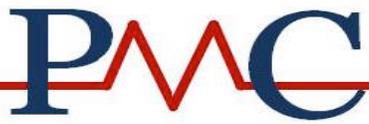


THE PRE-MED'S BEGINNER'S GUIDE



The Pre-Med Beginner's Guide

The knowledge every pre-med should have

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Thanks for downloading the “Pre-Med Beginner's Guide” by Pre-Med Community!

This guide is intended to provide you all of the basics you will need to know if you want to become a doctor. It will cover the process of becoming a doctor (the pre-med process), the general requirements of getting into medical school, statistics associated with matriculation, debunk some common myths, and answer some frequently asked questions.

We hope you enjoy this free-guide, it is meant to just get you up to speed. If you want more detail and information, make sure to check out www.premedcommunity.com for more articles and resources! We are here to help you every step of the way and make your dream of becoming a doctor a reality!

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The journey to become a doctor



That wonderful white coat.

Imagine one day being able to wear that wonderful white coat, helping save people's lives, performing miracles, and being the pride and joy of your family and friends.

Becoming a doctor is a dream for many people; a dream which many consider to be too difficult and daunting to undertake. Most people give up when they actually realize what it takes to become a doctor. The road to medical school is a long and rather challenging one, but it is also one that definitely can be accomplished. Here at Pre-Med Community, we want to help make this process and journey as easy and enjoyable as possible.

Lets take a brief look at the overall process:

- 4 years of undergraduate studies
- 4 years of medical school studies
- 3-5+ years of residency (depends on what type of doctor you become)
- 1-3 years of fellowship (optional)

So altogether that's over a decade of study and hard work required to become a licensed physician. In general, you have four years of undergraduate study to be able to apply for medical school. However, some schools will allow you to do just the pre-requisites required for admission to their school, which means it could take as little as 2-3 years of undergraduate studies, depending on how many classes you take. Once you get accepted into medical school, you will usually have 2 years focused on learning about the human body (classwork) and 2 years of rotations (clinical experience). After graduating medical school, you apply for a residency in the medical field you want to work in. Once you are a resident, you actually already start making some money! After finishing residency, you can choose to do a fellowship if you seek further specialization (which also means more money). The length of the fellowship depends on what area of medicine it is. Once you have finished your residency you will be fully licensed!

Overview:

4 yrs

Undergraduate Studies

4 yrs

Medical School

3-5 yrs

Residency



Doctor

That is the general process of what it takes to become a doctor. There are things worth knowing about such as Post-baccalaureate programs and pre-med tracks. For more information on that check out our articles which cover that and much more. Let's now briefly go over what to expect as a pre-med student.

What to expect as a pre-med student

People might think that being a pre-med student is the exact same as being just any other college student. While it's true that a pre-med student is attending college, there is a whole world of difference between the two. The amounts of work required as a pre-med student is sometimes double or even triple of what a regular college student might do. Also, the expectations of having to get good grades make the experience even more intense! This is exactly what makes being a pre-med student so fun! Despite the higher standards, it is quite rewarding to push yourself even harder and to truly educate yourself.

Here are some of the things you can expect as a pre-med student:

- Study about twice as much as a regular college student
- Spend weekends going to do volunteering
- Waking up early some days to do shadowing
- Staying late at school doing research or tutoring
- Preparing for the MCAT
- Making friends and studying together with other pre-med students

Being a pre-med is hard! But don't give up because the experience can actually be quite rewarding. I personally never liked doing science classes during high school, but I became absolutely fascinated by them. I have been forever changed (in a good way!), because of living the pre-med lifestyle. If you don't like to push yourself, then it will be very difficult to succeed as a future doctor. It goes without saying though that the rewards for becoming a doctor are well worth it.

As a pre-med you will be more concerned about getting those A's (every A counts!), you will be thinking about anything you can do to boost your application (we offer tons of great ideas on our blog about that!), you will be staying up late studying and waking up early, and you will be working hard throughout this journey. But most importantly, you will feel fulfilled and satisfied with what you have accomplished.

