



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

# Getting Into Medical School

*AAMC Resources and Services  
for Premed Students*



Association of  
American Medical Colleges

# Contents

## Getting Started

Aspiring Docs®	4
Finding Health Care Volunteer Experiences	5
Finding Research Experiences	7

## Choosing a Medical School

Medical School Admission Requirements™ (MSAR®)	10
Mission and Interview Questions Worksheet	11

## Programs

Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP)	12
Medical Minority Applicant Registry	13
Fee Assistance Program	14
Anatomy of an Applicant	15

## Getting Into Medical School

A Premed Student's Steps to Medical School	16
Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®)	18
What's on the MCAT Exam?	19
The AAMC PREview® Professional Readiness Exam	20

## Applying to Medical School

American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®)	21
How Does the AMCAS Application Work?	22

## Paying for Medical School

Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (FIRST)	23
You CAN Afford Medical School	24
Budget Worksheet for Students	25

## My Path to Medical School: Checklist

## The AAMC Wants to Hear From You!

## About the AAMC

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is a nonprofit association dedicated to improving the health of people everywhere through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 158 U.S. medical schools accredited by the [Liaison Committee on Medical Education](#); 13 accredited Canadian medical schools; approximately 400 academic health systems and teaching hospitals, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools, academic health systems and teaching hospitals, and the millions of individuals across academic medicine, including more than 193,000 full-time faculty members, 96,000 medical students, 153,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Following a 2022 merger, the Alliance of Academic Health Centers and the Alliance of Academic Health Centers International broadened participation in the AAMC by U.S. and international academic health centers. Learn more at [aamc.org](http://aamc.org).

# Welcome to the AAMC — Your Trusted Resource for Official Guidance and Information for Premed Students

You're about to embark on the most exciting journey of your education and training, and you'll be making some of the most important decisions of your career.

At the AAMC, we're here to help you navigate the journey — from premed through residency and beyond — with reliable, trusted resources and services.

We hope that you find this booklet helpful in answering many of your questions about embarking on a career in medicine. We encourage you to visit our website to take advantage of the many resources we've created for you, including webinars, podcasts, inspiring stories, tools, and tips.

Also, be sure to connect with AAMC Premed on social media to get the latest information and join us in discussions about premed topics.

We wish you the very best of success in a rewarding and fulfilling career in medicine!

AAMC Premed Team

[aamc.org/students](https://aamc.org/students)



AAMC PreMed



@AAMCPreMed



## Aspiring Docs®

*The AAMC Aspiring Docs® website provides resources and inspiration to help you get started on your path to medicine.*

There's a lot of planning and preparation leading up to applying to medical school – so start exploring the great information on the Aspiring Docs website right away.

You'll find fact sheets with a wealth of information on:

- Partnering with your advisor.
- Deciding whether a career in medicine is right for you.
- Getting lab experience, shadowing a doctor, and finding summer programs.
- Preparing to take the MCAT® exam.
- Learning about the PREview® exam and how to prepare.
- Applying to medical school or MD-PhD programs.
- Making the most of a gap year.
- Experiencing an anatomy lab, seeing a patient for the first time, and other experiences shared by current medical students.
- And much more.

Plus, you'll be able to read inspiring Q&A interviews with and personal stories from medical students, residents, and physicians – some of whom took a unique path to medicine or overcame challenges.

And, finally, be sure to follow premed, medical student, and resident bloggers as they share their experiences, challenges, and what keeps them motivated on their path to a career in medicine on [AspiringDocsDiaries.org](http://AspiringDocsDiaries.org).

[aamc.org/aspiringdocs](http://aamc.org/aspiringdocs)



## Finding Health Care Volunteer Experiences

Volunteering in a health-care-related setting will enhance your medical school application. But, more importantly, it's a chance to see whether you enjoy working in the medical field.

### Where can I find out about opportunities?

If you are still in school, your first step should be to talk to your academic or prehealth advisor. Also, check to see whether there is an office of community service or student activities on campus that can help connect you with a position. Be sure to join premed or service clubs since they're one of the best ways to hear about volunteer openings, make friends, and find out about other opportunities for premeds. You can also contact hospitals, clinics, labs, research facilities, charities, foundations, or other organizations directly; many list volunteer opportunities online.

### What types of volunteer experiences are best?

Although you'll benefit from almost any type of volunteer experience, it's best to find at least one opportunity related to health care. You'll want to search for something that genuinely interests you so that you'll enjoy the experience, be motivated to stick with it, and learn from it. You may need to try a few different volunteer experiences before you discover one that is a good long-term fit. Don't do something just because you think it will look good to medical schools. When you talk about your experiences during medical school interviews, it will be easier if you're passionate and invested in your volunteer work. Examples of volunteer experiences that current medical students listed on their medical school applications can be found on Anatomy of an Applicant. This resource showcases how your volunteer experiences can demonstrate the core competencies and make you stand out to admissions officers.

### Is it better to have one ongoing experience or many different experiences?

It's good to have a variety of experiences, but it's also important to show you've cultivated specific interests and are able to commit to an activity over a sustained period of time. You're more likely to gain significant responsibilities or leadership roles if you volunteer with an organization regularly. This also helps you network and develop relationships with potential mentors and people who may potentially write your letters of recommendation.

### What about experiences unrelated to medicine?

If you're interested in something unrelated to medicine, don't be afraid to pursue it. Most volunteer experiences are valuable and will provide you with well-rounded experiences. Just make sure you have at least one solid health-care-related experience, in addition to your nonmedical volunteer work, so that your experiences speak to your commitment to medicine.

