



NAVIGATE THE MED SCHOOL MAZE

12 TIPS FROM START TO ACCEPTANCE



An Accepted Admissions Guide

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Navigate the Med School Maze:
12 Tips From Start to Acceptance

Introduction

Whew! You're in the midst of applying to medical school, and it's time to write your AMCAS and non-AMCAS personal statements. But first, before you start filling in the boxes on that medical school application, stop. Take a deep breath. Let's assess your status: You've worked hard to ensure you have a strong GPA. You studied for and took the MCAT. You've volunteered and perhaps researched a topic of interest. Hopefully you have even carved out time for your own recreational interests.

Now you are about to begin the last stage:

- Completing the medical school applications
- Writing your personal statement
- Drafting and submitting secondary essays
- Interviewing

This is the only part of the admissions process that you still have any influence over. You can't change your competition, and you can't change what you've done to date, but you can make sure that what you submit in the future is your best.

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What is Accepted?

Accepted is the premier admissions consultancy that offers:

- 1-on-1 consulting for medical school
- Expert editing of all application components (essays, CVs, letters of recommendation, waitlist letters, and more)
- Interview prep
- Free resources – guides, webinars, and a podcast
- Sample essays
- Our interactive blog – where you can get the latest admissions news, solid advice, and answers to your questions

As Seen On

WALL STREET
JOURNAL

U.S. News

Bloomberg
Businessweek

POETS &
QUANTS

The Boston Globe

INSIDE
HIGHER ED

Why Our Clients Love Us

No matter where you live and no matter where you're applying, our expert admissions consultants are ready to listen, mentor, and guide you as you prepare an outstanding med school application that will get you accepted. You'll love us because you'll see from the first phone call or email that we care about you and support you as you strive to achieve your goals and dreams.

But you don't need to take our word for it. See what some of our clients have to say about Accepted...

"Sheryl was a 10. She's provided me with tremendous feedback and confidence going into my interview and I was one of 15 students who received early acceptance to the PA school. Total applicant pool was 2500. I'm fairly certain that her coaching placed a huge role in getting me there. Will recommend her to anyone who needs a PA interview coach."

"Thank you so much for your help on my essays. I've already [early November] received an acceptance from University of Virginia. I received a compliment from one of my interviewers about my personal essay. The help you have given me has definitely made a difference...Thanks again!"

Is My Profile Competitive?

By Alicia McNease Nimonkar

In the six months leading up to the medical school application cycle, you can begin anticipating any weaknesses in your application. By assessing your qualifications early in the process, you can use this time strategically to improve your chances of receiving an acceptance. With nearly ten years of experience in admissions and a demonstrated record of success (on average, 9 out of 10 of the clients I worked with last cycle received an acceptance), I recommend reviewing your qualifications in these areas:

GPA: Do you have an increasing trend in your GPA? If not, consider completing more coursework, if you are not already doing so. Do whatever it takes to earn A's in the courses you register for – even if that means that you sign up for fewer classes. Having a decreasing trend is a deal breaker for most medical schools.

For more information about how to improve your study skills, I have included a chapter on this topic in my book, [*The Definitive Guide to Premedical Postbaccalaureate Programs*](#).

MCAT: If you have a competitive MCAT score, apply. If it would make you a stronger candidate, you have time to [retake the MCAT](#) before you submit your application. The higher your MCAT score, the better. If possible, work with the test prep company that can address your specific weaknesses – whether that is content or test-taking strategy. Make sure that you apply strategically to the schools that accept applicants with MCAT scores in your range.

Activities: Have you completed activities that cover clinical experience, community service, research (optional at many schools), [leadership](#), and cultural diversity? Do you have any long-term activities – any that you have continued for a year or longer? It's helpful to have a strong balance of diverse experiences with long-term involvement. It can raise red flags if an applicant has several short-term (six months or shorter) activities.

