

Chapter 2


Admission to US Medical Schools: From Application to Selection

Leila E. Harrison

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6804-075X>

Washington State University Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, USA

Christina J. Grabowski

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1707-1238>

University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine, USA

Leila Amiri

University of Illinois College of Medicine, USA

Radha Nandagopal

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5959-9594>

Washington State University Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, USA

Richard Sanker

Baylor University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter includes in-depth information on the medical school application process in the United States (US), the various admissions criteria and selection processes, and the range of interview and assessment modalities used to evaluate applicant competencies. It also provides information about the various pathways aspiring physicians may take to seek admission to medical school. In these sections, evidence is provided highlighting the work that has been done to better understand these areas. The chapter concludes with the important perspectives of an admissions committee chair and a pre-health advisor to further elucidate this complex process.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1468-9.ch002

INTRODUCTION

Application to and selection for medical school continues to be a competitive process in the US. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), there were 52,777 applicants to MD degree-granting medical schools for the 2018 entering class (AAMC, 2018a), of which 41% matriculated (AAMC, 2018b). Applicants also have the option of applying to colleges of osteopathic medicine. In the same application cycle, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) reported 20,981 applications for 7,467 seats (AACOM, 2018). The application process is lengthy with applications for both MD and DO programs opening in early May, over a year prior to expected matriculation. Furthermore, the process has evolved over the years making it more important for applicants, pre-health advisors, admissions committees, and medical education faculty to be familiar with the variety of assessment modalities and applicant characteristics and experiences desired by medical schools.

The goal of this chapter is to provide an in-depth account of the full continuum of medical school admissions, including the different ways medical schools use materials in the application or from the interview to make decisions. It includes an overview of the holistic review framework adopted by many medical schools to align their admissions criteria to institution-specific missions and goals while also diversifying the physician workforce to better meet the healthcare needs of their changing patient populations. It also provides an overview and examples of programs that highlight the different pathways students can come through. The important perspectives of the admissions committee and pre-health advisor are also included. This chapter aims to demystify the admissions process while highlighting evidence-based practices for selection.

APPLICATION SERVICES

There are three different application services to apply to US medical schools: the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS), and the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS). Each of these serves unique medical colleges, making it important for applicants and advisors to know their differences, deadlines, and processes. This section of the chapter provides details of each of these application services, including their differences and schools served.

As of early 2019, there were 154 MD-granting US medical schools accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME, 2019). The majority of these programs utilize the centralized application service through the AAMC which is AMCAS. The application includes questions about demographics, personal and familial background, academic background, essays, and an option for including 15 activities the applicant wishes to share. There are currently 35 DO-granting US medical schools accredited by the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (AOA, 2019), many with multiple locations. Most of these programs utilize the centralized application service AACOMAS, and the application includes similar information as AMCAS. There are nine public MD programs and one public DO program in the state of Texas, which utilize TMDSAS. TMDSAS is slightly different than AMCAS in that rather than limiting activities to only 15, TMDSAS provides sections for employment, leadership, research, healthcare, and community service, allowing applicants to submit unlimited activities for each section. These application services provide a centralized process for applicants to apply to multiple programs.

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/admission-to-us-medical-schools/246618

Related Content

The Value of Measuring Patient Engagement in Healthcare: New Frontiers for Healthcare Quality

Guendalina Graffigna and Serena Barelo (2017). *Health Literacy: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 392-414).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-value-of-measuring-patient-engagement-in-healthcare/181204

Narratives of Teaching Methods

Jennifer Lynne Bird (2020). *Using Narrative Writing to Enhance Healing* (pp. 238-268).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/narratives-of-teaching-methods/242504

Alice in Simulation-Land: Surgical Simulation in Medical Education

Vanessa Bazan, Michael D. Jax and Joseph B. Zwischenberger (2020). *Handbook of Research on the Efficacy of Training Programs and Systems in Medical Education* (pp. 449-458).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/alice-in-simulation-land/246643

Curing Autoimmune Naturally: My PMR Story

Donna J. Karaba (2015). *Innovative Collaborative Practice and Reflection in Patient Education* (pp. 167-193).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/curing-autoimmune-naturally/123629

PA vs. NP: What Is the Difference Between These Healthcare Professions?

Karen A. Wright, Arlene Pericak and Cameron W. Hogg (2022). *Handbook of Research on Advising and Developing the Pre-Health Professional Student* (pp. 81-110).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/pa-vs-np/303434