



Pre-Med FAQ

What should my major be?

Most medical schools do not require a specific major. Therefore, you may major in almost anything. You should consider a major which you enjoy, in which you will perform well and which may serve as a basis for further graduate work or employment should you choose not to apply to or are not admitted to medical school. Admissions committees expect variety in educational programs, so you should take courses in a wide variety of subject areas, no matter what you decide to declare as a major.

Is it difficult to get into medical school?

Yes. Here are recent national statistics for allopathic and osteopathic applications:

Allopathic/M.D. programs

2013 Statistics	Applicants	Admitted
Average Overall GPA	3.54	3.69
Average Science GPA	3.44	3.63
Average Non-science GPA	3.66	3.76
Average MCAT Score	28.4	31.3
# of Applications Received	690,281	
# of Applicants	48,014	
# of Matriculates	20,055	
Average # of applications	9.0	

Source: Association of American Medical Colleges (www.aamc.org)

Osteopathic/D.O. programs

2013 Statistics	Applicants	Admitted
Average Overall GPA	3.42	3.50
Average Science GPA	3.27	3.38
Average Non-science GPA	3.54	3.6
Average MCAT Score	25.9	26.87
# of Applications Received	137,542	
# of Applicants	16,454	
# of Matriculates	6,135	
Average # of applications	7.7	

Source: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (www.aacom.org)

What is a D.O.?

A D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) is a licensed, board certified physician, who has attended medical school and has completed a residency in a medical specialty. Osteopathic physicians are known to approach diagnosis and medical treatment in a holistic manner. Many D.O.'s specialize in primary care.

What is the MCAT?

Future MD and DO students must take the [Medical College Admission Test](#) (MCAT) before applying to medical school. The MCAT tests knowledge of physical science (chemistry and physics), biological science (biology, organic chemistry, biochemistry), and verbal reasoning skills. Starting in spring 2015, the test will also include a section on behavioral science (psychology and sociology). Application is made through a centralized service called AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service).

The MD application is through [American Medical College Application Service](#); the DO application is through [American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service](#); and the Texas application is through [Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service](#).

The MCAT 2015, a newly developed test will debut January 2015. The new exam will measure Foundational Concepts, Content Categories, and Scientific Inquiry and Reasoning Skills. The new exam is designed to help prepare tomorrow's doctors for the challenges, advancements, and reformations of our future health care system. The first applicants to sit for MCAT 2015 will be those who apply to medical school for the fall 2016.

When do I take the MCAT?

Generally, you apply to medical schools before the beginning of your senior year (or a year before you plan to enter), so you should take the admissions test by the spring or summer after your junior year. If offered during the application cycle, you may repeat the test if you are not happy with your scores and you have a good reason to think your score will improve. However, we encourage you to be as prepared as possible the first time you take the test.

What do medical schools consider when evaluating applicants?

The criteria for admission varies from school to school, but usually include academic record (GPA), MCAT, letters of recommendation, demonstrated knowledge and commitment to the profession and a personal interview. Personal characteristics such as integrity and maturity are considered. Early in your college career you should consider exploring the medical field through volunteering, employment, shadowing and research for credit.

What GPA do I have to have to get into medical school?

This varies from school to school. However, the majority of students accepted to medical school have a GPA of approximately 3.5 or higher. It is particularly important that you perform well in your science courses. It is important for those considering professional school to be realistic about the extent to which performance meets admissions expectations.

Is it all over if I have a bad semester?

Admission committees look at the "big picture" as they evaluate applicants. They realize that every student does not hit the ground running when they enter college. Admission committees expect an excellent academic record, but will make some allowances for a problem quarter, slow start or rough spot. If academic problems arise, you must bounce back and perform better than ever to show that the problem was an exception, rather than the rule.

So will I need letters of recommendation?

Yes. Most schools require two letters from science professors that have had you in class and one letter from a non-science professor. Some D.O. programs require a letter of recommendation from an osteopathic physician. Some medical schools allow you to have additional letters.

Is financial aid available?

Amounts and types of aid vary from school to school, as does the cost of your education. You should investigate the costs early in your undergraduate career. Knowing that you are probably going to incur a substantial loan debt for medical school may affect the way that you borrow for your undergraduate education. Most applicants are eligible for government originated aid; apply during January of your application cycle, even if you are still waiting to find out whether or not you have been accepted. Apply for aid at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. For more information on financing your medical education, visit the AAMC and the AACOM.

Health Professions Scholarship Program is offered via the US Air Force; US Army; and US Navy. These programs typically cover 100% of medical school tuition and fees, along with a bonus or stipend.

If you are a low-income applicant you may be eligible for the AAMC Fee Assistance Program or an AACOM Fee Waiver. This will help offset costs of taking the MCAT and applying to medical school.

Pre-med information compiled through:

University of Denver <http://www.du.edu/nsm/premed/>

University of Cincinnati http://www.uc.edu/preproadvising/pre-health/pre-medicine.html#medical_school

Purdue <http://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/career/premed.html>