Application essays: If you know that you struggle with writing application essays (most people do!), start early. Anticipate this potential weakness in your application by addressing it head-on. You can allocate time for brainstorming and journaling to improve the way that you approach the writing process and the way you handle high stakes writing assignments. You can always [work with an expert](#), like those of us at Accepted. We can work with you to help you outline and organize your ideas as well as guide you through the writing process, draft by draft.

While there are many ways to improve your application, being strategic in identifying what your specific weaknesses may be can make all the difference. Being honest with yourself in your assessment of your materials will help you submit a better application. Take the time to plan for success!

[Alicia McNease Nimonkar](#) is an Accepted consultant and former Student Advisor at UC Davis' postbac program who specializes in postbac and med school admissions. Alicia has guided hundreds of students through the AMCAS application process and knows what works and what doesn't. Profit from her knowledge, experience, and skill.

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Leadership in Admissions

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Related Resources:

- [Get Accepted to Medical School in 2017](#) [webinar]
- [Reapplying to Med School: Evaluating Your Medical School Profile](#)
- [5 Easy Ways to Improve Your Medical School Profile](#)

When Should I Apply?

Of course your credentials are extremely important when applying to medical school, but equally important is WHEN in the application cycle you submit your application. The medical school application process is extremely competitive. Since tens of thousands of students apply every year, your success is dependent not only on your academic and extracurricular credentials, but also on the timing of your submission.

AMCAS (the American Medical College Application Service) processes your primary application and forwards the information to the medical schools you select. Even though the deadlines for most schools are in the late fall, [it is critical to submit to AMCAS in the early summer](#) (June-July). Late submissions often lead to rejection. If you apply late and are not rejected, you may be placed “on hold,” which means a school is waiting to see if they will offer you an interview, not because you lack the credentials, but because all interview spots have already been assigned.

Submission to AMCAS is only the beginning of the process. Following your online submission will be a waiting period while you are “verified.” During this time it is critical to have your transcripts (from all schools attended) and MCAT score(s) forwarded along with your letters of recommendation.

Many students submit their AMCAS application online in June, but then fail to be persistent in the forwarding of other supporting documents. Your application will not be reviewed until it is considered “complete.”

Most schools, as well as AMCAS, allow you to check your status online. This is very important; many students have failed to gain admission because of minor details (such as their letters never arrived or arrived in December or an undergraduate institution lost the transcript request).

Check and confirm the arrival of each part of your application package. Successfully completing your application with all supporting documentation during the summer (a year before you want to matriculate) will increase your chances of receiving an interview invitation.

If you’re lucky, you will receive secondary applications in the late summer and interview invitations in the fall.



Related Resources:

- [5 Tips for Researching Medical Schools](#)
- [Medical School Admissions: Why Applying in June is Critical](#)
- [Applying to Medical School Late in the Application Cycle](#)

The Importance of Clinical Exposure

Here's how important clinical exposure is to your med school profile: You can have a GPA in the high 3's and an MCAT score over 515 and still get rejected from a top med school; throw in some clinical exposure or shadowing with those top marks and you're practically a shoo-in.

According to most admissions members at top-ranked medical schools, clinical volunteer work is absolutely necessary; an absence of such experience can literally kill an application. Without it you fail to show the adcom that you have investigated the medical field, thereby failing to prove that you know that it's the right field for you.

Saying that you want to "save lives" or "work in pediatric hematology oncology" is noble and admirable, but do you understand what doctors do daily to fulfill such a goal? Do you have what it takes to save lives PLUS work 24-hour shifts? Do you like working in a hospital environment? Can you handle dealing with sick people and their families?

Furthermore, if you indicate that you are interested in a particular specialty field, then you MUST be able to discuss what you've seen and what you've experienced and how those things have contributed to your calling and your desire to enter that specialty field.

Bonus tip: If you are the child of a physician, you most likely have more shadowing experience than the average non-child-of-a-physician applicant. However, it is crucial that you acquire clinical experience with doctors who are NOT your parents in fields that are NOT your parents' fields so that you are certain that your decision to enter a field is because you truly desire that role and those responsibilities and not simply because you are blindly following in the footsteps of your mom or dad.

