

Medical & Dental School

Application Details & Checklist

Table of Contents

Before Making the Decision to Apply	2
Be Prepared.....	2
Take the MCAT or DAT	2
Fee Assistance and Registration	2
Preparation and Completion of the MCAT or DAT	2
Become a Well-Rounded, Competitive Applicant.....	3
Getting Letters of Recommendation and a Committee Letter	3
Overview of the Recommendation and Committee Letter Process	3
Choose a Breadth of Letter Writers	3
Collect Letters of Recommendation Using Storage Platform.....	4
Request a Committee Letter	5
Application Details	5
Medical Schools: Applying through the Early Decision Plan	5
Medical School Application Costs	5
Dental School Application Costs	6
Deciding upon Schools to which to Apply.....	6
Preparing the Application	6
AMCAS – M.D. Medical School Programs	6
AACOMAS – D.O. Medical School Programs	6
AADSAS – Dental School Programs	6
Experiences Section	7
Reporting Past Infractions.....	7
Appendix A: Application Checklist	8

Before Making the Decision to Apply

Be Prepared

- Register for the [Pre-Med/Pre-Health Newsletter](#) for information about scholarships, internships, jobs, and application details.
- Make and *maintain* professional connections. This includes faculty as well as people who supervise you in clinical experience, research experience, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities.
- Connect with the Pre-Health Advising team at least once each semester. It's easier for us to write you a strong committee letter if we know you.

Take the MCAT or DAT

Fee Assistance and Registration

MCAT

- If applicable, apply for [AMCAS Fee Assistance](#) *before* taking the MCAT.
 - Fee Assistance qualifies you for discounts on the following: registration for the MCAT, MCAT prep materials, a medical evaluation if it's required to support your application for MCAT testing accommodations, application fees, and the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) website.
 - The Fee Assistance application cycle opens in January and benefits can be used for up to two calendar years. If you are approved for fee assistance between January 1 and December 31, 2017, then your benefits will expire on December 31, 2018.
- Register early for the MCAT as exam sessions can fill. See the AAMC website for the exact registration deadlines.

DAT

- If applicable, apply for the [DAT Partial Fee Waiver](#) in the January before you take the DAT.
 - Fee waivers are granted on a first-come, first-served basis at the beginning of each calendar year to eligible candidates who provide the needed documentation. The waivers are often exhausted within two or three months.
- Register early for the DAT, which is offered year-round as testing sessions can fill.

Preparation and Completion of the MCAT or DAT

- Prepare for the MCAT or DAT.
 - MCAT: Study for at least 300 hours. Use the [AAMC Study Guide Document](#) to help guide your preparation. Use the free [Kahn Academy Tutorials](#) and questions along with any other resources you find helpful. Past students have reported Next Step, Exam Crackers, and Princeton Review to be helpful.
 - DAT: Study for at least 100-150 hours. Use the [ADEA website](#) to help guide your preparation. Students have reported preferring Bootcamp and DAT Destroyer materials. Chad Videos, which require a monthly subscription, have been helpful to some in the month before taking the exam.
 - Be cautious about spending money on MCAT or DAT prep courses or boot camps. The only way you will get a great score is if you put in the time to study.
 - Take lots of practice exams in conditions that mirror those that you will see on test day, i.e. number of breaks, time of day, etc. Do not take the MCAT or DAT until you are earning a score on the practice tests that is close to the score you aspire to earn on the actual test in at least three consecutive attempts.
- Complete the MCAT/DAT after completing the courses tested on the exam and preferably by the spring of the year you intend to apply. The DAT does not cover physics and, for some, may be taken prior to junior year.
 - The DAT takes two weeks and the MCAT takes four weeks to be both scored *and* connected with your application. As such, the exam should be taken for medical school by late June and for dental school by mid-July since admissions are rolling.
 - **The MCAT or DAT must be taken by the timelines listed above, or UMass will not be able to write your committee letter.** We have a firm August 1st deadline for receiving all committee letter materials.