Things to consider before deciding on pre-med:

Being a pre-med is tough. Med School is tough. Residency is tough. Being a doctor is tough. You should be aware that by choosing this path you are going to have to face numerous hardships you otherwise would not. As a pre-med you will have to study a lot harder than the average student, constantly be stressed about your GPA, spend weekends going volunteering, spend late hours in the research lab, having to take the MCAT! All of this without any certainty that you will get accepted. If you do get accepted, then you

have to face medical school and the incredible amount of knowledge you are expected to digest. Then you must face residency where you are work incredibly long and hard hours all under the scrutiny of a senior doctor. And finally once you are a doctor you will have to work hours longer than the average joe and be on call most of the time. As a doctor you will see and witness things unimaginable. You will also be drowned in medical school debt. If you are going into medicine for money then you are making a mistake, as it is calculated that the cost of attending medical school is \$1 million when you factor in the 10 years you could have been building an income. You will have spent your 20s and 30s studying and preparing to be a doctor while all your friends have been out having fun. If there is one word that I think describes becoming a doctor, it is sacrifice. You will have to sacrifice a lot to become one and get there. The road is not easy and if your motives are not good you will not make it and even if you do you will be miserable. Surveys have shown that most doctors would not choose a career in medicine again. So why would you want to go into this career? Obviously because there is something much more important. You will be saving lives and making a huge difference to many people. The good you will be doing for your community will far outweigh all the hardships you must face. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to have someone's life rest in your hands. You will be given the highest responsibility imaginable and help those who need it the most. If you are wanting to be a doctor for a good reason such as helping others then you will find it fulfilling, but if your intentions are for money or status then you

shouldn't waste your time. Now if I haven't scared you off yet let's go over what the general requirements are for getting into medical school.

General requirements for getting into medical school

It is said that the toughest part about becoming a doctor is getting into medical school. Getting into medical school is a challenge all on its own. Each school varies a little with what they want from an applicant, but in general it follows a few main trends. First, they want a student who will be capable of handling the rigors of medical school, this means that they want someone who has a good GPA and MCAT. And second they want a student who is a well-rounded person that really wants to help people. This is generally demonstrated through volunteer experience, research experience, and shadowing experience. Medical schools are looking at applicants more and more as the whole person instead of just numbers on a sheet of paper.

Let's break down the basic requirements of a competitive medical school application:

- A high GPA, 3.5+. (Overall GPA and science GPA are considered)
- Strong MCAT score
- An undergraduate degree
- Shadowing experience
- Volunteering experience
- Research experience
- Letters of recommendation

While this does look like a lot, there is actually more than enough time from when you start college to when you apply to medical school to cover all of these areas. For those of you who are concerned that your GPA is not good enough, know that there are plenty of action plans you can take to still get into medical school. One action plan is doing the post-baccalaureate program, which allows one to improve their GPA and the competitiveness of their application. I also want to mention that you DON'T need to be the perfect applicant to get accepted, there is much more leniency than you expect. And there are also a variety of medical schools with very different GPA and MCAT scores of those who matriculated.

For more information, we offer tons of resources on our site that go into much more depth into each of these categories. Such as ways to improve your GPA, how I made all A's in the hardest classes and maintained a 3.96 GPA while majoring in Biochemistry, how to get the best recommendation letters, which majors are best for getting into medical school, and much more!