Remember, if all things are equal – high test scores, high GPA, excellent references, and a solid application – the applicant with the clinical exposure, with the hands-on knowledge that being a doctor is his or her true calling, is the one who will get that coveted letter of acceptance.

Watch the webinar:
Create a Winning AMCAS Application!

Related Resources:

- [5 Reasons Why Med Applicants Should Volunteer](#)
- [Med Applicants: Be Strategic with Your Activities](#)
- [8 New Year's Resolutions Med School Applicants Need to Keep](#)

Choosing the Best Schools for YOU

How many schools should you apply to? 10? 20? 40? Each applicant's list will be different. You should consider several factors including state of residency, strength of credentials, and the match between your personal goals with the school's mission.

What you should do is aim to apply to approximately 20-25 schools and then adjust the number upward or downward depending on the following factors:

- (1) Apply to your state school(s) and any other nearby medical schools that may have reciprocity between states.
- (2) Apply to your undergraduate institution if they have a medical school – especially if you have had the opportunity to do research or clinical work at the school or an affiliated hospital.
- (3) Apply to private schools that are a good match academically with your credentials.
- (4) Explore the mission of each school and select schools that you match well in terms of your experiences, goals, and focus.
- (5) Consider finances when applying – the more schools you apply to, the more application fees you'll have to pay.

You need to balance a realistic number of schools with your best chance of success. Your residency, minority or disadvantaged status, and financial constraints are all important factors in addition to those I've mentioned above. But remember, you never know which aspect of your application will attract a school – some schools value research, some have a strong mission working with the underserved, some have a primary care focus...so don't limit yourself too much, but rather select schools that align well with your strengths.



Related Resources:

- [How Do I Decide Which Med Schools to Apply to?](#)
- [How to Research Medical Schools](#)
- [Where Should I Apply to Med School?](#)

Writing an Awesome AMCAS Essay

"Why do you want to be a doctor?"

Surely this is an important question to answer in your own mind and address in your personal statement. That assumption doesn't necessarily mean, however, that you should begin the essay by answering the question or that your answer should be the focus of the piece.

Some applicants have compelling stories to tell about an illness or injury, an inspiring mentor or a memorable service experience that pointed them in the direction of medicine. If you have such a story, you're set with your opening paragraph and your theme; your challenge is to draw readers in and make them want to know what happened next.

If you're like most applicants – an intelligent person who has an aptitude for science, a strong inclination toward service and no life-altering experiences or “light bulb moments” that led you to choose medicine – your focus should be on what sets you apart from the rest of the thousands of applicants. Is your college major a bit offbeat for a premed? Did you or your family face economic or other hardships and obstacles? Do you have any unusual jobs, interests, or hobbies? (Consider the candidate who taught classical Indian dance at her college while she was an undergrad and studied the discipline in India for a year before applying to medical school. Or the guy who opened an on-campus organic juice bar to promote health and local, clean eating.)

If you devote the valuable and very limited space AMCAS provides for the essay to those qualities and accomplishments that make you unique, admissions committees will gain a better understanding of the kind of person you are.

**5 Fatal Flaws to Avoid in Your
Application Essays!**

*Free
Guide!*

Related Resources:

- [Create a Winning AMCAS Application](#) [webinar]
- [Ace the AMCAS Essay](#) [admissions guide]
- [4 Things to Do Before Submitting Your AMCAS Application](#)

Creating Sizzling Secondaries

After you submit your AMCAS application, if you're lucky, you'll be asked to submit [secondary applications](#). Each medical school requires different information. The following tips will help you write these challenging essays.

1. Timing is critical.

The general rule is to complete each secondary application within two weeks of receiving it.

2. Prioritize schools.

If faced with more secondaries than you can handle, prioritize. Complete the secondaries from the schools you are most interested in attending and/or have the greatest chance of being offered an interview first.

