

Inspiring Stories: Webinar for Non-Traditional Applicants

Q&A Session Transcript

Applying to Medical School

Any suggestions for entering Work & Activities experiences into the AMCAS application for someone that spent 13 years as a Special Forces Medic, 8 years in active combat zones, and working. It's tough to choose which experiences to enter.

Your Special Forces experience is unique. Suggest entering these experiences during that time, because it will definitely stand out.

What is the MCAT score requirement to be admitted to FIU?

For those applicants that were accepted to FIU last year the range for the new MCAT last year was 498-519 and the average was a 509.

How important are premedical courses vs research experience vs MCAT in the MD/PhD application process?

They are all critically important as most medical schools have a holistic approach to admitting applicants.

Do you advise we write about different experiences in our secondary application than what was highlighted in our AMCAS personal statement and within the Work & Activities experiences?

Use your best judgement and decision based on if you have additional experiences you want to include on the secondary application. You are not required to enter different activities on the secondary application.

With regards to applying early, I won't have my post-baccalaureate course work completed until the end of July. Is it worth trying to apply that late?

Yes, it is definitely worth applying. Just make sure the rest of your AMCAS application is complete - letters of rec, essays, etc.

How would you recommend discussing previous academic weakness in your application?

Own up to it, do not make excuses. Talk about what you learned throughout that experience and what you would change moving forward.

How would you advise students applying as a non-traditional student to a MD-PHD program?

Apply early, and explain what makes you a non-traditional student. Write in your essay makes you stand out as an applicant.

How does having a thesis-based master's and less clinical experience impact my application to MD/PhD programs?

The research experience is emphasized over the clinical experience. Just make sure you know what is involved in clinical care (for MD-PhD applicants).

I have heard that students who are majoring in Biochemistry, Biology or Chemistry are more compelling than ones majoring in Psychology or Arts? What do you think about this?

Most students do major in Biology or Chemistry but we also have students who are educationally diverse. We have students with over 25 non-science majors at HWCUM.

Transitioning to Medical School

What's the one thing that you wish that you knew before entering or applying to medical school?

- Knowing what resources are available and using them.
- Don't be afraid to use those resources and not being scared to ask for help studying. That would have helped me significantly.
- Also, before you start medical school it would behoove you to take a course in genetics if you have not done so already.

How did you transition to going from the military to going to med school? How is military experience viewed in the application process?

When you are preparing your AMCAS application, be sure you have get your military transcript sent to AMCAS to be included with verification. It can be a hard transition and hard to talk about your experiences as a war veteran in the medical school environment. The mental health program at medical schools can be extremely helpful with transitioning.

How challenging was it transitioning from being gainfully employed to taking out loans and studying in medical school full time?

It could be tough transition. Also, it's important to focus on your ultimate goals in the process. In the mean time you could also make decent money as a nurse and if you able to get some financial aid from your school. You do have to plan more, be more strategic, budget really well, and adjust to your new finances.

If you have family of your own how do you balance that with being a medical student?

Time management is crucial. It's healthy balance that you have to maintain. Be strategic, plan time to study, and be committed. Be organized and plan ahead.

What kinds of student support services are available on campus at FIU?

We have a lot of resources tailored to medical students. Also, upperclassmen are available to help medical students to acclimate to all the materials you will be exposed to. We have disability services to those that need it. We have an office of Diversity and Inclusion to help students and we have

opportunities for peer mentorship to help with the transition. We have a counseling and wellness office that offers yoga, cooking demonstrations, and a lot of activities that help with wellness that includes full time psychiatrists that are specific to the medical students

As a non-traditional student should you have to prove yourself more to medical schools more than a traditional student?

No, more students are non-traditional now. Simply let medical schools know who you are. Especially in the interview, share your experiences and tell them about yourself. In some cases you have the more real life experiences that could actually make the application and interview process easier in some ways.

Do you have any study tips for those that are balancing full time job with full time student?

Be sure to practice good time management. Also, figure out how you study best. How you study now might be different from how you study in medical school. Learn what works for you and run with it. Stick to a schedule and arrange your time accordingly. When you are studying it should be qualitative not quantitative.