Medical School Stats:

(MCAT and GPA)

US Medical Schools	MCAT	GPA
Neomed School of Medicine	29	3.73%
Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences	26.4	3.4
Howard University College of Medicine	27	3.41
San Juan Bautista School of Medicine	221	3.43
Northeast Ohio Medical University	24	3.5
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine	33	3.51
Meharry Medical College	27	3.52
Morehouse School of Medicine	27	3.54
Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine	23	3.58
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University	31	3.59
Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University	31	3.59
Michigan State University College of Human Medicine	28	3.59
Mercer University School of Medicine	29	3.61
Tufts University School of Medicine	34	3.61
Tulane University School of Medicine	33	3.61
Albany Medical College	32	3.64
New York Medical College	32	3.64
Rush Medical College of Rush University	31	3.65
The Commonwealth Medical College	30	3.65

Eastern Virginia Medical School	32	3.66
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences F. Edward Herbert School of Medicine	32	3.66
Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine	31	3.66
Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine	23	3.67
University of New Mexico School of Medicine	28	3.67
University of North Texas School of Medicine	28	3.67
Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University	31	3.68
Hofstra North Shore -- LIJ School of Medicine	33	3.68
Wright State University School of Medicine	30	3.68
Drexel University College of Medicine	31	3.69
Florida International University Herber Wertheim College of Medicine	31	3.7
Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University	28	3.7
University of Illinois College of Medicine	32	3.7
University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville	29	3.7
University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine	30	3.7
Central Michigan University of Medicine	28	3.71
Florida State University College of Medicine	29	3.71
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine	30	3.71
University of California California, Davis, School of Medicine	32	3.71
Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine	33	3.72
Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine	31	3.72
University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine	32	3.72
University of Missouri - Kansas City	28	3.72
University of South Florida College of Medicine Morsani College of Medicine	31	\$3.72
Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine	31	3.72
Wake Forest School of Medicine of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center	33	3.72
Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine	32	3.73
Rutgers, New Jersey Medical School	33	3.73
Temple University School of Medicine	32	3.73
Univeristy of Arkansas College of Medicine	29	3.73
University of Louisville School of Medicine	30	3.73
Univeristy of Massachusetts Medical School	33	3.73
University of Vermont college of Medicine	32	3.73
University of Washington School of Medicine	31	3.73
Georgetown University School of Medicine	31	3.74
Louisiana State University School of Medicine in Shreveport	29	3.74
Sanford School of Medicine The University of South Dakota	29	3.74

Texas A&M Health Science Center	30	3.74
University of Nevada School of Medicine	31	3.74
Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California	35	3.75
Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University	32	3.75
State University of New York Upstate Medical University	33	3.75
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University	33	3.75
University of Kentucky College Of Medicine	32	3.75
University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine	25	3.75
University of South Carolina School of Medicine	29	3.75
East Tennessee State University James H. Quillen College of Medicine	29	3.76
Geisel School of Edicine at Dartmouth	34	3.76
George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences	32	3.76
Medical College of Georgia at Georgia Regents University	32	3.76
State University of New York Downstate Medical Center College of Medicine	34.00%	3.76
University of Connecticut School of Medicine	33	3.76
University of Minnesota Medical School	32	3.76
Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine	32	3.77
Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine	30	3.77
The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University	30	3.77
Univeristy of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix	31	3.77
University of Colorado School of Medicine	33	3.77
University of Rochester School of Medicine	34	3.77
Emory University School of Medicine	35	3.78
Indiana University School of Medicine	31	3.78
Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans	30	3.78
Medical College of Wisconsin	31	3.78
Texas Tech School of Medicine	32	3.78
Univeristy of California, Irvine, College of Medicine	34	3.78
University of California, Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine	35	3.78
University of Cincinnati College of Medicine	34	378.00%
University of Utah School of Medicine	30	3.78
Boston University School of Medicine	35	3.79
Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science	32	3.79
Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine	31	3.79
Stony Brook University Schol of Medicine	34	3.79
University at Buffalo State University of New York School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	32	3.79