3. Be thorough and do not rush.

The essays in your secondary application are as important as your personal essay and in some cases more important. Do not rush through them.

4. Research each school.

Before starting to write any essays, spend some time reviewing the website, the mission statement, and the curriculum of the medical school. (This is something you want to repeat again before interviewing.) Try to incorporate in your essays some of the information you learn so that you stress why you are a good match and what you can offer your target school. In essence you want to personalize each essay. Try to reinforce how your past experiences match the school's mission statement or how your interests match their specialty offerings. Each school has a special focus (such as a unique curriculum, strong research base, a focus on the underserved or primary care). Think about what you have to offer that aligns well with their focus or mission and reinforce that in your essay.

5. Give state school essays enough attention.

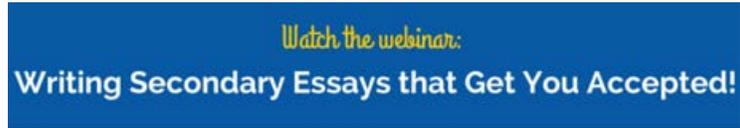
When completing an essay for your state school, stress why you want to go there just as you would any other school. Financial reasons and proximity to home are important reasons, but you still want to reinforce why you are a good match for the school.

6. Share additional information.

Each secondary application provides a place for you to show a little more of yourself. Try to include information in your essays that you may not have been able to incorporate into your AMCAS application. The secondary essays should complement, not duplicate, the AMCAS essay.

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Again this is the final piece of information that will be considered by admission committees prior to interview offers, so put time into each and make sure you customize them for each school.



Related Resources:

- [Medical School Secondary Essay Handbook: School Specific Tips for Top Programs](#) [admissions guide]
- [5 Tips for Spectacular Secondaries](#)
- [Successful Medical School Secondary Application Strategies](#)

5 Things to Remember When Writing Your Resume or CV for Medical School

All medical schools require a [resume](#) or curriculum vitae as part of the application. While you can look up templates for a resume online, there are a few pointers you should keep in mind.

1. Keep it clean and easy to read. The purpose of a resume is to have all of your information in one convenient place. Most admissions committee members will use the resume to remind themselves of where you went to school and where and when you worked. For that reason, keep it clear and neat. Don't make the font too small or too fancy. Don't put pictures or other details. Design details will just distract the readers from your qualifications.

2. Emphasize academic excellence. You should include all academic honors you've received as well as your major and GPA. If you've received merit scholarships, you should mention those as well.

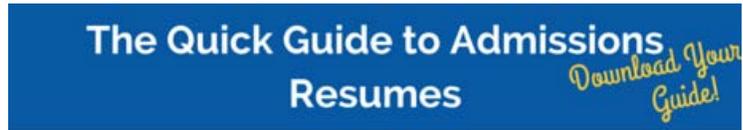
3. Don't forget research. Many medical schools are interested in [candidates who have engaged in research](#). Don't just list the labs where you have worked, include poster presentations and pending or accepted publications to show the admissions committee your commitment to science.

4. Emphasize leadership in extracurriculars. Medical schools are looking for people who go above and beyond the threshold requirement, so emphasize extracurriculars where you took on active [leadership roles](#), like planning conferences or organizing and teaching classes to others. All of the descriptions should feel active. The same goes true for hobbies – if you like skiing, for example, name the competitions or tournaments you've competed in as a way to show excellence.

5. Don't pad with fluff. Here's a not-so secret – people can tell when you are adding fluff to your resume. If you are including jobs to mark time, but they aren't significant, don't overwrite the description. Don't add hobbies at the end like “watching T.V.” or “reading.” If you don't have the research experience or volunteer work needed, then that's a sign to [go get some](#). On the other hand, if you have experience, don't be shy about listing it.

After the long process of applying to medical school and taking the MCAT, the resume or CV can feel like an afterthought. But, avoid turning in something sloppy. Think of the document like a roadmap that gives people reviewing your application a convenient guide to navigate all of the other material you've included.