- Release your MCAT or DAT test score and application to your advisors. We cannot tell you what scores are competitive if you are not yourself willing to give your advisors access to this information.

Become a Well-Rounded, Competitive Applicant

- Acquire significant, sustained, and meaningful clinical experience. For medical school, this means direct patient care. For dental school, this means shadowing a dentist and developing manual dexterity.
- Demonstrate a sustained and meaningful commitment to service, both to UMass and to the community.
Be wary of trying to “double count” volunteer clinical hours as both service and clinical experience. Schools are looking for students who go above and beyond, not those who seek to do the minimum required.
- Earn a competitive GPA in the sciences and overall as well as a strong MCAT/DAT score. After calculating your science GPA, consult with a Pre-Health Advisor to learn if your academic record is competitive for the programs to which you plan to apply and how to make it so. For context, in the 2016 – 2017 application cycle:
 - 73% of UMass Amherst applicants to MD programs were admitted if they had at least a 3.7 science GPA and a 508 on the MCAT.
 - 75% of UMass Amherst applicants to DO programs were admitted if they had at least a 3.3 science GPA and a 502 on the MCAT.
 - 83% of UMass Amherst applicants to dental programs were admitted if they had at least a 3.3 science GPA and a 19 on the DAT.

Getting Letters of Recommendation and a Committee Letter

Overview of the Recommendation and Committee Letter Process

Applicants typically have 4 to 6 letters of recommendation. They will have their letter writers upload these letters to a storage platform. Then, in the AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS application, the applicant will denote that he/she is submitting a “committee letter.” The committee letter will include both a letter from the Pre-Health Advising team and the letters posted for the candidate in the storage platform. Since the Pre-Health Advising team has around 200 letters to write over the summer, the team will only begin writing the committee letter after the candidate has submitted the application in full and has the MCAT/DAT score he/she plans to use for the cycle. The application takes 2-6 weeks to be verified as AACOMAS/AMCAS/AADSAS check that the grades entered in the application match those found on the transcript and that they were correctly categorized. The application will not be sent to schools until this verification process is complete. As such, the Pre-Health Advising team has 2-6 weeks to write the committee letter prior to it being verified and will make every attempt to have it submitted within two business days of the candidate’s application being verified. **Please do not contact an advisor about the status of the committee letter prior to your application being verified.**

Choose a Breadth of Letter Writers

Think about who you will ask for letters of recommendation and ask if they are open to writing you a letter. The list below is a suggestion. Keep in mind (1) those writing letters should know you well (2) no letter is better than a lukewarm letter

(3) one person might fill multiple categories in the recommendation list below:

- 2 science faculty members who have graded your work.
- 1 faculty member outside the sciences who has graded your work.
- 1 person who has supervised your research, if applicable.
- 1 person who has supervised your clinical experience.
- 1 person who has supervised your community volunteer work or extracurricular activities.

If you know who you would ask to write you a letter but are not yet ready to apply to medical school, you can ask that person if he or she would be open to writing you a letter in the future and then be certain to stay in touch: get coffee, stop by office hours, send updates via email, and/or send casual emails (like passing along an article that may interest the person).

Collect Letters of Recommendation

Currently (2024-25), we are using a special email address to collect supporting letters of recommendation from professors, work supervisors, etc. The address is: **PreHealthLetters@umass.edu**.

- ☐ ~~Set up your account when you are ready to begin collecting letters of recommendation—no sooner than six months before you apply because schools want letters that are current.~~
 - ~~• Log in and fill in the request form.~~
 - ~~• You will receive an invoice notice.~~
 - ~~• With the invoice notice, you will be able to pay by credit card or check. Your account will be activated after payment is processed.~~
- ☐ In March, ask for letters of recommendation providing at least 1-2 months' notice. For people, like faculty, who will be writing many letters this time of year, give as much notice as possible.
 - Give the person you ask the option of saying no and ask someone else if there is hesitancy.
 - If you struggle to think of people who can write you strong letters of recommendation, consider taking an additional year before applying so that you can cultivate strong, supportive professional relationships.
- ☐ Follow up with a thank you email once someone has agreed to write you a letter of recommendation. The email should:
 - Offer to give your letter writers links to guidelines (found on Applying to Schools page of website).
 - **Request that the letter be written on letterhead.**
 - **Request that the letter be signed.**
 - Provide along with the email, your resume, graded papers that you have written for the instructor (if applicable) and an explanation of why you want to be a doctor/dentist or personal statement if you have a draft.

