

Thinking About Medical School

Degrees & Decisions



There are a variety of health science-related degrees including human medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, public health, health care administration, various therapies, pharmacy, optometry, nursing, etc.

Medical school is a huge life commitment. Make sure you understand the daily job responsibilities of a doctor and the various options for practice in order to affirm if medicine is the right choice for you. Remember that a medical degree is not necessarily used specifically for practicing medicine; it could be combined with an MBA, JD, MPH, PhD or other degrees for a non-medical profession in health-related fields.

The main medical degrees in the United States

MD

Doctor of
Medicine

4-year programs plus
a residency of 3-8 years
Also found in Canada, Australia
& a few other countries

DO

Doctor of
Osteopathy

4-year programs
plus a residency
of 3-8 years

MBBS

Bachelor of Medicine
& Bachelor of Surgery

6-year program
Mainly designed for high school graduates
Sometimes has a 4-year graduate entry
option for students with a bachelor's degree.

Choosing A Medical School



- Check the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) website for broad analysis of different medical schools. Consider the school's location, cost, reputation and facilities.
- Research which schools offer a curriculum and learning style that best suits you.
- Check each school's requirements to judge your chance of acceptance.
- Attend career panels and info sessions that include medical professionals to help you in your exploration. The Career Development Center (CDC) and Academic Advising often sponsor events that serve to give students further insight into the health profession.
- Do not forget about tuition costs, location, cost of living, availability of financial aid, and how all of the above fit with your personal life.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

- Medical schools prefer a diverse student population who come from different educational backgrounds.



- Many medical school applicants major in science but that is not necessarily required. However, there are certain Pre-Medicine courses (typically Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Statistics) that must be completed.



- Admission committees are looking for candidates with strong analytical, critical thinking, research and oral and written communication skills.



- These differ depending on schools. You may need to send your syllabus to med schools to make sure that the courses you completed fulfill their requirements.

Preparing For The MCAT

If you want to attend medical school immediately after graduation, you should plan to take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) in June of your junior year. The MCAT is only available in Hong Kong, not in Mainland China. The test schedule changes each year.

MCAT Schedule in Hong Kong:

https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/reserving/148106/reserving_internationaltesting2014.html

Applying

There are numerous components when applying to medical school: undergraduate transcript, MCAT or other standardized test, personal statement, letters of recommendation, work and internship experience as well as the application interview. Medical school is very competitive so students must excel in each aspect of the application and be meticulous throughout the application process. Remember that it costs money for each application, but don't limit yourself to a single application either.

Start early

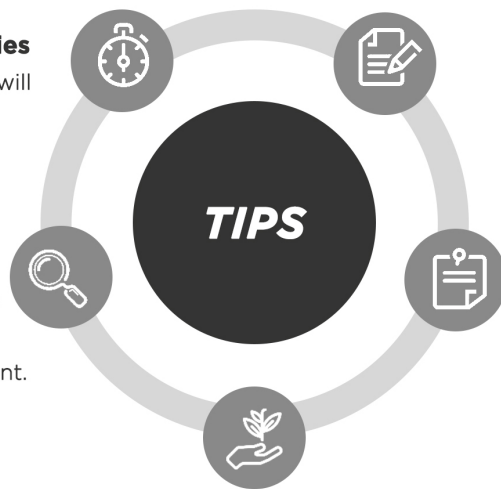
Research medical schools in different regions of the world. Understand variations in practice and start figuring out what you want to do with your medical degree. Create a table with the most important factors to you. This will help organize your thoughts and narrow down your search. Meet with a CDC advisor, academic advisor, and faculty to further narrow your search.

Take the MCAT once and early

The MCAT is a difficult test that involves a great deal of preparation, and you are encouraged to take it only once. The earlier that you take the MCAT, the earlier you can apply and the more spots will be available when the admission committee considers your application.

Consider research opportunities

Involvement in a research project will help you hone critical thinking, teamwork, problem-solving, and quantitative skills. There is no typical preference for the type of research (lab, translational/clinical, honors work); it is more about the demonstration of your intellectual curiosity and scholarly development.



Show civic engagement

Schools expect applicants to have developed a rich portfolio of experiences that have informed their understanding of healthcare, challenged their intellect, and demonstrated their commitment to others. Engagement in your community through volunteerism and service helps you develop social awareness, cultural competency, and a sense of civic responsibility.

Develop your clinical skills

Clinical experience is not a requirement for medical school. However, such experience is often beneficial. When searching for clinical experiences, search for meaningful experiences volunteering in hospitals, clinics, communities, non-profit organizations or private offices. Try to shadow and observe healthcare professionals and interact with patients. Educate yourself on finding legitimate organizations and ensuring you are learning ethically while abroad.

Additional Resources

<http://prehealth.cas.nyu.edu>
<http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

<http://www.naahp.org>
<http://www.projects-abroad.org>

If you have any questions or need help with finding, deciding and applying to medical school, visit the CDC for individual advice. Be sure to schedule an appointment online or come to our walk-in hours.