About the Association of American Medical Colleges

Founded in 1876 and based in Washington, D.C., the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is a not-for-profit association representing all 147 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents nearly 167,000 full-time faculty members, 88,000 medical students, and 124,000 resident physicians.

Through its many programs and services, the AAMC strengthens the world’s most advanced medical care by supporting the entire spectrum of education, research, and patient care activities conducted by our member institutions. The AAMC and our members are dedicated to the communities we serve and steadfast in our desire to earn and keep the public’s trust for the role we play in improving the nation’s health.

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Welcome to the AAMC—Your Trusted Resource for Official Guidance and Information for Pre-Med Students!

You are about to embark on the most exciting journey of your education and training, and you’ll be making some of the most important decisions of your career.

At the AAMC, we’re here to help you navigate the journey—from pre-med through residency and beyond—with reliable, trusted resources and services.

We hope that you find this booklet helpful in answering many of your questions about embarking on a career in medicine. We encourage you to visit our website to take advantage of the many resources we’ve created for you, including webinars, podcasts, inspiring stories, tools, and tips.

Also, be sure to connect with AAMC Pre-Med on social media to get the latest information and join us in discussions about pre-med topics.

We wish you the very best of success in a rewarding and fulfilling career in medicine!

AAMC Pre-Med Team

aamc.org/students

AAMC Pre-Med

@AAMCPremed
Aspiring Docs

The AAMC’s Aspiring Docs website provides resources and inspiration to help you get started on your path to medicine.

There’s a lot of planning and preparation leading up to applying to medical school—so start exploring the great information on the Aspiring Docs website right away.

You’ll find fact sheets with a wealth of information on:

- Partnering with your advisor
- Deciding if a career in medicine is right for you
- Getting lab experience, shadowing a doctor, and finding summer programs
- Preparing to take the MCAT® exam
- Applying to medical school or MD/PhD programs
- Making the most of a gap year
- Experiencing an anatomy lab, seeing a patient for the first time, and other experiences shared by current medical students
- And much more

Plus, you’ll be able to read inspiring Q&A interviews with medical students, residents, and physicians about their personal stories—some of whom took a unique path to medicine or overcame challenges.

And, finally, be sure to follow pre-med, medical student, and resident bloggers as they share their experiences, challenges, and what keeps them motivated on their path to a career in medicine on AspiringDocsDiaries.org.

aamc.org/aspiringdocs
Getting Started

Finding Volunteer and Lab Experiences

Two of the most important things that can help you decide if a career in medicine is right for you is getting volunteer experience in a medically related environment and getting lab experience. Volunteering will help you prepare for medical school in addition to enhancing your medical school application.

Each year, the number of medical school applicants who have significant medically related volunteer experience and/or lab experience grows. Many universities now require internships or a capstone course during the senior year of college. Working in a lab setting will help make you a competitive applicant; it will also help you determine if a career in medicine or medical research is right for you. Here are answers to common questions. Find more answers on the Aspiring Docs website at aamc.org/aspiringdocs.

Where can I find out about opportunities?

If you are still in school, your first step should be to talk with your academic or pre-health advisor. Also check to see if there is a campus office of community service or student activities that maintains a website or database. Check the science department bulletin boards or websites for opportunities to assist with faculty research projects. Join pre-med or service clubs because they’re one of the best ways to hear about volunteer and research openings, make friends, and find out about conferences and other opportunities. Hospitals, clinics, labs, research facilities, charities, foundations, or other organizations may have volunteer opportunities listed online.

If you haven’t started college or if you’ve already graduated, focus on networking. Call people you know—some of your best opportunities may come from within your own network of friends, family, and work and school contacts. Ask any of them if they know about open clinical or research positions or other available opportunities. Human resources departments at large research hospitals and universities in your area might be looking for lab technicians. Job opportunities are typically posted on the career pages of their websites.

Is it better to have one ongoing experience or many different experiences?

It’s good to have a variety of experiences, but it’s also important to show you’ve cultivated specific interests and are able to commit to an activity over a sustained period of time. You’re more likely to gain significant responsibilities or leadership roles if you regularly volunteer with an organization. This also helps you network and develop relationships with potential mentors and other people who may later write your letters of evaluation.

When is the best time to look for a position?