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Related Resources:

- [Six Tips for Better Resumes](#)
- [The 6 Commandments For A Successful CV](#)
- [Do's and Don'ts for Writing Your Resume – Part 1: The 9 Do's](#)

5 Must-Haves of a Med School Letter of Recommendation

An excellent letter of recommendation has several key components. On average, they tend to be about three pages in length. Any more than three pages can be considered excessive since each applicant has at least three letters of recommendation attached to their application and medical schools receive on average 5,000 applications each year. That's a lot of letters to read! A letter longer than three pages may not be read all the way through or in much detail. On the other hand, a letter that is too brief – only one page in length – will hurt your application. It's too short to go into much detail.

The [best letters of recommendation](#) all have the following components:

1. They explain how well the letter-writer knows the applicant.

The first section of the letter explains how the writer knows the applicant – in what capacity, as a professor, mentor, supervisor, etc. They describe the length of time they have known you. By establishing the background of the relationship, the writer is in the best position to describe you to the selection committee. The best letters are from people who have known you for a year or longer and who have worked closely with you on successful projects.

2. They go into depth about your accomplishments.

The majority of the letter should be focused on covering what they have observed about the quality of your work and the [characteristics that you have demonstrated](#). The longer this section of the letter is, the better. It is here that the recommender can help you shine as an applicant.

3. They provide details about the outcomes of your work and the impact you have on others.

Selection committees love facts, numbers and data. Any outcomes that are emphasized as the result of your work will make the letter stand out from others. Information like the numbers of patients you have assisted, or increasing the number of people you are able to assist as well as positive quotes from people you have worked with can provide convincing evidence of an exceptional character. Other examples of outcomes include publications, poster presentations or awards.

4. They provide context for your accomplishments.

If you are the first person in your family to earn a college degree, this information makes all of your success even more remarkable. Including information about yourself like the number of languages you are fluent in or your knowledge of other cultures can also support your candidacy for medical school. A paragraph or two describing your background can take a letter of recommendation to the next level!

5. They detail the reasons why you will succeed in medical school.

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The best letters will use the characteristics they have already described about you – that are unique to you – to explain why you will succeed in medical school. In convincing selection committees that you are well prepared and that you will excel in the next phase of your education can provide compelling support for your application.

If a letter writer takes the time to include all of these sections, it demonstrates a deep respect and strong confidence in the applicant.

Looking for more tips on LORs or other aspects of the admissions process? Our blog has loads! Subscribe to the Accepted Admissions Blog now and receive admissions advice directly to your inbox!

[Bring me to the blog!](#)

Related Resources:

- [The Best Medical School Recommendations](#)
- [How to Not Ask for Recommendation Letters](#)
- [The President Wrote My Letter of Recommendation!](#)

Preparing for the Med School Interview

Only a small percentage of applicants receive med school interview invites, so if you have made it to this select applicant pool, then your admission chances have definitely increased. Knowing this, what should you do to be best prepared?

Make Travel Plans

Make sure you arrive well in advance of your scheduled interview time. Most schools offer a day-long interview schedule, therefore it is recommended that you arrive the evening before so you can get settled and relax.

Know What to Wear

Be professional. The key is to wear something you feel comfortable in, and even more importantly, something you feel confident wearing. Comfortable shoes are also a good idea. Limit anything you or others might find distracting – for example, if your clothing doesn't fit well and you're constantly adjusting it, or if you're wearing loud jewelry, you risk your outfit overpowering your message.

Remember you have been selected based on your credentials on paper. The interview is your chance to present yourself personally. You want to look and act like a physician, someone that will be treating future patients.

(Men, [look here](#). Women, [read this](#).)

