

myEssay.com Medical School eBook

Medical School Application Guide	2
Application Strategy and Overview	2
Know Thyself	2
The Ideal Candidate.....	2
The Application	3
Strategy.....	5
Application Time Line	6
When to Apply?.....	6
Online vs. Traditional Applications	8
Why Should I Use AMCAS-E?.....	9
The Basics	9
Guide to Recommendations	9
What You Need.....	10
Elements of an Effective Recommendation.....	10
Things to Consider.....	10
Recommendation Check List	11
Choosing Your Recommenders.....	11
Educate Your Recommenders.....	12
Do the Grunt Work	13
Guide to Interviews.....	13
Preparing for the Interview.....	14
Interview Day	15
Medical School Essay Guide	17
Essay Overview.....	17
Things to Consider.....	17
Questions before Answers.....	17
Strategy.....	18
Writing the Essays	19
More on Choosing a Topic.....	20
Guide to Introductions	21
10 Introduction Techniques	22
Guide to Conclusions	24
Finishing the Essay.....	24
Final Touches Checklist	24
Sample Essays	26
Five Essays with Comments.....	26
Grammar Supplement.....	34
Parts of Speech	34
The Basic Sentence.....	36
Problem Sentences.....	37
General Concerns.....	40
Punctuation	42
Legal.....	43
Disclaimer.....	43
Copyright	43
Trademarks	43

Medical School Application Guide

Application Strategy and Overview

Nobody said applying to medical school is easy. It is even harder to get admitted. This guide will help you navigate the sometimes tricky and always demanding process of medical school applications. In this guide, myEssay.com tells you what schools look for in a candidate, where they find it, and how you can make sure that they find it in your application.

KNOW THYSELF

Why do you want to attend medical school? Do you have purely academic interests in mind or professional ones as well? Are you reacting to external pressures or genuine interest? It is important to understand why you are willing to embark upon the arduous process of applying to medical school because if you are not convinced of your own motivations, there is no way that you will be able to convince an admissions officer. During the admissions process, your main goal should be to demonstrate to the admissions committee that you are an *intelligent* person with *character*. You will have to consistently demonstrate that you are *motivated* by the right reasons and to perform well. Admissions officers want proof that you are *passionate about learning* and *compassionate about people*.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

There is no “recipe for success” when it comes to applying to medical school. In fact, you want to avoid a formulaic approach. There are, however, a few key traits that you will want to consistently demonstrate. Each successful candidate will present a different combination of these attributes, with each applicant emphasizing certain attributes over others. But all candidates will demonstrate at least some component of each of the following qualities:

Intelligence

Your “intelligence quotient” transcends your MCAT scores and transcript. There are a lot of competitive applicants out there—many with good MCAT scores, many with good grades. It is of primary importance that you demonstrate to medical schools that you have the ability to understand the difficult concepts that their classrooms will undoubtedly throw your way. You also have to demonstrate that as a doctor, you will be capable of making sound decisions about difficult issues. You must demonstrate your intelligence in all areas of your application: your essays, recommendations, and interviews.

Character

Medical schools place a tremendous emphasis on the character of their students—for obvious reasons. In demonstrating your character, you must provide concrete examples of your integrity, your own ethical code, and your sincerity. Good character is not an easily measurable trait. You do, however, have the opportunity to demonstrate your character in nearly all aspects of your application. Remember that if all of the details of your application don't jive, your character will automatically be called into question.

Motivation

Are you going to run out of steam half-way through medical school? Do you have a hard time committing to and excelling in projects, courses, and activities? Or are you willing to take on assignments, give them your all, and work to improve yourself at the same time? Medical schools want dynamic people that are committed to themselves and the school that they have chosen to attend. You must consistently demonstrate that you are motivated to push yourself to the limit and then, expand those very limits. It is also imperative that you demonstrate to the admissions committee that your motivations for pursuing a medical degree are sound. You will impress nobody if you speak of earning money, gaining social prestige, or enjoying job security.

Passionate About Learning

Prove that your undergraduate career has not “burnt out” your capacity or desire to learn. If you are not excited about being in a rigorous academic atmosphere for at least another four years, there is no way that you are going to be a successful student. You can demonstrate your desire to learn in all aspects of your application—from your transcript to your essays.

Compassionate About People

Do you envision a medical career predicated on research and minimal interaction with people? There are all sorts of doctors out there and all sorts of opportunities for M.D.'s. It is, however, absolutely critical that you demonstrate that you are interested in working with and helping people. After all, even if you are a research doctor, your research is hopefully going to better the lot of mankind.

Remember that there are several forums through which you can demonstrate these traits. What you choose to do in your non-academic time speaks to the kind of person you are. If you have chosen activities that have genuinely interested you, you have probably fully committed yourself to them and have assumed leadership positions.

If you engaged in activities that introduced you to the world of medicine, you can prove to admissions committees that you are at least somewhat acquainted with the realities of practicing medicine. You will be able to demonstrate to the admissions committee, through your experiences, that you have been thoughtful about your decision to apply.

THE APPLICATION

Academic Record

Admissions officers want to know that you will excel in medical school. Their best tool for anticipating how you will fare is to examine your previous experiences in academic settings. They will focus on the quality and difficulty of your coursework. A solid performance in past academic settings is expected. This does not mean that you must bid medical school “good-bye” if your transcript suffers from a few blemishes. Therefore, a less than stellar academic record does not eliminate you from consideration at top schools. Ideally, your application will balance itself out—for example, if your undergraduate GPA is low, your MCAT is high, and vice versa. If you are sub-par in both areas, admissions officers will turn...

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