According to Rivka Glaser, PhD, adjunct professor of biology at Stevenson University, if you’re interested in a research or laboratory position for the following semester, the best time to look for positions is during the middle of the semester, or a week or two before midterms. There also tend to be a lot of research opportunities, both paid and volunteer, in the summer. Remember, typically there are more applicants than available spots, so complete your applications early.
Medical School Admission Requirements

One of the most important decisions you’ll make is where to go to medical school. Rely on accurate data from a trusted source.

The AAMC’s Medical School Admission Requirements resources provide the most comprehensive, up-to-date information and data.

The Official Guide to Medical School Admissions: How to Prepare for and Apply to Medical School

This is the most complete and trusted guide for medical school admissions and includes crucial information about the application process, financial resources, interview tips, and admissions criteria. Receive exclusive insight from the experts who manage the MCAT® exam and AMCAS® application, and get details on choosing the school that is the best fit for you, elements of the admission decision, diversity in medical schools, financing, applicant and matriculant data, and more. It includes worksheets to help you make strategic decisions during the application process. Available in print and ebook formats.

Medical School Admission Requirements for U.S. and Canadian Medical Schools

When you’re ready to start researching medical schools, the Medical School Admission Requirements website is the most accurate resource for requirements, data, and information. This is the only comprehensive resource with current data that come directly from the AMCAS application and MCAT exam. Completely redesigned for 2017, the new site is mobile friendly, with enhanced search and filter options, dynamic charts, and an expanded compare feature. Review waitlist procedures, premedical coursework requirements, demographics of the entering class, admissions statistics, and more. Your one-year subscription allows you to search, sort, and save information.

aamc.org/msar
### Mission and Interview Questions Worksheet

Medical schools give weight to specific characteristics that align with their missions. Be aware of each school’s mission statement and how your personal traits align with it. Examples could include research inquisitiveness, empathy, teamwork, curiosity, and a desire for knowledge about the health care delivery system. You can find each medical school’s mission statement under the “About” section in the Medical School Admission Requirements website. You don’t need a subscription to view this section. Go to [aamc.org/msar](http://aamc.org/msar), and click on “preview the website for free.”

School name: __________________________________________________________________________

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Ideal fit</th>
<th>Good fit</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Not a fit</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Course offerings</td>
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<td>Class size</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Research programs</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Interviews and/or meetings with faculty</td>
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<td>Reputation</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Tuition and financial aid</td>
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<td>Programs for minority or disadvantaged students</td>
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<td>Teaching methods</td>
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<td>Combined-degree offerings</td>
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<td>Campus tour</td>
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<td>Rural or community offerings</td>
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<td>Residency placement</td>
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Impression of school:  □ Favorable  □ Undecided  □ Unfavorable

Likelihood of applying:  □ Will apply  □ Undecided  □ Unlikely to apply

Follow-up questions to ask: ____________________________________________________________________

For a list of interview questions, see the article “Selecting a Medical School: 35 Questions I Wish I Had Asked” at [aamc.org/35questions](http://aamc.org/35questions).

[aamc.org/msar](http://aamc.org/msar)
Summer Health Professions Education Program

The Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) is a FREE (full tuition, housing, and meals) six-week academic enrichment summer program for qualified undergraduate freshmen and sophomores from:

- Racial and ethnic groups that historically have been underrepresented in health professions—African-American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian
- Rural areas, economically disadvantaged areas, or groups that historically have received substandard health care (regardless of racial or ethnic background)

SHPEP offers students a variety of academic and career experiences that will support their preparation within the health professions:

- Academic enrichment in the basic sciences and quantitative topics
- Learning and study skills development, including methods of individual and group learning
- Clinical exposure through small-group clinical rotations and full-group clinician seminars. This is limited to 5 percent of program time for all sites
- Career development sessions, including the exploration of the health professions, admissions process, and an individualized education plan to identify other appropriate enrichment activities

Housing, meal, and travel costs are covered by the program. Scholars are provided with a $600 stipend, which typically is distributed midway and at the end of the program.

There are many other summer enrichment programs and pipeline and outreach programs for students who are not eligible for SHPEP. Talk with your advisor, check the list of resources on shpep.org, and visit aamc.org/aspiringdocs for more information.

shpep.org

www.facebook.com/shpepconnect

SHPEP is a national program funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation with direction and technical assistance provided by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Dental Education Association.
Medical Minority Applicant Registry

The Medical Minority Applicant Registry (MedMAR) is used by U.S. medical schools to identify U.S. applicants who self-identify as members of a racial or ethnic group historically underrepresented in medicine, or who are economically disadvantaged.