### **What's the best way to maximize my opportunities during an experience?**

"One thing that I always tell students is to make the most of the opportunity they participate in by advocating for themselves," says Lisa Kooperman, assistant dean of studies and director of the Office for Fellowships and Pre-health Advising at Vassar College. "If they find themselves in a hospital for instance, pushing papers, I tell them to befriend a nurse, a PA, a radiologist... or other health care practitioner and ask if they can get more involved. Their motivation is likely to be met with some extra responsibilities that will get them more exposure and respect. It's important to build relationships throughout the experience as a way of learning more about the field, and it can often lead to a strong letter of recommendation."

### **How can I document these experiences?**

It's a good idea to maintain a resume that documents where and when you've volunteered to use as you continue to apply for new positions and programs. You'll also want to track the number of hours you spend on each activity and record who supervised you, since the American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®) application asks for this information for the 15 activities you choose to list. You can also keep a journal about your experiences to reference when it comes time to write your personal statements and essays for medical school. It never hurts to ask for a letter of recommendation if you've volunteered somewhere long enough for the writer to get to know you and your goals.

## Finding Research Experiences

Working in a research setting can help make you a competitive medical school applicant and help you to determine whether a career in medicine or medical research is right for you.

### How do I find a research position?

If you're currently in college, check with your institution's science or undergraduate research websites for opportunities to assist with faculty research projects. You can also review faculty biography pages and lab websites for more information. Next, reach out to your immediate network: express your interest in assisting with a research project to your science professors, academic advisor, and your prehealth advisor.

Try exchanging ideas with your peers and upperclassmen for advice on research opportunities at your institution. You can also ask peer advisors, resident advisors, or any fellow premedical students for introductions to principal investigators (PIs). You might even try the "Undergrad-Grad-PI" method. This is where you first reach out to undergraduate students in research labs to learn about their responsibilities; they are oftentimes more responsive. Then, reach out to the graduate or postdoc students to learn about the research question being investigated. After this, read the most recent paper or abstract the lab published. Once you complete these steps, you can approach the PI more confidently and more effectively demonstrate your commitment to and understanding of their project.

Staff at your school's career center or student employment office may know about research job openings, and they can also offer resume help and go over interview tips and techniques. Remember, opportunities may be on or off campus, full- or part-time, paid or unpaid, or part of a summer program. Once you find a position, you can connect with your school's fellowships or awards office to inquire about research funding opportunities.

If you've already graduated, consider looking into open positions. Research hospitals, universities, and biotech companies are always looking for lab technicians or clinical research coordinators. Job opportunities are typically posted on the career pages of their websites.

### When should I begin gaining research experience in college?

Some premedical students begin their research experiences during their first year of college, and others begin research positions after they have already graduated. On average, most students secure a research position junior or senior year. There are three big factors that will impact this:

1. Your level of interest in pursuing research. If you are really excited to investigate a question under a mentor, you might find yourself reaching out to professors early and often. Other students may focus on gaining clinical experience, and therefore wait until later in their academic career to start research.
2. Readiness for the research project. Different PIs will have different expectations for preparation. A research project might require you to first take coursework in basic lab sciences, statistics, or another advanced topic specific to the project. Other PIs may prefer to have their graduate or postdoc students train you "on the job." This will impact when you are ready to join a project.
3. Finding the right research project. The process of reviewing different PIs and research projects to find the right fit for you can take time. What subject do you want to investigate? Do you want your research project to take place in a lab or non-lab setting? Is there an independent question you want to investigate with the help of a mentor?

### When is the best time to look for a position?

According to Kate Stutz, PhD, director of pre-health advising at Brandeis University, if you're interested in a research position during the academic year, the best time to look for positions is at the very beginning of the semester. There also tend to be a lot of research opportunities in the summer, both paid and volunteer, through set programs like the [U.S. National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates](#). It's best to start applying for summer research positions between December and February. Remember, typically there are more applicants than available spots so get your applications in early. Each undergraduate institution will be different, so make sure to connect with your advisors and peers for advice on when to start looking.

### What's the best way to apply?

The outreach email message that you send to potential research faculty is very important. This message should include a formal introduction of yourself, evidence that you are familiar with their research projects, and a clear, specific ask. Identify what you hope to contribute to the project. Do you want to clean the glassware or analyze lab findings? Consider attaching your resume as well.

Dr. Stutz stresses that networking and persistence are crucial to finding a position. Make sure you're using all of your network, including your peers and professors, to find open positions. Don't be afraid to send follow up emails; faculty are very busy and often overlook emails. Sometimes, it can be even more effective to stop by a professor's office hours to hand deliver your materials and indicate your interest in person.

### How should I prepare for an interview?

With any interview, it's important to make a good impression. Be sure to dress appropriately. Come prepared with a resume. Use your campus career center for advice on proper attire and resume best practices.

Often during interviews, you'll be asked about your career goals. It's helpful to be able to speak about the steps you plan to take to meet those goals. Talk about classes you've taken, especially upper-level science courses. Speak about your skills, your knowledge of techniques, and the equipment you've used throughout your coursework. Be prepared to discuss the lab experiments you've completed. If you've done any sort of research — even in your coursework — keep track of it. This shows you have experience.