University of Central Florida College of Medicine	32	3.79
University of Kansas School of Medicine	30	3.79
University of North Carolina - Chapel hill School of Medicine	33	3.79
University of South Alabama College of Medicine	31	3.79
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine	36	3.8
Maryland School of Medicine	33	3.8
Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health	35	3.8
University of Alabama School of Medicine	31	3.8
University of Mississippi School of Medicine	32	3.8
The University of Toledo College of Medicine	32	3.81
University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences	29	3.81
University of Oklahoma College of Medicine	30	3.81
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health	32	3.81
Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University	33	3.82
Creighton University School of Medicine	31	3.82
University of California, Riverside School of Medicine	35	3.82
University of California San Diego School of Medicine	35	3.82
University of Florida College of Medicine	33	3.82
University of Nebraska College of Medicine	31	3.82
Wayne State University School of Medicine	32	3.82
West Virginia University School of Medicine	29	3.82
Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons	36	3.83
Loma Linda University School of Medicine	31	3.83
Saint Louis University School of Medicine	33	3.84
University of Iowa Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine	33	3.84
University of Michigan Medical School	36	3.84
University of Texas Medical School at Houston	33	3.84
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai	37	3.85
Stanford University School of Medicine	37	3.85
University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine	36	3.85
Weill Cornell Medical College	36	3.85
Duke University School of Medicine	36	3.86
New York University School of Medicine	36	3.86
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine	36	3.86
Mayo Medical School	34	3.87
Northwestern University, The Feinberg School of Medicine	36	3.87
The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston	32	3.87
University of Chicago Division of the Biological Sciences The Pritzker School of Medicine	37	3.87

University of Virginia School of Medicine	36	3.87
Baylor College of Medicine	35	3.88
Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania	38	3.88
University of Texas Southwestern Medical School	34	3.88
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine	36	3.88
Yale University School of Medicine	37	3.88
Washington University of St. Louis School of Medicine	38	3.9
John Hopkins University School of Medicine	36	3.91
Harvard Medical School	37	3.93
Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School		
UCLA/Drew Medical Education Program		
University of Arizona School of Medicine		
University of Miami School of Medicine		
University of Missouri - Columbia School of Medicine		

As we can see from the medical school rankings there is a lot of diversity in the numbers of every category. The average GPA for all medical schools in the US is 3.75, but the lowest GPA was only 3.4. The average MCAT for all medical schools in the US is 31, but the lowest MCAT was only 23. This means that there is a lot more leniency when it comes to getting into medical school than you may previously have thought. Of course, having a high GPA and MCAT is definitely better, but there are medical schools which might still accept you even if you are below average. When deciding on which medical school you want to attend to you must take into account many different factors. How is your GPA? MCAT? Is it in the same state as you? What is the tuition? Knowing what med-schools expect of you can help you get an idea where you stand and also can be a great tool to motivate you to push even harder in your pre-med journey!

FAQ

General pre-med questions:

What is better MD or DO?

Neither is necessarily better than the other. Both a MD and DO can practice in every state, are licensed by the same licensing boards, found in every specialty of medicine, and attend 4 years of medical school and 3-7 years of residency. MD stands for “Medical Doctor” while DO stands for “Osteopathic Doctor.”

Can I still get into medical school even if I have a low GPA?

It depends on how low it is. If it is around a 3.0 then you should possibly consider some other options. However, often you can compensate for a low GPA by making up for it with other parts of your application. Medical schools want to see well-rounded applicants who show promise for making a great doctor. Focusing on your extracurricular activities such as volunteer hours, experience in medical environments, shadowing doctors, and research can really show that you would make a great doctor. So don't worry! If your GPA is not too competitive you can still get into medical school! Just focus on really making all the other aspects of your application shine! [Check this article](#) for 4 ways to still get into medical school with a low GPA.

What is the best major to apply to for medical school? There is no best major for applying to medical school. You can apply to medical school with any major as long as you do all of the prerequisite classes. [Click here](#) to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of doing a science major vs. a non-science major.

Do I need a science major to apply to medical school?

No, you do not need a science major to apply to medical school. You can apply as long as you do the prerequisite classes.

Should I double major to better my chances of getting in medical school?

