

Holistic Review in Medical School Admissions

What Is Holistic Review?

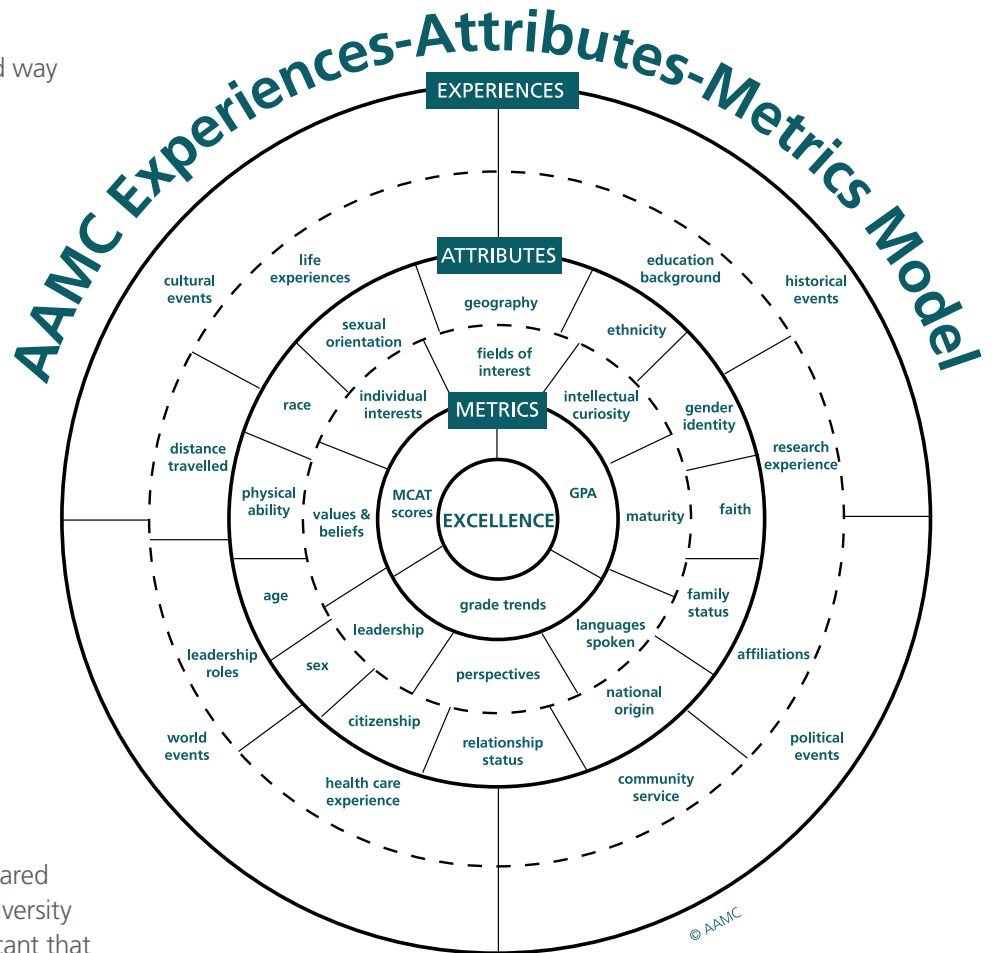
Holistic review is a flexible, individualized way for schools to consider an applicant's capabilities, providing balanced consideration to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics. These factors are considered in combination with how the individual might contribute value as a medical student and physician. The use of holistic review by schools has increased in recent years and is becoming more and more common.

How Do Schools Implement Holistic Review?

Holistic admissions involves widening the lens through which schools view applicants, recognizing and valuing the different dimensions that shape each individual. The Experiences-Attributes-Metrics (E-A-M) model can be used as a tool to provide admissions staff and committee members with a shared framework for thinking broadly about diversity and identifying experiences of the applicant that will help fulfill the mission of the medical school. The model offers admissions staff and committee members the opportunity to take into account the whole applicant and to think about applicants as future physicians rather than simply as prospective students.

How Do Schools Use Their Mission in Admissions?

Mission-based admissions means that a medical school's admissions policies and procedures are set up specifically to align with the mission and goals of the institution. Each medical school's mission statement can be found at the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#) website. By reading these statements, you can figure out if a school's goals align with your own. You can use this information to prepare your application and help you highlight how your experiences make you a good fit for a particular institution.



Adapted from Workforce America: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource, McGraw Hill Publishing, 1990.

What Do Nonacademic Experiences and Information Communicate About an Applicant?

On your application, it's important to convey a full picture of who you are, even the parts not related to medicine, because your life's details and anything that demonstrates your character and values matter. Medical schools consider a concept they call "distance traveled": where you've come from to get where you are now. They want to know about the challenges or constraints you've faced and what you've done to persevere. What about you illustrates resilience, drive, passion, and commitment? Beyond what you've accomplished academically, schools want to know what you will contribute to their institutions. One of the main goals in

the admissions process is to make sure students will succeed in medical school and contribute positively to their future patients and the medical community.

What Makes a Competitive Applicant?

- Good time-management skills. Are you able to balance many competing deadlines, keep focused, and prioritize when necessary to complete tasks on time?
 - Evidence of leadership. Are you able to demonstrate that you can lead a project or team?
 - Exposure to medically related environments. Do you have meaningful and sustained volunteer experience in a medically related setting, such as a clinic, nursing home, or physician's office?
 - Exceptional communication skills. Are you articulate and able to communicate information clearly to people regardless of their backgrounds or experiences?
- Evidence of compassion and respect. Can you point to experiences that show you are empathetic and caring?
 - Interpersonal skills. Medicine today relies on skilled people from numerous health professions. Can you demonstrate that you're able to work well in groups and teams?
 - Interests outside medicine and personal background. What are your qualities, hobbies, passions, and other personal attributes that will contribute to the medical school community and enrich its diversity?

MORE INFORMATION

Holistic Review: www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR): www.aamc.org/msar