Lastly, interviewers often ask candidates if they have any questions. Dr. Stutz suggests asking something that indicates you've done your own research into their project. You could ask where they see their research going in the next three years or what challenges they anticipate. You could also ask about expectations for undergraduate researchers; do they expect you to work 20 or more hours a week? Full time over the summer? Do they require you to have work study or to sign up for research credits? Asking these questions can help you plan ahead and determine whether this position is the best fit for you. Check out these [interview resources](#) for more tips.

### Does research experience have to be in a wet lab?

No! Research can be performed in any field or subject. Medical schools admit applicants with research in classics, sociology, history, and policy, as well as applicants with research in biology, biochemistry, and neuroscience. Medical schools value all types of research. Research can take place in a scientific lab that requires advanced devices and procedures to obtain data for analysis. Research can also take place in the humanities or social sciences, where participant interviews or surveys are needed to obtain an individual's life perspective. The clinical research field is constantly investigating patient outcomes and

how to improve care through clinical trials or analysis of patient data. As a premedical student, consider the question you want to investigate further. Do you want to learn more about how health inequities impact disadvantaged communities in your area? Or perhaps you want to know more about the protein channels involved in memory cognition? Once you choose a direction, you can then partner with a research PI for guidance on how to navigate your question.

Sierra Perez, pre-health advisor at Brandeis University, tells students to get creative with their research question. She has been impressed by the medical school applicants who have created independent questions that address the community's needs. "Applicants are recognizing the critical needs of specific populations, such as homelessness, LGBTQ+, veterans, youth with disabilities, etc.," she stated. "There is also a demand for translational researchers, or individuals who can take complicated bench topics and apply it to the clinical world."

### **Is research experience required to be accepted to medical school?**

It depends. Some medical schools are very research-focused; they may require a research thesis or have research time built into the curriculum. Other schools are more community or clinically focused; they would rather have an applicant work in a health care setting or volunteer at their local soup kitchen than be at the bench moving clear liquids from one test tube to another. Research experience (in whatever discipline) is helpful for developing some of the [AAMC Premed Competencies](#), such as critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and scientific reasoning, as well as teamwork and oral communication skills. How much you should engage in research depends on how much you enjoy it once you try it!

Most accepted medical school applicants have some form of academic or clinical research at the time they apply. Competence in research has become increasingly important in the medical field to improve patient care outcomes.

You can also review medical school mission statements to see if research is a focus at a particular school. You can read each school's mission and find the number of accepted students in their most recent class who had research experience in the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#). Remember, it's best to pursue experiences that you're genuinely interested in, rather than just to check a box, but you may not know whether research is for you until you give it a try.



## Medical School Admission Requirements™ (MSAR®)

*One of the most important decisions you'll make is where to go to medical school. Rely on accurate data from a trusted source.*

The AAMC Medical School Admission Requirements™ (MSAR®) resources provide the most comprehensive, up-to-date information and data.

### ***The Official Guide to Medical School Admissions: How to Prepare for and Apply to Medical School***

This is the most complete and trusted guide for medical school admissions and includes crucial information about the application process, financial resources, interview tips, and admission criteria. Receive exclusive insight from the experts who manage the MCAT exam and the AMCAS application, and learn about how admission decisions are made, diversity in medical schools, paying for medical school, applicant and matriculant data, and more. It includes worksheets to help you make strategic decisions during the application process. Available free of charge from the [AAMC Store](#).

### **Medical School Admission Requirements for U.S. and Canadian Medical Schools**

When you're ready to start researching medical schools, the MSAR website is the most accurate resource for requirements, data, and information. This is the only comprehensive resource with current data that comes directly from the AMCAS application and MCAT exam. The site is mobile- and tablet-friendly, with detailed search and filter options, dynamic charts, and an expanded comparison feature. Review information about each school's admission timeline, premedical coursework requirements, demographics of the entering class, admission statistics, and more. Your one- or two-year subscription allows you to search, sort, save information, take notes, and even share favorites by email.

[aamc.org/msar](https://aamc.org/msar)

## Mission and Interview Questions Worksheet

Medical schools give weight to specific characteristics that align with their missions. Be aware of each school’s mission statement and how your personal traits align with it. Examples could include research inquisitiveness, empathy, teamwork, curiosity, and a desire for knowledge about the health care delivery system. You can find each medical school’s mission statement under the “About” section in the Medical School Admission Requirements website. You don’t need a subscription to view this section. Go to [aamc.org/msar](http://aamc.org/msar) to view each medical school’s profile.

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Factor	Ideal fit	Good fit	No opinion	Unsure	Not a fit	Notes
Course offerings						
Class size						
Location						
Research programs						
Technology						
Interviews and/or meetings with faculty						
Reputation						
Tuition and financial aid						
Programs for minority or disadvantaged students						
Teaching methods						
Combined-degree offerings						
Campus tour						
Rural or community offerings						
Residency placement						

Impression of school:  Favorable  Undecided  Unfavorable

Likelihood of applying:  Will apply  Undecided  Unlikely to apply

Follow-up questions to ask: \_\_\_\_\_

For a list of interview questions, see the article “Selecting a Medical School: 35 Questions I Wish I Had Asked” at [aamc.org/35questions](http://aamc.org/35questions).

## Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP)

The Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) is a FREE six-week academic enrichment summer program focused on improving access to information and resources for college students interested in the health professions. SHPEP scholars have a legacy of success: over 65% of scholars who apply to medical and dental school are accepted, and over 78% of students earn advanced degrees.

