Content credits

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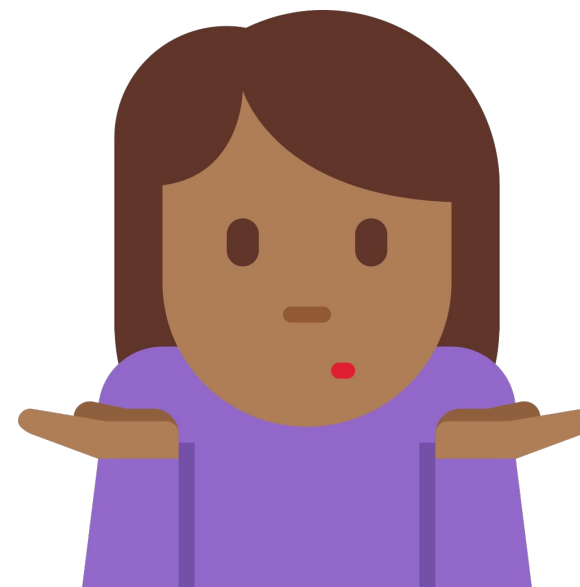Communications Committee, AAMC MD/PhD Section

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The COVID-19 pandemic has created monumental challenges in the world around us

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Applicants in the 2020-2021 MD/PhD admissions cycle
What does this mean for YOU?

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Elements of the successful MD-PhD application

HOLISTIC REVIEW

- Applicants show integrity and maturity:
  - Creative, aptitude for big questions in biomedical research, resilience, collaboration
- Productive research experience(s)*
- MD-PhD Essay – why MD-PhD?
- Letters of recommendation from research mentors
- Academic record, GPA & MCAT
- Experience in caring for others
- Extracurricular activities and life experiences
- Interviews

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*What constitutes a substantive research experience?

- **Enough research experience to understand what you are getting into:**
  - Multiple summer projects
  - Undergraduate research, Senior
    research thesis
  - One or more years pursuing research after undergraduate degree (Post-bac)

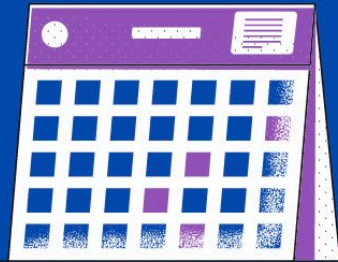**Become familiar with testing hypotheses**

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The good news

A strong MD/PhD application is not built overnight

A three month hiatus will not negate years of commitment

MD/PhD Programs are working together to be flexible

Programs are developing ways to accommodate applicant needs

MD/PhD application review is holistic

Looking for overall potential for success as a physician scientist

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Tips for MD/PhD Applicants on Virtual Interviews

Find a location with strong wifi

Zoom interviews can use a lot of bandwith, so identify a location where you'll have consistent wifi connection for long periods of time.

Test out the equipment

Have a reliable device with software loaded and tested before interview day. Be sure to close all unnecessary applications to optimize performance of the video conference.

Dress professionally

Even though you may not visit in person, you should appear presentable with attire similar to what you would wear in person. Avoid busy patterns that can be distracting on camera.

Use strong lighting

It's important for you to be seen so find a location with good natural light and/or strong light source behind your camera. Avoid bright lights behind you as they will create dark shadows.

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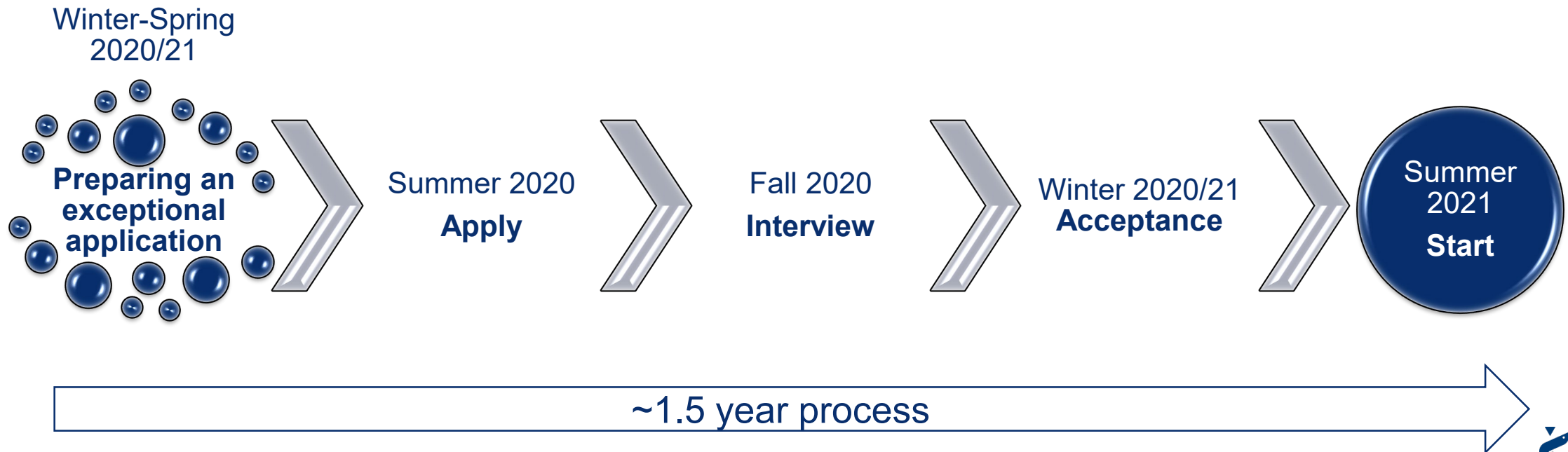

Be passionate about a career as a physician scientist

No matter what the circumstances of your interview, your goal is to convey your passion and potential as a physician scientist. This includes your prior experience as a scientist, your capacity for empathy with the human condition, and your ability to effectively communicate these ideas. Good luck!

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Application Timeline
Candidates Matriculating in the Summer of 2021

Pre-application (2-3 years)
- Courses
- Research
- Clinical exposures
- Activities and life experiences

Winter-Spring 2020/21

Preparing an exceptional application

Summer 2020
Apply

Fall 2020
Interview

Winter 2020/21
Acceptance

Summer 2021
Start

~1.5 year process

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What should you look for in a MD-PhD program?

- Environment (research and academic)

- Students, program activities & professional development, community involvement

- Alumni achievement

- Location

- A sense of belonging or "good fit"

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For more information:

https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/coronavirus-covid-19-and-fee-assistance-program/

- **https://www.aamc.org/mdphd**
- **www.NIH.gov/training**
- **Role models**
  - Directors and Mentors (Summer Program and Post-Bac)
  - Professors, Lab Heads and Department Chairs
  - MD-PhD Students, Graduate Students and Post-Docs
  - Career Advising Offices
  - PhD and MD-PhD Program Directors

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Lead

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