When you register for the MCAT exam, you’ll get a chance to participate in the Medical Minority Applicant Registry. The registry was created to enhance admissions opportunities for U.S. students who are members of a racial or ethnic group historically underrepresented in medicine, or who are economically disadvantaged. Please see the website for specific eligibility requirements. The registry provides basic biographical information and MCAT exam scores to minority and admissions offices at AAMC-member medical schools, which may choose to send information to students.

aamc.org/medmar

Fee Assistance Program

The AAMC Fee Assistance Program assists those who, without financial assistance, would be unable to take the MCAT exam and/or apply to medical schools that use the AMCAS application.

Fee Assistance Program benefits include reduced registration fees for the MCAT exam, official MCAT preparation materials, complimentary access to the Medical School Admission Requirements website, waiver of AMCAS fees, and more.

Be sure to check the Fee Assistance Program eligibility requirements before you register for the MCAT exam, submit your AMCAS application, or purchase any AAMC products as benefits are not retroactive.

aamc.org/fap
Getting into Medical School

A Pre-Med Student’s Steps to Medical School

This infographic represents a basic timeline of the steps toward medical school. Your advisor and AAMC resources can help you individualize the timeline and steps.

aamc.org/students
**Getting Started**

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### College Freshman Year

- **Explore Your Options for Careers in Medicine**
- **Get Some Experience**
  - Volunteer or intern in the field
- **Stay on Track for Medical School**
- **Get More Experience and Look at Resources**
- **Prepare for Medical School Interviews**
- **Make a Game Plan with Your Advisor**
- **Register for the MCAT Exam**

### Summer

- **Get Some Experience**
- **Get More Experience and Look at Resources**

### College Sophomore Year

- **Stay on Track for Medical School**
- **Work with your pre-health advisor**
- **Attend pre-health meetings**
- **Volunteer/work in a medical-related field**

### Summer

- **Get More Experience and Look at Resources**

### College Senior Year

- **Prepare for Medical School Interviews**
- **Consult with your advisor**
- **Get interview tips from Aspiring Docs website**

### College Graduation

- **If waitlisted or rejected:**
  - Talk with your advisor
  - Consider a gap year or post-bacc program
  - Explore at [students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc](http://students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc)
- **If accepted:**
  - Decide which medical school you want to attend
  - Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms; visit FIRST at [aamc.org/FIRST](http://www.aamc.org/FIRST)

### Finalize and Submit Your AMCAS Application

- **College Senior Year**
  - Continue to volunteer/work

### Receive Letters of Acceptance or Rejection

- **College Sophomore Year**
  - **If accepted:**
    - Decide which medical school you want to attend
    - Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms; visit FIRST at [aamc.org/FIRST](http://www.aamc.org/FIRST)
  - **If rejected:**
    - Talk with your advisor
    - Consider a gap year or post-bacc program
    - Explore at [students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc](http://students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc)

### Things to Discuss with Your Advisor

- **Taking a gap or growth year**
- **Post-bacc programs**
- **Letters of recommendation**
- **Pre-med and other requirements**
- **Course work**

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**When to take the MCAT exam**

- **Summer**
  - **Get Some Experience**
  - **Get More Experience and Look at Resources**
  - **Stay on Track for Medical School**
  - **Prepare for Medical School Interviews**
  - **Make a Game Plan with Your Advisor**
  - **Register for the MCAT Exam**

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**Get Ready for Medical School**

- **College Graduation**
  - **If waitlisted or rejected:**
    - Talk with your advisor
    - Consider a gap year or post-bacc program
    - Explore at [students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc](http://students-residents.aamc.org/postbacc)
  - **If accepted:**
    - Decide which medical school you want to attend
    - Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms; visit FIRST at [aamc.org/FIRST](http://www.aamc.org/FIRST)

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**College Graduation**

- **If waitlisted or rejected:**
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- **If accepted:**
  - Decide which medical school you want to attend
  - Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms; visit FIRST at [aamc.org/FIRST](http://www.aamc.org/FIRST)
Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT®)

The AAMC develops and administers the MCAT exam—a standardized, multiple-choice test that has been part of the medical school admissions process for more than 85 years.