SHPEP offers students a variety of academic and career experiences that will support their preparation within the health professions:

- Academic enrichment in the basic sciences and quantitative topics.
- Development of learning and study skills, including methods of individual and group learning.
- Clinical exposure through small-group rotations in health care settings, simulation experiences, and seminars.
- Career development sessions directed toward exploring the health professions, explaining the admission process, and developing an education plan.
- A financial literacy and planning workshop that informs students of financial principles and management strategies.
- A health policy seminar series to expose scholars to current health policy issues, the policymaking process and analysis, health care financing, and the social determinants of health.
- An introduction to interprofessional education that explores effective collaboration across health professions.

Housing, meals, and travel assistance are covered by the program. Scholars are provided with a \$1,000 stipend, which is typically distributed in one installment midway through the program and another at the end of the program.

There are many other summer enrichment and pathway programs for students who are not eligible for SHPEP. Talk with your advisor, check the Other Opportunities webpage on [shpep.org](https://shpep.org), and visit [aamc.org/aspiringdocs](https://aamc.org/aspiringdocs) for more information.

[shpep.org](https://shpep.org)



[facebook.com/shpepconnect](https://facebook.com/shpepconnect)



[@SHPEPconnect](https://www.instagram.com/SHPEPconnect)



[@SHPEPconnect](https://twitter.com/SHPEPconnect)



[youtube.com/c/shpepconnect](https://youtube.com/c/shpepconnect)

SHPEP is a national program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation with direction and technical assistance provided by the AAMC and the American Dental Education Association.

## Medical Minority Applicant Registry

*The Medical Minority Applicant Registry (MedMAR) is used by U.S. medical schools to identify U.S. applicants who self-identify as members of a racial or ethnic group historically underrepresented in medicine or who are economically disadvantaged.*

When you register for the MCAT exam, you'll get a chance to participate in the Medical Minority Applicant Registry. The registry was created to enhance admissions opportunities for U.S. students who are members of a racial or ethnic group historically underrepresented in medicine or who are economically disadvantaged.

Please see the website for specific eligibility requirements. The registry provides basic biographical information and MCAT exam scores to minority and admissions offices at AAMC-member medical schools, which may choose to send information to students.

[aamc.org/medmar](https://aamc.org/medmar)



## Fee Assistance Program

*The AAMC Fee Assistance Program assists those who, without financial assistance, would be unable to take the MCAT or PREview exams or apply to medical schools that use the AMCAS application.*

Fee Assistance Program benefits include reduced registration fees for the MCAT exam and the AAMC PREview® professional readiness exam, official MCAT preparation materials, complimentary access to the MSAR website, waiver of AMCAS fees, discount Electronic Residency Application Service® applications, and more.

Be sure to check the Fee Assistance Program eligibility requirements before you register for the MCAT exam, PREview exam, submit your AMCAS application, or purchase any AAMC products as benefits are not retroactive.

[aamc.org/feeassistance](https://aamc.org/feeassistance)



# Anatomy of an Applicant

Many medical schools are progressing to a competency-based admissions process. In addition to your grades and test scores, these schools evaluate you based on the 17 **Premed Competencies** that demonstrate your preparedness for medical school. To show how successful applicants have demonstrated these competencies in many different ways, **Anatomy of an Applicant** is a free resource that shares interviews from real medical students, their prehealth advisors, and the admission officers who accepted them. You can also complete a workbook with self-assessment worksheets to track your own competencies.

## Preprofessional Competency: Teamwork

**Definition:** Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.



### Premed Competencies: Self-Assessment

When evaluating your readiness for medical school, schools assess your development, understanding, and proficiency in the premed competencies through your experiences as described in the AMCAS application, personal statement, interview, letters of recommendation, and performance on other assessments (e.g., MCAT exam, PREview exam).

You should periodically assess or reassess your learning and development in these competencies to determine where you may need additional experiences to better prepare for medical school.

Using the sheet below, reflect on each competency area and what experiences have given you an opportunity to develop in the competency. (You can view all competencies and their definitions at the end of this document.)

**Date of Self-Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Competency:**

<b>Professional</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Learning and Growth	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal Skills	<b>Thinking and Reasoning</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Humility	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliability and Dependability	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific Inquiry
	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy and Compassion	<input type="checkbox"/> Resilience and Adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/> Written Communication
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Service Orientation	<b>Science</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork and Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Behavior
			<input type="checkbox"/> Living Systems

**Level of Competency Development:**    Planning     Progressing     Demonstrating

**How I demonstrated this competency across experiences:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**How developing this competency helps prepare me to be a successful medical student or future physician:**

\_\_\_\_\_

20 ANATOMY OF AN APPLICANT



### Premed Competency Experience Worksheets

In the AMCAS application, you're able to list up to **15 significant experiences** (three of which should be listed as your most meaningful), including extracurricular activities, awards, honors, and publications that you would like to highlight for medical schools. This worksheet provides a structured way to keep track of your experiences by reflecting on how the experience was transformative for you, your impact while engaging in the activity, and the personal growth you experienced because of your participation.

Use the sheet below to think about which **competencies** you gained experience in and how you developed or demonstrated these competencies through the experience. Keep in mind that medical schools will not expect any one experience to relate to all competencies. You will likely demonstrate numerous competencies through several experiences. You should complete this worksheet either at the end of an experience or periodically update it over the course of a long-term experience.