It will certainly not hurt your application assuming you can maintain a good GPA. However, I would recommend against it. That is more time, work, and money that you have to put in and you are risking more opportunities to hurt your GPA. It might look a bit nicer on the application but it also might not even matter. For what it is worth, I would say just focus on one major and doing it well.

Do I need to finish all of my pre-requisites before applying to medical school?

No. You just need to finish all of the pre-requisites before you actually start medical school.

Can I go to a Caribbean medical school and still get a MD and work in the US?

Absolutely! Make sure you are going to an accredited university like Ross (<http://medical.rossu.edu>). These schools have you take the same USMLE as American medical school counterparts and allow you to practice in all 50 states.

GPA:

What GPA do you need to get accepted into medical school? Most medical schools require that you have at least a 3.0 GPA as a minimum requirement. To be competitive you will need a 3.5 or higher. According to the AAMC, only 40% of applicants that have a 3.4 to 3.6 GPA get accepted into medical school. Only 55% of applicants who have a 3.6 to 3.8 get accepted to medical school. For those who have a 3.8 or higher, only 72% of applicants get accepted. So to be competitive, you want to have around a 3.5 GPA or higher.

What's more important, science GPA or the overall GPA? Medical schools typically focus more on your science GPA rather than your overall GPA. This is because your science GPA is a better indicator of whether you can handle the rigors of medical school or not. Overall GPA is important, too, so you don't want to be failing your general education classes. Maintaining a high science GPA is more important for getting into medical school.

Can I get into medical school if I failed a class?

Yes, you can still get into medical school if you fail a class, but it will make it harder. Failing a class will lower your GPA and also raise a red flag to the people reviewing your application. It is definitely not good to fail a class and can make the difference between getting accepted and not.

How does medical school view a withdrawal? Can I still get accepted with a "W" on my record?

Yes, you can still get into medical school with a withdrawal on your record. A

withdrawal does not affect your GPA, but it does look bad in the eyes of those reviewing your application.

If I retake a class does the old grade get replaced?

No. This is a common pre-med myth. Taking a class again does not replace your first grade. All AAMC medical schools take both grades into account. So if you failed the first time and made an “A” the second time, they will count both the “F” and the “A.” Don’t try and fail a class the first time hoping you can replace it with a higher grade.

What is BCPM GPA?

BCPM stands for “Biology Chemistry Physics Mathematics.” This is how the AAMC refers to science GPA. Any class that is under one of these disciplines will count towards your BCPM grade, such if you took an ecology class, that will affect your BCPM GPA because it is a biology course.

Do grades from study abroad count towards my GPA?

Yes. They are college accredited classes so they count towards your GPA.

Medical application:

What is a primary application?

The primary application, also known as AMCAS, is the one provided by the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) to be used to apply to all allopathic schools. Essentially, this is the application you send to all medical colleges you want to apply to.

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/>

What is a secondary application?

After you send a medical school your primary application, they can choose to send you a secondary application. The purpose of a secondary application is to learn more about the applicants and see if they are a good fit for that school. The questions vary quite a bit between medical schools.

When can I apply for medical school?

It is important to know that when you apply to medical school, you are typically applying for the following year. So if you want to start medical school in 2017, then you need to apply during 2016. Medical schools under AAMC open the application early to mid June. Medical schools operate on a rolling basis. This means that it is to your advantage to apply as soon as possible in the application cycle. As time goes on, more and more seats are being filled. If you wait too long you will be competing with hundreds or even thousands of applicants for only a few seats. So it is in your best interest to apply as soon as the application opens.

How many letters of recommendation do I need for medical school?

The minimum requirement is usually 3 letters of recommendation - two from science professors and one from a non-science professor. However, having around 5 letters is ideal.

Who should I ask for letters of recommendation?

Apart from your professors, you want to ask people who know you reasonably well and will have good things to say about you. If you do research you should ask the head researcher to write a letter of recommendation. If you shadowed a doctor or a PA, they would also be a good person to ask. If you volunteer a lot at a certain place, getting a letter of recommendation from your volunteer supervisor could be very helpful.

