2020

Application and Interview tips for MD-PhD Programs

Communications Committee of the MD-PhD Section of the Group of Research, Education, and Training (GREAT) AAMC
Application Timeline
Candidates Matriculating in the Summer of 2021

Pre-application (2-3 years)
- Courses
- Research
- Clinical exposures
- Activities and life experiences

Winter-Spring 2020/21
Preparation

Summer 2020
Apply

Fall 2020
Interview

Winter 2020/21
Acceptance

Summer 2021
Start

~1.5 year process
Elements of a successful MD-PhD application

Holistic review

- Physician scientist career commitment
- Experience in caring for others
- Productive research
- Strong academics
- Integrity and maturity
- Activities and life experiences
MD/PhD Application process

- Apply via the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS)
  - 3 essays; 2 are MD/PhD specific:
    - Personal Comments (all MD applicants)
    - MD-PhD Motivation Essay (why pursue MD-PhD Degree?)
    - Significant Research Experience Essay
  - MCAT and GPA
  - Experiences (up to 15)
- Request Letters of Recommendation
- Request official transcripts

This application and LORs are the only information we have about you
Application Process – Research Experience

Significant Research Experience

• Describe the research in your lab
• Describe your research project
• Did you test a hypothesis or conduct discovery research?
• Describe your role on each project
• What did you learn?
• What did this project teach you about your career path.....?
Application Process – Letters of Recommendation

• Individual schools have specific letter requirements
• May have up to 10 letters, but we don’t want to read that many!
• Critical letter(s) are from your research mentor(s)
  • Submit one LOR from each substantial research experience
  • LOR should attest to your potential as a physician scientist
Application Process – Work and Activities Descriptions

• Can enter up to 15 different experiences
• Pick up to three as “most meaningful”, but be prepared to discuss each experience
• Experience includes:
  • Shadowing, volunteering, research, leadership activities, presentations, employment
  • Include start and end dates, total hours
Interview Day – General Tips

• Smile and make eye contact
• Maintain a positive attitude throughout the day
• Actively engage interviewers and students
• Be able to address all the items in your application
• Be prepared for certain questions, but do not over-rehearse

Try to enjoy the experience
Interview Day – Questions

Questions may be open ended or address a specific point in your application

• What experiences shaped your decision to pursue an MD/PhD dual degree?
• What are your long-term career goals as a physician scientist?
• Tell me about your research
For more information:

- https://www.aamc.org/mdphd
- NIH.gov/training
- Role models
- Knowledgeable people who care about you:
  - Directors and Mentors (Summer Program and Post-Bac)
  - Professors, Lab Heads and Department Chairs
  - MD-PhD Students, Graduate Students and Post-Docs
  - Career Advising Offices
  - PhD and MD-PhD Program Directors