**Name of experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of experience (check all that apply):**    Volunteer     Laboratory     Paid

**Start date:** \_\_\_\_\_    **End date:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Hours/time spent in experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor or contact information:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Meaningful or important parts of this experience:** Reflect on your experience and for each relevant competency, describe:

- What you learned about the competency by observing others.
- How you developed or improved in the competency.
- How you demonstrated the competency.

*Note: Remember to write about only relevant competencies, not all competencies. No one experience is likely to reflect all competencies.*

15 ANATOMY OF AN APPLICANT AAMC.ORG

# A Premed Student's Steps to Medical School

## Getting Into Medical School



**College  
Freshman  
Year**

**1**

**Explore Your  
Options for Careers  
in Medicine**

Visit Aspiring Docs® website  
Meet with an advisor  
Apply to summer programs  
Explore financial aid options

**5**

**Make a  
Game Plan  
With Your  
Advisor**

**College  
Junior Year**

Get research or internship  
Review AMCAS® application  
Look into Fee Assistance P  
Review the MCAT® and PR  
registration processes



**6**

**Register  
for the  
MCAT Exam**

Register early!  
Use Medical School Admission Requirements™ to compare schools  
Begin filling out AMCAS application

**Summer**

This infographic represents a basic timeline of the steps toward medical school. Your advisor and AAMC resources can help you individualize the timeline and steps.

[aamc.org/students](http://aamc.org/students)



Buy books  
Find a place to live  
Attend orientation programs and matriculate

**Get  
Med**



2

Summer

Get Some Experience

Participate in enrichment programs  
Volunteer or intern in the field

College Sophomore Year

Stay on Track for Medical School

3

experience  
on processes  
Program  
Eview®

4

Get More Experience and Look at Resources

Summer

Work with your prehealth advisor  
Volunteer/work in a medical-related field



er

Finalize and submit your AMCAS application  
Continue to volunteer/work

College Senior Year

7

Prepare for Medical School Interviews

Consult with your prehealth advisor  
Get interview tips from Aspiring Docs website

Receive Letters of Acceptance or Rejection

8

Get Ready for Medical School

College Graduation

**If waitlisted or rejected:**  
Talk with your advisor  
Consider a gap year or post-bacc program  
Explore at [students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc](https://students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc)

**If accepted:**  
Decide which medical school you want to attend  
Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms; visit FIRST at [aamc.org/FIRST](https://aamc.org/FIRST)



## Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®)

*The AAMC develops and administers the MCAT exam – a standardized, multiple-choice test that assesses your knowledge of natural and social sciences concepts and the critical thinking and scientific problem-solving skills required to begin the study of medicine.*

The MCAT exam is designed to help better prepare tomorrow's doctors for the rapid changes in science and medical education. It reinforces the diversity of interests and preparation that medical school admissions committees look for in their applicants.

The MCAT exam tests not only what you know, but how you apply that knowledge by assessing your problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and knowledge of natural, behavioral, and social science concepts and principles, all of which are necessary to the study and practice of medicine.

You'll find a variety of resources to help you prepare for the exam, including MCAT practice exams and other materials written by the developers of the exam, videos and review questions in the Khan Academy MCAT collection, and more!

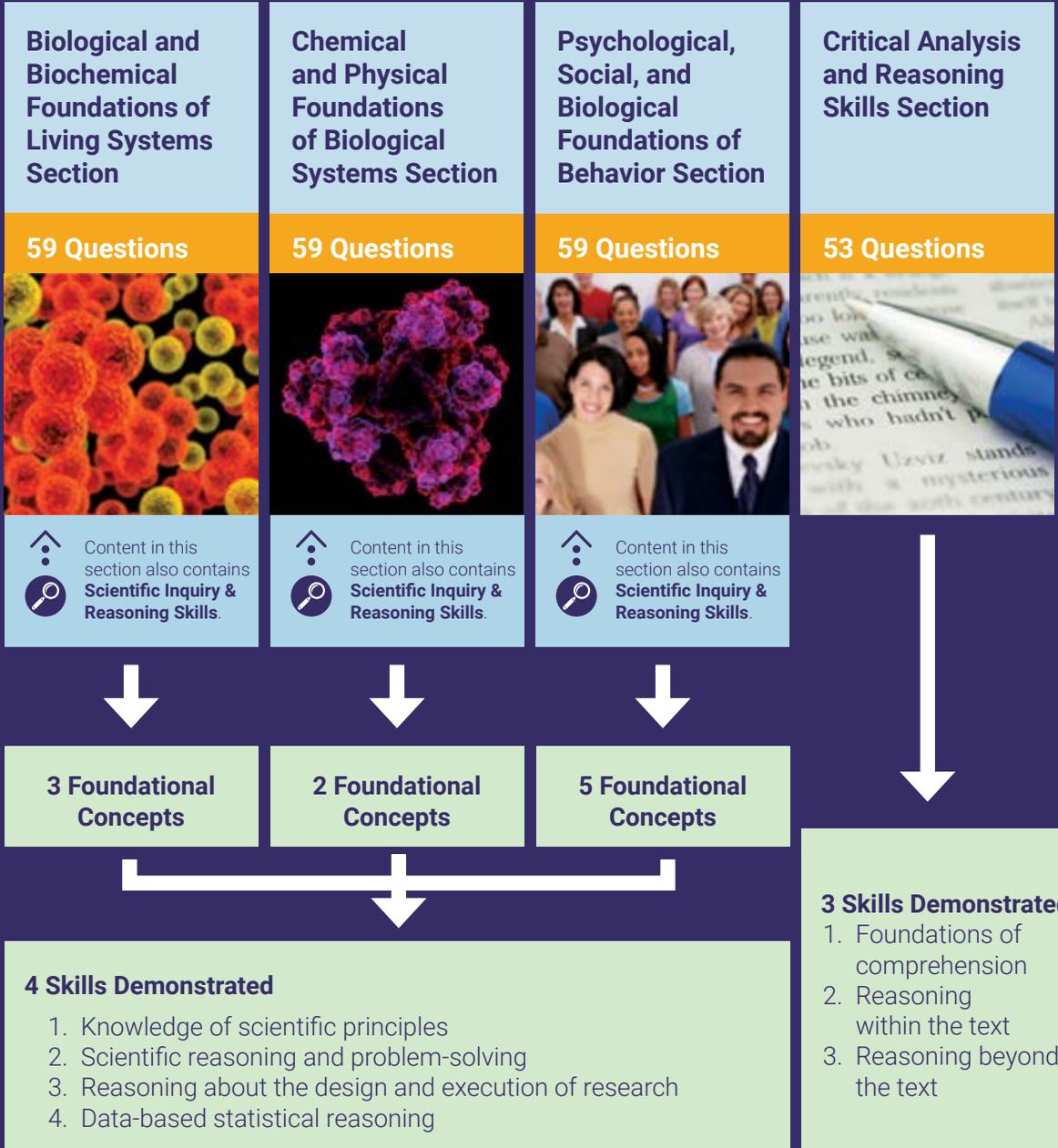
To learn more about the MCAT exam, including what's on the exam, test preparation, and scoring, visit [aamc.org/mcat](https://aamc.org/mcat).

