

General information about application to graduate programs in medicine or basic science:

There are five important credentials that contribute to an impressive and competitive graduate program application:

1. **Grade Point Average:** Grade point average is one of the most important criteria that graduate programs use to rank each pool of applicants. Visit your schools of interest online to learn about the academic credentials of their most recent entering class.

2. **Admission Test Scores:** Each graduate program uses a certain admission test as supplemental assessment of the knowledge base and testing skills (thinking skills) of each applicant.

The [MCAT](#) (Medical College Admission Test) is the standard admission test for medical schools.

The [DAT](#) (Dental Admission Test) is an equivalent test for application to Dental Schools.

Most other graduate programs require the [GRE](#) (Graduate Record Exam).

3. **Letters of Recommendation:** Most graduate programs require letters of recommendation.

Medical programs generally request 5 letters. The best advice is to request letters from two science faculty and one non-science faculty person who have worked closely with you in upper division coursework. Two additional letters should come from people who have managed your work or volunteer experiences. Osteopathic programs generally require at least one letter from a DO. [DO NOT ask for letters from family members, family friends or clergy.]

Graduate research programs may request fewer than 5 letters. Check the specific requirements for your program of interest.

4. **Work or Volunteer Experience:** It is important to gain experience in the area of your prospective career either through a "real" (paying) job or volunteer work. You must be able to respond to the question, "How do you know that you want to be ...?".

For those interested in a career in "primary" health care -- with day-to-day patient contact - it is essential that your experience involve actual patient contact. Most health care professionals welcome the opportunity to mentor the next generation. There are many opportunities for hands-on involvement (appropriate for your level of expertise). Introduce yourself to potential mentors, and ask what opportunities may exist in his or her practice.

For those interested in Masters or PhD programs with a research component, letters of recommendation need to profile your experiences with undergraduate research.

5. **Interviews:** Most admissions processes involve a personal interview with applicants who present a strong primary application. During this interview, the admissions committee will assess the applicant's personal characteristics relative to the expectations of the specific profession.

Take advantage of every opportunity during your University training to further develop your communication skills in anticipation of this interview experience.

Learn the habits of a good listener. Be able and willing to thoughtfully ask for clarification, if you do not understand a question or comment.

Respond appropriately and enthusiastically, but be genuine in your responses.

Develop a comfortable style of body language that is welcoming and confident. First impressions mean a lot in any interview situation.

Links to Additional Information:

[AMCAS](#) - American Medical College Application Service

[AACOM](#) - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

[ADEA](#) - American Dental Education Association