The MCAT exam is designed to help better prepare tomorrow’s doctors for the rapid changes in science and medical education. It reinforces the diversity of interests and preparation that medical school admissions committees look for in their applicants.

The MCAT exam is designed to test not only what you know, but how you apply that knowledge by assessing your problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and knowledge of natural, behavioral, and social science concepts and principles, all of which are necessary to the study and practice of medicine.

You’ll find a variety of resources to help you prepare for the exam, including MCAT practice exams and other materials written by the developers of the exam, video and review questions in the Khan Academy MCAT collection, and more!

To learn more about the MCAT exam, including what’s on the exam, test preparation, and scoring, visit aamc.org/mcat.
What’s on the MCAT Exam?

Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems Section

Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems Section

Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior Section

Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Section

59 Questions

59 Questions

59 Questions

53 Questions

3 Foundational Concepts

2 Foundational Concepts

5 Foundational Concepts

Content in this section also contains Scientific Inquiry & Reasoning Skills.

Content in this section also contains Scientific Inquiry & Reasoning Skills.

Content in this section also contains Scientific Inquiry & Reasoning Skills.

3 Skills Demonstrated
1. Foundations of comprehension
2. Reasoning within the text
3. Reasoning beyond the text

4 Skills Demonstrated
• Knowledge of scientific principles
• Scientific reasoning and problem-solving
• Reasoning about the design and execution of research
• Data-based statistical reasoning

Get all the details at students-residents.aamc.org/mcatexam
American Medical College Application Service® (AMCAS®)

Did you know that each pre-med student applies to an average of 16 medical schools?

The best part, however, is that when you use the AAMC’s centralized application service, you only need to submit one primary application, regardless of the number of medical schools to which you apply.

AMCAS is available to individuals applying to first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. If you are applying to an MD or a combined MD program (e.g., MD/PhD), you most likely will use the AMCAS service to complete and submit your application materials. If you are an advanced-standing or transfer applicant, you should contact the medical school directly for assistance.

AMCAS collects and delivers your verified application information, letters of evaluation, and MCAT exam scores to each school you choose. Each participating school is then responsible for making its own individual admissions decisions.

Most medical schools also administer a secondary application and host in-person interviews, which you may be invited to complete. Visit medical school websites for more information about their application and review processes.

Contacting AMCAS

AMCAS representatives are available to answer your questions and assist you in completing your application from Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. (ET). Closed Wednesday, 3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. (ET)

202.828.0600 | amcas@aamc.org

aamc.org/amcas

@amcasinfo
Preparing for AMCAS

• The AMCAS application opens in May of each year for applicants who plan to begin medical school in the following year. When you are ready to begin the application, you should start by visiting the AMCAS website (aamc.org/amcas). The documents and video tutorials available in the Resources section are updated for each application cycle with the most current information.

• AMCAS does not advise applicants on making decisions related to their application, so we encourage you to work with your school’s advising office and to review the Medical School Admission Requirements.

• Using the online application, you will enter information about yourself and your background. You will have your official transcripts sent directly to AMCAS, where AMCAS staff will verify your coursework and normalize your GPA based on your school’s grading scale. Along with your letters of evaluation, AMCAS then sends your verified application data to the medical schools to which you have chosen to apply.

• For regular applications, your official transcripts must be received by AMCAS within 14 calendar days after the application deadline.

• You can submit your AMCAS application before your official transcripts and letters of evaluation reach AMCAS.

• June-September is the peak application submission period, which means your application may take about six weeks, after all materials are received, to be processed.

• After your application is submitted, you may check its verification status using our automated system or on Twitter @amcasinfo.

View FAQs, video tutorials, download an instruction manual, and more at

aamc.org/amcas
Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (FIRST)

Most medical students borrow at least a portion of the money they need to finance their education, and there are many options to repay.

Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (FIRST) is the AAMC’s financial aid and debt management program—and it’s packed with FREE materials to help you make wise financial decisions. You will find:

- A library of financial aid fact sheets to help you with budgeting, understanding credit cards, debt management, and more
- Videos that provide answers to many financial aid-related questions
- The MedLoans® Organizer and Calculator—a tool specifically designed for medical students at AAMC-member medical schools
- Free access to SALT™, an online program that provides practical information and interactive lessons on money management, budgeting, credit, and more

With FIRST, you will find the information you need to make educated borrowing decisions and develop sound debt management skills.

aamc.org/first
You CAN Afford Medical School

You want to be a doctor or physician scientist—that’s a good career choice, both socially and financially. You probably know that medical school is expensive, but what you may not know is once you are admitted to medical school there are options for financing your education. The key is to find the solution that best meets your goals.

Things to Think About

There are many different ways you might choose to pay for your education, but student loans are a reality for most students. The keys to successful repayment are careful planning and budgeting, learning how to effectively manage your debt, and educating yourself on the various repayment options.

Learn About Repayment Options

It may seem too early to learn about loan repayment options, but being aware of them can help ease the fear of student loan repayment down the road. There are various repayment plans currently available, and it’s important to know that you have options when it comes to selecting the plan that works best for your financial situation. Another opportunity for repayment can be found with service repayment programs. These programs can help you repay your loans while practicing in a medically underserved area, or through public or military service. For more information, review the financial aid fact sheets at www.aamc.org/first/factsheets.

Final Thoughts

Stay true to your passion. Explore your options. Find a good advisor/mentor. If you can, enter medical school with little or no credit card debt and be aware of the status of your undergraduate loans. The less debt you begin school with, the less debt you will have at the end. Do what you can to not put application and interviewing costs (fees, travel, hotels, etc.) on credit cards. Frankly, there will be no room in your medical school budget to pay off that debt. Lastly, remember the financial aid office; they will be essential to you throughout medical school. They are there to help, so make sure you get the help you need.

aamc.org/first
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<th>College Year 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk with academic advisor about selecting fall semester courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointment with a pre-health advisor</td>
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<td>Add pre-health meetings to my calendar and get on email lists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find opportunities to volunteer, shadow a doc, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore options for careers in medicine on Aspiring Docs website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply to summer enrichment programs (if eligible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore premedical coursework requirements and application policies in MSAR Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn about financial aid and financing strategies through FIRST's website (aamc.org/first)</td>
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<th>Summer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer/work in medical field; internship, research, leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in summer enrichment programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take summer courses as necessary or desired</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check in with pre-health advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add pre-health meetings to my calendar and double-check that I’m getting emails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer/work in medically related activities</td>
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<td>Develop relationships with faculty, advisors, and mentors on campus (important for getting letters of recommendation later)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply for summer research/enrichment programs (if eligible)</td>
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<th>College Year 2</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Volunteer/work in medical field; internship, research, leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in summer enrichment programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take summer courses as necessary or desired</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check out the AMCAS website resources and review the process of applying (aamc.org/amcas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Look at the process of applying and preparing for the MCAT® exam (aamc.org/mcat)</td>
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<td>Look at the Fee Assistance Program (aamc.org/fap) eligibility requirements</td>
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<td>Consider which faculty, advisors, and mentors to approach for letters of recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue with volunteer/work in meaningful clinical experiences, and possibly take on a more substantial role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with pre-health advisor to: Strategize my medical school application timeline, whether I want to take a gap year; discuss letters of recommendation; review medical education options; and discuss my schedule for completing premedical and other required coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Register for a spring date for the MCAT exam (if not taking a gap year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore premedical coursework requirements and application policies in MSAR Online</td>
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<td>Learn about financial aid and financing strategies through FIRST's website (aamc.org/first)</td>
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<td>Complete AMCAS application; work on secondary applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request letters of recommendation from faculty, advisors, mentors</td>
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<td>Complete volunteer/work in meaningful clinical/research experiences</td>
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<td>Consult with pre-health advisor on application status, medical educations options, etc.</td>
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<td>Complete supplementary application materials for schools I’ve applied to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for interviews and campus visits at medical schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive acceptances and make a decision on which medical school to choose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify the medical schools I will not be attending by the deadline date given</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete FAFSA and financial aid forms</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Year 3</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with volunteer/work in meaningful clinical/research experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consult with pre-health advisor on application status, medical educations options, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Complete supplementary application materials for schools I’ve applied to</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase books and equipment, and make my living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend orientation programs and matriculate into medical school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>