[aamc.org/mcat](https://aamc.org/mcat)



@AAMC\_MCAT

# What's on the MCAT Exam?



Get all the details at [students-residents.aamc.org/mcatexam](https://students-residents.aamc.org/mcatexam)

## The AAMC PREview® Professional Readiness Exam

*The AAMC develops and administers the PREview® exam – a standardized exam designed to assess an applicant’s understanding of effective professional behavior.*

The PREview exam is designed to support admission of a diverse and capable future physician workforce. It signals the importance of the professional competencies medical school students and future doctors need to work well within multidisciplinary teams and provide skilled and compassionate care to diverse populations. The exam is required or recommended by many medical schools, and it is taken in addition to the MCAT exam.

The PREview exam presents a series of hypothetical scenarios across the full range of professional competencies and asks examinees to evaluate the effectiveness of a series of behavioral responses to each scenario. Scores from the PREview exam provide medical schools information on applicants’ readiness to further advance their professional competencies in medical school.

The AAMC provides several resources to help you prepare for the exam, including a preparation guide written by the developers of the exam, full-length practice exams, and other resources to help you prepare for your testing session.

To learn more about the PREview exam, including what’s on the exam, test preparation, and scoring, visit [aamc.org/preview](http://aamc.org/preview).

### What Professional Competencies Are Measured on the PREview Exam?

The scenarios within the PREview exam are based on real-life situations in educational, health care, social, or other real-life contexts. The scenarios are written so that you do not need direct experience in these settings. The exam gives you a total of 186 behavioral responses across the scenarios to evaluate, and you will rate the effectiveness of the responses on a four-point scale from very ineffective to very effective.



## American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®)

*Did you know that each premed student applies to an average of 18 medical schools?*

Luckily, when you use the AAMC's centralized application service, you only need to submit one primary application, regardless of the number of medical schools to which you apply.

The AMCAS application is available to individuals applying to first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. If you are applying to an MD or a combined MD program (e.g., MD-PhD), you'll most likely use the AMCAS service to complete and submit your application materials. If you are an advanced-standing or transfer applicant, you should contact the medical school directly for assistance.

The AMCAS program collects and delivers your verified application information, letters of evaluation, and MCAT and PREview exam scores to each school you choose. Each participating school is then responsible for making its own individual admission decisions.

Most medical schools also administer a secondary application and host virtual or in-person interviews, which you may be invited to complete. Visit medical school websites for more information about their application and review processes.

### Contacting the AMCAS Program

AMCAS Support Center representatives are available to answer your questions and assist you in completing your application from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. ET. Closed Wednesday, 3-5 p.m. ET.

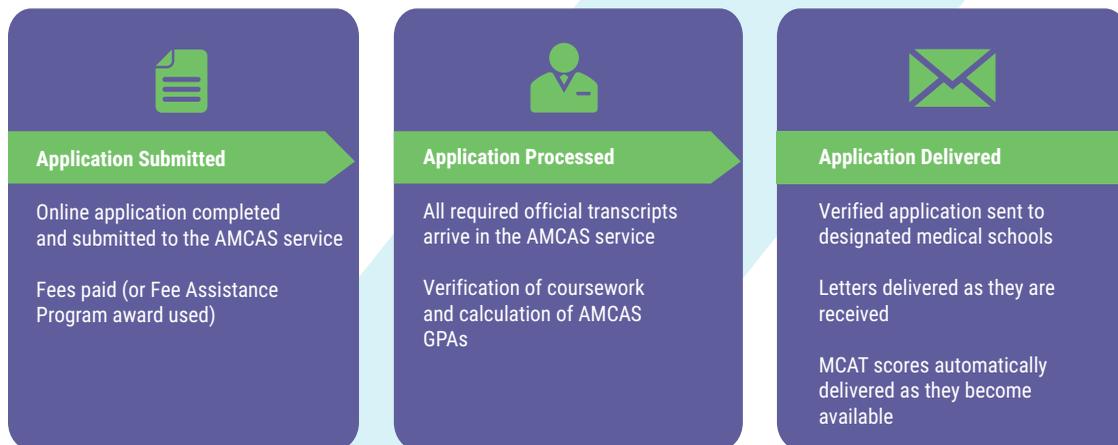
202-828-0600 | [amcas@aamc.org](mailto:amcas@aamc.org)