What should I write for my personal statement?

The personal statement is your opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Make sure your personal statement answers questions like:

Why have you selected the field of medicine? What motivates you to learn medicine? Also providing explanations for bad grades in your application can be helpful, as long as they are genuine! Talk about hardships and obstacles you have overcome. And most importantly, you want to make your personal statement fun and enjoyable to read. Don't make it bland and factual, try and make it memorable for those who read it!

What is a letter of intent? And how do I write one?

A letter of intent informs a medical school that they are your top choice and you will actually attend their school if you get accepted. This is important because medical schools actually want their applicants to attend their school. This letter should show that you are a good fit and why you want to attend their school.

What happens when I get waitlisted?

Every medical school has a different waitlist policy. Being waitlisted does not mean rejection. Many students still get accepted into medical school after being waitlisted.

How long do I have to wait to hear back?

It all depends on the school. Some important dates to remember are:

October 15 - The first day that acceptances can be sent out

March 30 - The date that MD schools are recommended to accept the number of students in the upcoming year's class

May 15 - When applicants must choose one school out of multiple acceptances

How many schools should I apply?

You should try and apply to as many as 20-30 schools to increase your chance of getting accepted. The more competitive you are as an applicant the less schools you need to apply.

Does my ethnicity matter for medical school?

Ethnicity does not matter when it comes to getting accepted into medical school.

Medical schools want diversity in their student population.

Can I apply to medical school from high school?

There are some BS/MD programs, which allow you to matriculate straight into medical school from undergrad. These typically require you to maintain a certain GPA during undergrad.

Can I apply to medical school from a community college?

It does not look good taking science classes from a community college to the admission committee. You should consider transferring to a more traditional four-year university.

What is early decision?

Early decision program is something many medical schools participate in. In an early decision program you must apply earlier than normal, but you also hear about the decision much sooner (By October 1st). An applicant can apply to only one medical school for the early decision program.

Why should a student apply through an early decision program?

It can only help you to use an early decision program. If you get accepted early then you don't have to worry about getting into medical school. If not, you can just apply normally.

What are medical schools looking for in an applicant?

Ultimately medical schools want a well-rounded applicant who can handle the rigors of being a doctor. While having a good GPA and MCAT score are definitely important in

getting into medical school, there are many other things medical schools are looking for in an applicant. They want to see that you have a desire to help your community, that you understand what the medical environment is like, that you are a leader, etc. They want to know you have the qualities to make a good doctor. That is why it is important to do lots of extracurricular activities such as volunteering, shadowing, research, etc. Many times students who have a good GPA and MCAT score don't get in because they don't have any of those experiences. Make sure your application is spectacular in all aspects! Not just in GPA or MCAT, but also in extracurricular activities.

What age should I apply to medical school?

There is no rule on how old you have to be to apply to medical school. People as young as 20 and people as old as 50 apply to medical school all the time. You should apply when you feel your application is competitive enough.

What are post-bac programs?

A post-bac program is any program or classes that you take after graduating from undergrad for the purpose of getting into medical school. Post-bac programs are meant to help you boost your GPA or improve your application before applying to medical school. If you find yourself in a situation where your GPA isn't where it should be or you need some more classes to make your application more competitive, then you should consider a post-bac program.

There are four types of post-bac programs according to the Association of American Medical Colleges:

1. Career-changers: These are for individuals who did not initially want to become a doctor in undergrad. To apply to these programs, often you cannot have taken a lot of the required science courses for medical school.
2. Academic Record Enhancers: These programs are meant to help you strengthen and improve your medical school resume. These types of post-bac programs aim to improve your GPA or help you gain clinical experience.
3. Groups Under Represented in Medicine: These programs are meant to help under represented groups gain admission into medical school.
4. Educationally or Economically Disadvantaged Students: These types of programs exist to help disadvantaged students get into medical school.