Go through Your Interview Prep Checklist

- ✓ Preparing for each and every school you interview at is *very* important. Spend time reviewing the curriculum, the school's mission, the facilities, the hospitals you will be completing your clinical rotations at, the available community opportunities – everything that defines the institution. Try to figure out why you are a good match for this particular school so you can honestly state why you want to go there.
- ✓ Read through your AMCAS application. It's been months since you completed your application so review what you wrote. Don't be caught off guard.
- ✓ Think about what has changed since your AMCAS and secondary application submission so that you know what other information you want to make sure you share with your interviewer. Include anything that may have changed in your application, such as your plans for the current year, a recent publication, etc., so you can update your interviewer if necessary.

Anticipate Standard Questions

There are so many potential directions an interviewer could take. Here are some you might come across:

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➔ General Questions

- Why do you want to go to medical school?
- Describe your clinical exposure. Was there significant patient contact?
- Describe the activities you had during your gap year.
- Why did you enroll in a postbac program?

➔ Personal Questions

- What qualities do you possess that make you confident you can be a physician?
- What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

➔ More Thought-Provoking Questions

- What is your position on <choose your controversial topic – abortion, right to life, assisted suicide, Medicare, DNR, etc.>?
- Where do you envision yourself 10 years from now professionally?
- What are your opinions on managed care?

When your interviewer is done asking you questions, he or she almost always ask you for questions. Try to have a couple of good questions prepared. Don't just ask a question to ask one, but ask questions that are relevant to your background, questions that show your serious interest in the school and your knowledge of the institution.

What to Do During the Interview

Connect: Maintain eye contact throughout the interview.

Show interest: Take notes if it seems relevant – this shows that you are truly interested.

Be yourself: You can't reinvent yourself, but rather try to shine during the interview with your best qualities. That means if you are animated and outgoing go right ahead and show it. If you are shy that's fine, but still try to find a connection with your interviewer.

Present yourself honestly: If you are discussing a weak part of your record, own up to your mistakes and then stress your improvements. Don't minimize your past, but try to move on to future positives. If you are one of the lucky ones who has not had many struggles in your life, then still think how to answer an adversity question. Adversity comes in many shades – physical, financial, personal and/or emotional. Each of us has had some degree of struggle.

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What to Do After the Interview

Make sure you follow up your interview day with a personal thank you note to your interviewer. If you had a special experience with a student or student group and/or a non-interview faculty, you should also include that experience in your note.



Related Resources:

- [Interviewing with Impact: How to Make an Impression in Your Medical School Interviews](#) [webinar]
- [The Do's and Don'ts of Med School Interviews](#)
- [Prepare for Interviews with Positive Imagery](#)

Increase Your Chances of Acceptance While Waitlisted

By Alicia McNease Nimonkar

All is not lost! If you've been placed on the waiting list, do not lose hope. Some students receive an acceptance as late as a week before classes begin. If you can, maintain your sense of perspective.

Of all of the applicants under review, the admissions committee has decided that you are a promising enough candidate that they want to keep your application on the table. You have made it to the top half of the pile. Most medical schools will accept double the number of students they have space for because they anticipate losing students to other schools. The likelihood that you could be called up from the waiting list – depending, of course, on where you stand – is high.

To increase the likelihood of your acceptance from the waiting list, you can:

1. Continue your involvement in all activities.

Out of disappointment, please do not give up any of your activities. When things do not go as planned, the way we respond to these situations speaks volumes of our character. Worst case scenario, if you are not accepted this cycle, you can always reapply after addressing any weaknesses in your application. It would be hard to reapply with a stronger application, if you do not maintain the level of your commitment to service, research, and clinical experience.

2. Create reasons to update the selection committee.

Use this time to see what you can achieve! Take another class and earn an A. Work hard enough to receive an award – employee of the month or a certificate of recognition for the number of volunteer hours earned. Finish your research project or article so that you can work towards a publication, if you have not already started the process. Or present your work at a conference through a poster.

3. Write a letter of interest.

If you have not heard back from any of the schools by mid-April, when they give students a deadline to make a decision about their acceptance, you can [write a letter of interest](#).

4. Consult with an admissions expert.

If you're not sure why your application was placed on the waiting list, you can [contact an expert at Accepted](#) for a free consultation. Our consultants can assist you by reviewing your application and identifying any areas of weakness and creating a plan to address those in the most strategic manner possible – based on our extensive experience.