[aamc.org/amcas](https://aamc.org/amcas)



@AMCASinfo

## How Does the AMCAS Application Work?



### Preparing for the AMCAS Application

- The AMCAS application opens in May of each year for applicants who plan to begin medical school in the following year. When you are ready to begin the application, you should start by visiting the AMCAS website ([aamc.org/amcas](https://aamc.org/amcas)). The documents and video tutorials available in the Resources section are updated for each application cycle with the most current information.
- The AMCAS program does not advise applicants on making decisions related to their application, so we encourage you to work with your school's advising office and to review the Medical School Admission Requirements.
- Using the online application, you will enter information about yourself and your background. You will have your official transcripts sent directly to the AMCAS program, where AMCAS staff will verify your coursework and normalize your GPA based on your school's grading scale. Along with your letters of evaluation, the AMCAS program then sends your verified application data to the medical schools to which you have chosen to apply.
- For regular applications, your official transcripts must be received by AMCAS within 14 calendar days after the application deadline (or the next business day if the date falls on a weekend or holiday).
- You can submit your AMCAS application before your official transcripts and letters of evaluation reach the AMCAS program.
- June through September is the peak application submission period, which means your application may take about six weeks, after all materials are received, to be processed.
- After your application is submitted, you may check its verification status using our automated system or on the social platform X at [@AMCASinfo](https://twitter.com/AMCASinfo).

. Find FAQs, video tutorials, an application guide, and more at

[aamc.org/amcas](https://aamc.org/amcas)

## Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (FIRST)

*Most medical students borrow at least a portion of the money they need to finance their education, and there are many repayment options.*

Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (FIRST) is the AAMC financial aid and debt management program – and it's packed with FREE materials to help you make wise financial decisions. You will find:

- A library of financial aid fact sheets to help you with budgeting, understanding credit, borrowing loans, loan repayment, debt management, and more.
- Videos and webinars that provide answers to many financial aid-related questions.
- The MedLoans® Organizer and Calculator – a tool specifically designed for medical students at AAMC-member medical schools.
- Free access to the AAMC Financial Wellness program ([aamc.org/financialwellness](https://www.aamc.org/financialwellness)), an online financial education program that provides practical information and interactive lessons on money management, budgeting, credit, and more.

With FIRST, you will find the information you need to make educated borrowing decisions and develop sound debt management skills.

[aamc.org/first](https://www.aamc.org/first)

## You CAN Afford Medical School

*You want to be a doctor or physician-scientist – that’s a good career choice, both socially and financially. You probably know that medical school is expensive, but what you may not know is that once you are admitted to medical school, there are options for financing your education. The key is to find the solution that best meets your goals.*

### Things to Think About

While there are many different ways you might choose to pay for your education, student loans are a reality for most students. The keys to successful borrowing and loan repayment are careful planning and budgeting, learning how to effectively manage your debt, and educating yourself on the various repayment and forgiveness options.

### Have a Plan

One of your first stops on the road to creating a sound financial plan is the AAMC FIRST program. FIRST provides extensive information on the cost of applying to medical school, various types of loans, repayment information, and other related topics. Even with these resources, the process of financing medical school may be a bit overwhelming at times. Your next step is identifying a financial aid advisor at the schools to which you’re applying to assist you.

### Seek Good Advice

The importance of getting sound, accurate, and timely advice cannot be overstated. Whether it’s your prehealth advisor, a current medical student or resident, or the admissions or financial aid office at the school to which you’re applying, there are people who can help you navigate this often complex process. Look at each school’s financial aid office website to see what information is available. Bring your financial aid questions with you when you visit schools, and stop by the financial aid office to get your questions answered.

### Learn About Repayment Options

It may seem too early to learn about loan repayment options, but being aware of them can help ease the fear of student loan repayment down the road. There are various repayment plans currently available, and it’s important to know that you have options when it comes to selecting the plan that works best for your financial situation. Another opportunity for repayment can be found with service repayment programs. These programs can help you repay your loans while practicing in a medically underserved area, or through public or military service. For more information on repayment programs and a variety of other topics, review the financial aid fact sheets at [aamc.org/first/factsheets](https://www.aamc.org/first/factsheets).

### Final Thoughts

Stay true to your passion. Explore your options. Find a good advisor or mentor. If you can, enter medical school with little or no credit card debt and be aware of the status of your undergraduate loans. The less debt you begin medical school with, the less debt you will have at the end. Strive to not put application and interviewing costs (fees, travel, hotels, etc.) on credit cards as there will be no room in your medical school budget to pay off that debt. Lastly, remember the financial aid office. It will be essential to you throughout medical school and the financial aid staff are there to help you navigate the complexities of paying for your degree. Establish connections to ensure you get the help you need.