Where do I find post bac programs?

[Click here](#) for help finding a post-bac program.

How important is the interview for getting into medical school?

The interview is incredibly important! You can think about the interview as the last obstacle you must cross before getting into medical school. The interview is the last step before getting accepted. Only a small number percentage of applicants get offered an interview. Your primary and secondary applications are all for the purpose of ultimately getting an interview with a school. You will get accepted to the medical school depending on how well your interview goes.

How do I prepare for an interview?

There are several methods for preparing for an interview.

1. Do Mock interviews:

These are very helpful for helping you get used to the actual pressure of being interviewed. Ask your friends, family, teachers, etc. And make sure to ask for feedback on ways to improve.

2. Type out your answer to as many potential interview questions as you can:

You want to make sure you know how to answer all potential questions. So creating a list ahead of time and memorizing it will help you when the time comes.

3. Stay up to date about what is going on in the world of medicine:

Make sure you know what the current issues facing doctors are. This will help you appear more informed and will impress the interviewer. It also might save you on a question regarding current issues.

What should I wear to an interview?

You should wear business attire.

What are the different interview formats?

There are three main types of interviews you will face:

Traditional interview:

This is a one-on-one interview. It is normally with either a medical student or a faculty member. These interviews can last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour.

Group or panel interview:

In this type of interview, it can be either just yourself being interviewed by 2-4 interviewers. Or you can find yourself in an interview where you are being interviewed with 2-3 other applicants. If it is the panel interview, the interviewers will take turns

asking you questions. If it is a group interview, they will ask each of you a question. Or they also may make you work together on a problem.

Multiple Mini Interview (MMI):

In this type of interview, applicants rotate through different stations. At each station the applicant can be given a different scenario or question. This style of interview is considered more fair and objective and is being used more and more.

What should I do after an interview?

It is usually good practice to ask your interviewer for their business card and contact information. This way you can update them on anything noteworthy you do after the interview. You can also send them a thank you card, thanking them for their time and wishing them well on their endeavors. You should not annoy them with constant emails or contact.

MCAT:

Do I need to take the MCAT to get into medical school?

Almost every medical school requires that you take the MCAT. The MCAT stands for “Medical College Admission Test.” This is a standardized test that is required by most medical schools. There are some schools that don’t require it but it is rare.

How long will it take to complete the MCAT on test day?

You should expect to spend about 7 hours taking the test.

How much does the MCAT cost?

Registration for the 2015 MCAT costs \$300.

How many times should I take the MCAT?

There is no rule against how many times you can take the MCAT. However, medical schools frown upon students who have taken it too many times. You can take it again if you think you need to. But you should try and only take it once and make it count. So make sure you are well prepared!

Should I retake the MCAT?

This depends on the situation. You have to consider if it is worth it. If you have a low MCAT score then it might help to take it again and get a better score. If you fell just slightly short of your goal, then it might not be worth taking the whole test again just for one more point. Medical schools are not always fond of multiple MCAT scores. Also remember that you will have to pay for another registration fee again and spend another 7 hours taking the test.

Which MCAT score is considered when I retake it?

This depends on the school. Some schools take the average of your MCAT scores, some take the composite, and some take the most recent MCAT score. If you are going to retake the MCAT score try and make sure you do notably better and not just one point higher. This will help justify you retaking the exam.

When does my MCAT score expire?

Your MCAT score does not expire. However most medical schools only accept MCAT scores that are 3-4 years old.

Can I register for two tests at the same time?

No. You have to wait until your exam is finished before registering for another exam.

What is the best way to prepare for the MCAT?

There are many methods to study for the MCAT. The most common one is to self-study with the aid of test prep books. Typically most students will spend anywhere from 6 weeks to 3 months preparing. The more expensive method for preparing for the MCAT is to take a prep course, which is like a class where instructors personally help prepare you for the exam. This is a good method if you have the money and lack the motivation to self-study. These courses can cost anywhere from around \$1500-2000.

