take courses that prepare you for the MCAT and perform well on that.
What About Research Experience?

• Put your classroom knowledge to work
• Learn that science/knowledge creation is not a linear process
  • bumps in the road – learn adaptability and resiliency
  • creating new knowledge is harder than writing a term paper
• Learn to work independently and as a team member
• Develop critical thinking and analytical skills
• Learn professional presentation skills (oral and written)
• Benefit from a close mentoring relationship
• Learn how to read and interpret original literature
The New MCAT®

“...the health system of tomorrow will require a different kind of physician. And that is why, in 2015, there will be a new Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®).”

-Darrell G. Kirch, M.D., AAMC President and CEO

https://www.aamc.org/newsroom/reporter/march2012/276772/word.html
Preparing for the MCAT®

• MCAT® changes in 2015
  – Two semesters of introductory biology
    • NEW! Biology includes cell biology and molecular biology concepts
    • (Example questions also draw on genetics and physiology)
    • Expectation of ability to apply science-based skills to assessing and solving science-based problems
      – Basic knowledge of research design and statistics
  – NEW! Introductory course in biochemistry
  – NEW! Introductory course in psychology and sociology
## MCAT® 2015 Subject Areas and Format

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<th>No. of items / minutes</th>
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<td>65 / 95 min</td>
<td>1-15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chemical and physical</strong> foundations of living systems</td>
<td>65 / 95 min</td>
<td>1-15</td>
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<td><strong>Psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior</strong></td>
<td>65 / 95 min</td>
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<td><strong>Critical analysis and reasoning skills</strong> based on readings in humanities and social sciences (includes ethics, philosophy, cross-cultural studies, and population health)</td>
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GPA and MCAT® Scores, 2000 - 2011

Mean GPA Total, Applicants and Matriculants

Mean Total MCAT, Applicants and Matriculants

Source: AAMC, Data extracted from Table 17: MCAT Scores and GPAs for Applicants, and Matriculants to U.S. Medical Schools, 2000-2011.
https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/
Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students

aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/competencies
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
Core Competencies

• Thinking and Reasoning
  – Critical Thinking
  – Quantitative Reasoning
  – Scientific Inquiry
  – Written Communication

• Science
  – Living Systems
  – Human Behavior
Life Experiences

• Medically-related experiences
  – Demonstrate your desire to learn and understand
    • the daily life of a doctor
    • the practice of medicine in health-care settings
  – Demonstrate your abilities to empathize with and show compassion for people
  – Demonstrate the ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds/cultures
Life Experiences

• Extracurricular experiences should include “meaningful experiences”
  – In-depth
  – Service-oriented
  – Allow you to grow, stretch, and learn
  – Demonstrate your leadership abilities
  – Demonstrate your ability to work with and communicate effectively with others
Letters of Recommendation

• Letters of recommendation (LoR)
  – Whom to ask, how, when
  – What to do now

• Health Careers Evaluation Committee (HCEC)

Letter of Evaluation (LoE)
  – Background Information Form (BIF) with self-assessment of personal attributes; 20Qs
  – Personal Statement
  – Transcripts
  – Letters of recommendation
  – Interview (not alumni)
Preview: Application to Medical School

- AMCAS (and other service) Application
  - Personal essay
  - MCAT scores
  - Transcript
- Secondary Applications
- HCEC Letter or Letters of Recommendation Sent Directly
- Supplemental Letters
- Interview
- Follow-up Actions
Preparing for The Journey

• Update your profile in CCNet
• See your pre-health advisor(s) early and often
  – Is medicine the right career for you?
  – Understanding core and recommended academic course requirements
  – Strategic planning for selecting schools to apply to and when to apply
  – Obtaining feedback on your personal essay
  – Post-application strategies during the “long waiting” period
  – Other options in health careers and research
Preparing for The Journey

• Attend workshops and view/listen to recordings at the CCS Media Site:
  – Academic requirements
  – Building relationships, asking for LoR, and interviewing
  – The Application Process and the HCEC process
  – Reviewing for the MCAT
  – Financing your medical education
  – Guest speakers from medical school admission programs and panels of medical providers

• Join premedical groups and participate in events
• Stay informed
Use Your Resources

- *Human Health Professions Exploration and Planning Guide* (correction needed on course list)
- Career Library
- Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR)
- Alumni Surveys at career.cornell.edu/resources/surveys
- Extern Program and Community Mentorship Program
- Health Careers web page on medical issues
- American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC.org)
- Newspapers/magazines/journals/blogs
How to Find Alumni Surveys

Resources

MEDICAL ADMISSIONS AND SCHOOL EVALUATION SURVEYS

We ask Cornell applicants to health professions schools to provide information on their experiences applying to medical, dental, and MD/PhD programs. See how other applicants have fared in the process in our Kerberos-protected survey site:
Applications and Outcomes Survey

We ask Cornell alumni to provide information about their experiences at schools where they are studying, to help current applicants consider their options and develop an application strategy. See what they say about the schools they attended in our Kerberos-protected survey site:
Alumni Health Professions School Survey

SEE ALSO:
- Health Careers
Questions?