[aamc.org/first](https://www.aamc.org/first)

## Budget Worksheet for Students

For an interactive PDF of a student's budget, visit [aamc.org/studentbudget](http://aamc.org/studentbudget).

### MONTHLY INCOME:

Financial aid	_____
Investment income	_____
Gifts	_____
Other	_____
<b>Total Monthly Income</b>	_____

### MONTHLY FIXED EXPENSES:

Tuition and fees	_____
Books and supplies	_____
Savings	_____
Rent/mortgage	_____
Phone	_____
Taxes (federal, state)	_____
Vehicle payments	_____
Other transportation	_____
Personal loans	_____
Education loans	_____
Insurance (life and health)	_____
Home/renter insurance	_____
Auto insurance	_____
Auto registration/taxes	_____
Other	_____
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	_____

### MONTHLY VARIABLE EXPENSES:

Food/household supplies	_____
Dining out	_____
Clothes	_____
Laundry/dry cleaning	_____
Gas, oil, auto maintenance	_____
Parking	_____
Medical/dental/eye care	_____
Entertainment	_____
Travel/vacation	_____
Utilities	_____
Music/books/journals	_____
Personal care	_____
Subscriptions	_____
Cable TV and internet	_____
Credit card payments	_____
Charity/contributions/gifts	_____
Savings for interviews/relocation	_____
Test prep course/materials	_____
Exam/licensing fees	_____
Other	_____

**Total Variable Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plus Total Fixed Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equals Total Monthly Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Income** \_\_\_\_\_

**Less Total Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equals Total Discretionary Income (or Deficit)** \_\_\_\_\_

## My Path to Medical School: Checklist

	✓	Date
College Year 1	Talk with academic advisor about selecting fall semester courses.	
	Appointment with a prehealth advisor.	
	Add prehealth meetings to my calendar and get on email lists.	
	Find opportunities to volunteer, shadow a doc, etc.	
	Explore options for careers in medicine on Aspiring Docs website.	
	Apply to summer enrichment programs (if eligible).	
	Explore premedical coursework requirements and application policies in MSAR Online.	
	Learn about financial aid and financing strategies through FIRST's website ( <a href="http://aamc.org/first">aamc.org/first</a> ).	
Summer	Volunteer/work in medical field; internship, research, leadership.	
	Participate in summer enrichment programs.	
	Take summer courses as necessary or desired.	
College Year 2	Check in with prehealth advisor.	
	Add prehealth meetings to my calendar and double-check that I'm getting emails.	
	Volunteer/work in medically related activities.	
	Develop relationships with faculty, advisors, and mentors on campus (important for getting letters of recommendation later).	
Summer	Apply for summer research/enrichment programs (if eligible).	
	Volunteer/work in medical field; internship, research, leadership.	
	Participate in summer enrichment programs.	
	Take summer courses as necessary or desired.	
	Check out the AMCAS website resources and review the process of applying ( <a href="http://aamc.org/amcas">aamc.org/amcas</a> ).	
College Year 3	Look at the process of applying and preparing for the MCAT® and PREview® exams ( <a href="http://aamc.org/mcat">aamc.org/mcat</a> and <a href="http://aamc.org/preview">aamc.org/preview</a> ).	
	Look at the Fee Assistance Program ( <a href="http://aamc.org/fap">aamc.org/fap</a> ) eligibility requirements.	
	Pursue leadership opportunities in prehealth organizations on campus.	
	Consider which faculty, advisors, and mentors to approach for letters of recommendation.	
	Continue with volunteer/work in meaningful clinical experiences, and possibly take on a more substantial role.	
	Meet with prehealth advisor to: Strategize my medical school application timeline and whether I want to take a gap year; discuss letters of recommendation; review medical education options; and discuss my schedule for completing premedical and other required coursework.	
	Register for a spring date for the MCAT and PREview exams (if not taking a gap year).	
Summer	Explore premedical coursework requirements and application policies in MSAR Online.	
	Learn about financial aid and financing strategies through FIRST's website ( <a href="http://aamc.org/first">aamc.org/first</a> ).	
	Continue with volunteer/work in meaningful clinical experiences, research, and leadership experiences.	
College Year 4	Complete AMCAS application; work on secondary applications.	
	Request letters of recommendation from faculty, advisors, mentors.	
	Complete supplementary application materials for schools I've applied to.	
	Prepare for interviews and campus visits at medical schools.	
	Receive acceptances and make a decision on which medical school to choose.	
	Notify the medical schools I will not be attending by the deadline date given.	
	Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms.	
Summer	Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms.	
	Purchase books and equipment and make my living arrangements.	
	Attend orientation programs and matriculate into medical school.	

## The AAMC Wants to Hear From You!

*The AAMC strives to meet the needs and interests of premedical students, medical students, residents, and fellows. To do this well, we need to hear from you. We regularly invite input through surveys, focus groups, and feedback panels to understand your needs, interests, concerns, and pressing questions.*

### **Learner Feedback Panel**

The AAMC hosts an ongoing Learner Feedback Panel of premeds, medical students, MD-PhD students, residents, and fellows. Panel members serve for a total of 1-2 hours each month over the course of a year, responding to mostly online and email requests for input from the AAMC. This is a great chance for students and trainees to build peer networks and boost their CVs while providing key input on AAMC resources and services.

To learn more about the AAMC's work to obtain learner feedback and how to contribute your voice, please contact [learnerinput@aamc.org](mailto:learnerinput@aamc.org).













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