

Completing the AMCAS Application: Quick Guide for Applicant to Allopathic Medical Schools

Resources

- AMCAS Instruction Manual - Your first stop for detailed answers to AMCAS esoterica. Be sure to look at AAMC's FAQ links, too!
 - <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/>
- CPHA Questions Box - We're here to help and we check this every day
 - questions@prehealth.wisc.edu
- AMCAS Student Help Line - Have your AMCAS ID ready! Staffed by nice people who've seen it all!
 - 1-888-828-0500 available 8-4 EST Monday through Friday.

Organizational Overview

AAMC - American Association of Medical Colleges represents the administration, faculty, and students of all of the allopathic medical colleges in the United States. AAMC coordinates the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), the application to apply to medical school (AMCAS), the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) and the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) for residency matching. You will interact with AAMC in many ways throughout your professional career!

AMCAS - The American Medical College Application Service is a centralized application used by most U.S. medical schools (except most Texas schools). The application collects personal and academic information in one place and forwards this to the list of schools selected by you.

Components of the AMCAS: AMCAS opens in May, but you cannot submit until June

1. Identifying information

- Legal name, preferred name, alternate names, ID numbers, birth & sex

2. Schools attended and Institutional Actions

- Enter your high school and all colleges you have attended
 - see instructions for Canadian, foreign and U.S. institutions abroad
- Request official transcripts from the registrar for all institutions where you received college credit
- For study abroad, list the school, but indicate "Transcript Exception" if credits transferred (see instructions for additional details)
- Check with Office of Dean of Students to see if they have to report anything about you as part of background check. If so, you will need to include a brief statement about the incident under "institutional actions."

3. Biographical information

- Contact information, citizenship, legal residence, languages
 - Note: legal residence is determined at time of application
- Childhood information, dependents, parents/guardians, siblings

- Disadvantaged status: this is an optional essay you can write if you feel that:
 - you come from a historically medically underserved population
 - your experiences have been unique from your peers and shaped your interest in medicine
 - other parts of the application do not adequately capture the breadth/depth of the challenges or distance you have traveled relative to your peers
- Military service, military discharge, felony/misdemeanor
 - Note: ROTC is military service

4. Course work

- Add courses exactly as they appear on your transcript
- Retro credits and placement tests are added as AP during your freshman year
- If you received “general” credit for AP, indicate the specific topic in the course classification
- Enter your course work chronologically! (see instructions)

5. Work and Activities

- You may write about 15 experiences/activities in areas of paid experience in medical/non-medical settings, volunteering in medical/non-medical settings, research, honors/awards, publications/presentations, military experience, extracurriculars, artistic endeavors and “other” experiences.
- The character limit is 700. Be direct and tell the reader what you did, what your role was and how you are different now than when you started.
- Logistics: name of employer, contact information, title, start/end dates, estimated hours
 - You NEED a contact for every activity/experience
 - Indicate “0” or “N/A” for estimated hours for study abroad, publications/presentations and awards/honors.
 - Narrative statements are preferred, but if you have a lot of honors/awards, publications/presentations or shadowing experiences, you may opt for bullet point form.
- You *can* include experiences that you have recently started, but secondary essays may be a better place to discuss these.
- If you will continue with an experience, you can project these hours on the application
- **Prepare statements in a Word document so it is easy to share and edit, but copy/paste this into a notepad/txt file to remove formatting before pasting into the application!**

6. Personal statement

- The personal statement is a narrative statement to address the question, “Why medicine?”
- You may use personal experiences as a “springboard” for the ways in which you have explored medicine and developed skills to be good at the role of doctoring. Help the committee learn about you and let them “hear” your voice in your writing.
- The statement is limited to 5300 characters. The Center for Pre-Health Advising and the UW Writing Center are happy to help!

- **Prepare statement in a Word document so it is easy to share and edit, but copy/paste this into a notepad/txt file to remove formatting before pasting into the application!**

7. Letters of Evaluation

- You can upload up to 10 letters and select which schools will receive certain letters.
- The Center for Pre-Health Advising recommends getting *at least* 4 letters:
 - (2) Science - (1) from biology, chemistry or physics faculty
 - (1) Non-science faculty
 - (1) Professional (non-faculty)

8. Schools

- We recommend that students meet with the Center for Pre-Health advising to discuss their transcript in relation to school requirements and criteria in selecting medical schools.
- The Center for Pre-Health Advising maintains a database of UW-Madison alumni. Ask us about contacts at programs you are considering!
- The application includes one medical school. Additional medical schools may be added for a fee and may be added after submission. On average, students apply to 14 schools.

9. MCAT Information

- Your MCAT scores are automatically released to AMCAS. Be sure all of your exams are listed, but don't include exams that were voided at the time you took the exam.
- Include future test dates and keep this section updated.

10. Previewing and submitting

- Print a copy of your application and review it before submitting. Save a PDF version for yourself.
- You will have to verify several statements about the veracity of the document before submitting.
- If you make changes, you will need to re-certify your application. This will NOT slow down the verification process.

11. Monitoring your application

- Schools should receive all of your documents within 2-4 of verification. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to monitor the status of your application and notify AMCAS if a school has not received something.

12. Changes after you submit

- AMCAS will allow you to change some biographical information (name, email, address), MCAT test dates, add letters and add schools. You can't remove a letter writer, but you can indicate that they are no longer sending a letter (see instructions).

Application Timing

Submit early, but focus on creating a document that is polished and complete. It's better to submit a stronger application in the middle of June than a sloppy one on the first day.

Planning your application year

Fall semester the year you apply	Talk to letter writers; work on essays
January	Fee assistance program opens
Spring semester the year you apply	Talk to letter writers; work on essays; prep for MCAT
May	Application opens
June	Application submission begins
September-December	Individual school deadlines

What happens after I submit?

- AAMC will verify that the coursework you entered matches your transcripts. They will not review your application in any other way.
- Schools may send you secondary applications...**YES, TELL ME MORE!!**
 - Secondary applications are additional essays that are specific to the program
 - Schools may send secondary essays:
 - immediately after you submit your application (they want your \$50)
 - OR...after your application has been verified
 - OR...after your application has been verified and they have an MCAT score
 - OR...**ONLY** if you meet certain pre-screening criteria
 - Secondary essays are usually 250-1000 words (words, not characters)
 - Typical categories of secondary essays:
 - Why do you want to go to this school?
 - How will you contribute to the diversity of this program?
 - Does your academic record (or MCAT) reflect the work you think you can do?
 - Are there academic, personal or professional challenges that have shaped you?
 - You might get an ethical scenario, or asked to fill in a table of classes that meet a school's requirements or asked if you have applied to their program before.
- You will be invited for an interview! Contact the Center for Pre-Health Advising for a mock interview!
- Schools must let you know about your application by March 15th. With AMCAS, you can hold several spots at several schools until April 30th at which time, you must select a program. However, you can hold a spot at one program and stay on as many waitlists as you want! There can be a lot of movement on waitlists up through enrollment in July!!