What is the best MCAT prep book?

There is no “best” MCAT prep course. Each book has its own strength’s and weaknesses. The style and format of each book is different, some focus more on exactly what’s only on the test and others go more in depth. You should go to the bookstore and browse through the different MCAT books to see which one you feel is the best for you.

When should I take the MCAT?

Most pre-meds take the MCAT after finishing all the pre-requisite classes. This is because the MCAT mostly covers information learned in those classes. It is advised to take the MCAT after finishing taking your pre-requisite classes so you won’t have to try and learn all the information for the first time when preparing. Most pre-meds take the

MCAT as a sophomore or junior. If you want to apply to medical school during your senior year you should take the MCAT during the fall or early spring of your junior year. This is because the application cycle opens up in June and you want to have everything ready by the beginning of the cycle. Medical schools accept students on a rolling basis so it is in your best interest to already have the MCAT done by June of the year you want to apply.

What is a good MCAT score?

A competitive score for MCAT 2015 is around a 515, which averages around an 11 on each subsection. A 500 is comparable to a 25 on the old MCAT, and a 510 is comparable to a 30 on the old MCAT.

Do MCAT sub-scores matter?

Not usually. Medical schools mostly care only about your overall score. However, sub-scores do start to matter if there is a big discrepancy between your sub-scores. If you made a 12, 12, and a 6, then they may ask what happened and it might not look good. If your sub-scores are relatively the same then it shouldn't matter.

How many sections are on the MCAT?

There are four sections on the MCAT 2015.

1. Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
2. Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
3. Psychological, Social and Biological Foundations of Behavior
4. Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills

Extracurricular activities:

Do I need to volunteer to get into medical school?

While technically you don't need volunteering to get into medical school you should have at least 50 hours logged. Volunteering is very important to medical schools as it shows your willingness to help your community. Often applicants who have a good GPA and/or MCAT score don't get accepted because they didn't have enough volunteering hours. Find a program that you want to volunteer with and stick with it. Volunteering in a clinical setting is most ideal as it also lends to your clinical experience.

How much volunteering do I need to do?

There is no set amount of volunteering required. You want to show commitment with

your volunteering, so try and stick with something for a few months at least. Aim to have around 100 or more hours and you should be fine.

Where can I find volunteer opportunities?

[Click here](#) for help finding volunteer opportunities.

Do I need to do research to get into medical school?

No. Research is not necessary for getting into medical school. It does look good on your application and can provide you a good opportunity to get a letter of recommendation.

Where can I find research opportunities?

[Click here](#) for help finding research opportunities.

Do I need to shadow a doctor to get into medical school?

No. You don't have to shadow a doctor to get into medical school. However doing so can greatly help your application. Shadowing a doctor provides a great opportunity to learn what you are getting yourself into. Medical schools want to know that you are aware of the realities of being a working physician. Getting a recommendation letter from a doctor is very strong too. Shadowing about 40 hours is recommended for most pre meds.

How do I find a doctor to shadow?

Check out our article: [A pre-med guide to finding a doctor to shadow](#)

Do I need medical experience before applying to medical school?

No. Having medical experience is a definite plus to your application though. This shows that you already understand what the environment is like and that you are able and willing to handle it. Working as a scribe, tech, or even at the front desk of a hospital are all ways to get experience in the field.

Final words

Becoming a doctor is one of the greatest accomplishments in one's life and the journey is a truly worthwhile experience. Pre-Med Community will be there every step of the way to help you fulfill your dream of becoming a doctor. We look forward to serving all of your pre-med needs and thank you for your support!

I lastly want to remind everyone who is reading this; you CAN definitely become a doctor! Never give up on the dream! Make that dream a reality! Thank you for taking your time to read this! Please check out all the content and resources we provide at <http://www.premedcommunity.com>

Please help your fellow pre-med out and tell them to check out Pre-med Community and download this free e-book!

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