When applying, no news can be good news – especially if it leads to an acceptance. An acceptance is an acceptance, regardless of when you receive it.

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[Alicia McNease Nimonkar](#) is an Accepted consultant and former Student Advisor at UC Davis' postbac program who specializes in postbac and med school admissions. Alicia has guided hundreds of students through the AMCAS application process and knows what works and what doesn't. Profit from her knowledge, experience, and skill.

Help! I've been Waitlisted!

Listen to the
Podcast!

Related Resources:

- [Three Topics to Discuss in Waitlist Letters](#) [short video]
- [4 Must-Haves in a Med School Letter of Interest](#)
- [How to Write Waitlist Update Letters](#)

Choosing the Perfect Medical School: Multiple Acceptances & Reality

By Joshua Wienczkowski

It's that time of year when the first major batch of interviews for medical school are finishing up for the holidays; acceptance, wait-list, and (hopefully not) rejection letters are flowing out by the droves. Pre-meds across the country and world are waiting anxiously, updating their applications prodigiously. I genuinely hope one of those letters found or is about to find its way to your mail box and give you the joy of shrieking at the top of your lungs and running through the halls of your science building screaming, "I'M GONNA BE A DOCTOR!!!" I believe everyone should feel that feeling about something in life.

After the excitement has worn off, if you've been accepted to multiple institutions, you'll need to make a decision about where you'll actually attend.

Here are some stats:

- [According to the AAMC](#), the 2012 application cycle showed 636,309 applications from 45,266 applicants, making an average of 14 applications per applicant.
- Of that gaggle of paperwork, 19,517 matriculated to medical school.
- HOWEVER, we all know schools also pull from their [waitlist](#) because students choose other schools or defer for a year, etc.
- To get a snapshot of just how many acceptances schools offer above their class size, let's look at the top 10 most selective programs: Mayo, George Washington, Stanford, Brown, [Georgetown](#), UNC, Wake Forest, U Vermont, UCLA, Harvard, and UCSF. Together, they boasted an average acceptance rate of 3.75% and took in an average 7,932 apps for an average of 151 seats. Take the average acceptance rate of the average number of apps, and you get 297 seats, nearly double their average class size.

So what does all of this mean? It means that even the pickiest schools are offering many more acceptances than they have seats for because students are getting multiple acceptances on a consistent basis. My school this past year offered a total of 122 acceptances for 72 spots.

To help you narrow down your multiple acceptances to "the ONE," ask yourself the following questions (broken down into two categories: logical, and emotional).

Logical questions:

1. Which school can you afford? Loans add up, and as a medical student, you'll qualify for \$42,722 in Unsubsidized Loans through the government that accumulate interest at 5.41%. The rest must be made up through Graduate Plus Loans, which are at 6.41% as well as scholarships, which are hard to come by in med school.

2. How far is family or a support system? When you do get breaks (which is not often), you may want to spend your time with family. Medical school is hard, and not having family within

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driving distance (say, six hours or less) would make breaks more stressful than they need to be. Plane tickets add up as well, and you may not have a lot of extra cash lying around.

3. Does the city have what you need to satisfy all your needs? When you get out of class after a Friday exam, do you want to go hiking in the mountains or clubbing for the weekend? Choosing an area that has your interests is extremely important, because doing something you want to do to decompress is as important as having a favorite study place.

4. What do current students say? Word of mouth is still the most powerful tool in marketing, and medical schools are no different. Contact the admissions committee and ask if you can set up a phone or Skype conversation to talk with a [current student](#), and really get their perspective of being at that school.

Emotional:

1. How was your interview day at each school? Interview day is pretty indicative of how the school operates on a daily basis, and if you got rubbed the wrong way by some M1s or M2s, chances are you'll still not get along with them next fall. Also, how well did you like the admissions people? That's who the school has chosen to represent them, and you'll be dealing with them for the next four years with everything from your loans to potlucks/fundraisers and finding a trustworthy place to fix your car in town.

2. How big are classes? Do you want an intimate family-like environment or do you prefer the autonomy of a few hundred students?

3. Do you have a significant other to consider? There's an old saying that goes, "Happy wife, happy life," and choosing a school where your significant other can be happy is as important as you being happy. Take into consideration the job market for them in the area of each school and cost of living if you're looking into buying a house.

4. What does your gut say? Your instinct is a reflection of an accumulation of life experiences that help you weigh decisions as the potential of good or bad outcomes. Trust this experience and this feeling when choosing a school, and you won't be led astray.

Joshua Wienczkowski is a medical school student and student adcom member at East Tennessee's College of Medicine. He shares his med school journey with Accepted on [Accepted Admissions Blog](#) in his column, [Journeys with Joshua](#). Get an inside look into med school down South through the eyes of a former professional songwriter with a whole lot of clinical experience.

Sometimes it helps to hear about other people's dilemmas and decisions. We've interviewed hundreds of med school applicants and students from around the world – read their stories on our blog today!

Navigate the Med School Maze:
12 Tips From Start to Acceptance

Show me the interviews!

Related Resources:

- [Medical School Admissions: MD vs. DO Schools](#)
- [Overcoming the Odds: A Story of Med School Inspiration](#)
- [Medical School Admissions: A Dean's Perspective](#)

Should You Reapply?

Applicants who are still [waitlisted](#) in May should do some honest personal reflection before deciding how to move forward. Chances are they will not be one of the lucky ones entering med school in August.

Here are some questions for you to reflect on:

- Should I reapply right away next month?
- If I do reapply right away, what will be different in my application this year that was lacking last year?
- What about my extracurriculars – do I need more service or additional clinical or research experience?
- Are my credentials competitive? Should I retake the MCAT or apply to a postbac program to enhance my academic credentials?

If you have any doubts when answering these questions, consider waiting a year to reapply and spend the next twelve months enhancing your credentials.

If you feel confident that now is the right time to reapply to medical school, then you should immediately do the following six things:

1. Prepare your [AMCAS application](#) ASAP so you can submit promptly in June.
2. Spend time [rewriting your personal statement](#). It is not wise to resubmit the same essay. You are a different applicant this time than last, and you want to make sure the admission committee sees the difference in the materials you resubmit. Yes – many of the descriptions of your activities will remain the same, but you should be able to add a few [NEW experiences from the past year](#). If necessary, due to space limitations, combine older or less significant activities (such as several mentoring/tutoring positions) in order to add current and more relevant experiences.
3. Try to speak to your recommendation writers and have your letters updated. Sometimes it isn't possible, for instance when you've been out of school for years and/or working in a different field, but try and update as many letters as possible. This is important because one key goal for the reapplicant is to appear more qualified than in the previous application cycle.
4. Make sure you submit early and forward supplemental materials including transcripts, letters of recommendation, and MCAT score(s) as soon as possible.
5. Turn your secondary applications around in a week or two at most.
6. Lastly, check and recheck that all supporting documents have arrived and that your application is complete.

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Remember, timing is key not only for reapplicants but for all students. You cannot receive an interview until your file is complete.



Related Resources:

- [Medical School Reapplicant Advice: 6 Tips for Success](#)
- [Third Time's the Charm for This Orthopedic Surgeon](#)
- [Reapplying to Med School: Evaluating Your Medical School Profile](#)

Navigate the Med School Maze:
12 Tips From Start to Acceptance

Epilogue

Thanks for checking out Navigate the Med School Maze!

Now it's time to move from general tips to personalized advice tailored just for you. Explore our [Healthcare Admissions Consulting & Editing Services](#) now and work 1-on-1 with a pro who will help you get ACCEPTED.

*Discover how we can help you
get accepted.*

Our team has former admissions deans and directors, prize-winning writers, and decades of experience helping med applicants like you get accepted.

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