Unsigned letters and letters that are not on letterhead are the most common reasons that a committee letter is delayed.

- ☐ Request letters of recommendation
 - You should have an MCAT or DAT score before you ask anyone to write a letter for you.
 - Give your letters writers the email address **PreHealthLetters@umass.edu**.
 - Indicate whether you waive your right to see the letter. Waivers are submitted with Self-Assessment.
 - The advising office will access the supporting letters and attach them to your Committee Letter.
- ☐ **Re-applicants:** You may have letters from a previous cycle. If this is the case, be sure to notify us, so we know which letters you want to be sent this cycle. While re-applicants may be tempted to use letters from a previous cycle, it doesn't look as strong to submit letters that are over a year old. The Pre-Health Advising team suggests that you reach out to your letter writers, asking them if they can update the date on their previous letter and have them resubmit it to the Letters email address.
- ☐ Make sure your letter writers upload their letters by **May 31st of your application year**.

Request a Committee Letter

A committee letter is a thorough and candid assessment of the many facets of your candidacy for the health professions program you have chosen. The Pre-Health Advising team garner our review through multiple advising appointments, your self-assessment and insights from your other letter writers. It is compiled with your other letters of recommendations and provides additional insight into what the candidate has to offer. As such, a good committee letter starts with your keeping regular contact with the Pre-Health Advising Team. It is easier to write a strong and thoughtful letter if we know you.

The **committee letter** that the Pre-Health Advising team submits to AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS will be one PDF document that includes the actual committee letter followed by all of the letters of recommendation that were submitted to the PreHealthLetters email address.

- **May 1st:** Complete the online self-assessment by this deadline. The self-assessment forms the basis of the committee letter.
 - Fill out all of the sections and do NOT simply refer the Pre-Health Team to your resume. Instead, go beyond what is on your resume and tell us what you learned about yourself through your activities. Tell us how you've grown over time. Give us insight into who you are and share things that you might not have space to squeeze into your application.
 - Be clear about when each activity took place. If you did an activity over the course of five years but only while you were at home, state that.
- **For MD Programs:** In Section 6 of the AMCAS application, you will indicate who your letter writer(s) are, what types of letter(s) will be sent to AMCAS, and which schools should receive each letter.
 - When entering information about your letter of evaluation, select that you will be submitting a **Committee Letter and enter the contact information for the UMass Pre-Health Advisor with whom you have worked most closely.** (if you have met the deadlines for a Committee Letter)
 - Save the Letter Request Form from the Main Menu of the application from within the Letters of Evaluation section and email it to the Pre-Health Advisor who will be writing your committee letter.
 - If you are applying to MD programs as well as MD-PhD programs, you can receive two committee letters, one for MD programs and the other for MD-PhD programs. Be sure to have two Quivers in veCollect and to send two Letter Request Forms to your advisor.
- **For DO and dental programs:** Go to the Evaluations page and select to create an evaluation request. Enter the contact information for the Pre-Health Advisor who will be submitting your committee letter. While you can designate a deadline for when the reference should be completed, please realize that no matter the date you select, we prioritize writing committee letters by the date you submit and are verified.
- **August 1st:** Submit your application by this deadline, complete with MCAT or DAT score, to get a committee letter.

Application Details

Medical Schools: Applying through the Early Decision Plan

Applying through Early Decision limits candidates to applying to only one school; hence, we strongly discourage this path. Consult with the Pre-Health Advisors before submitting an EDP application.

Medical School Application Costs

For AMCAS, the 2018 application fee is \$160 for the first school and \$39 for each additional school. Be sure to apply for the Fee Assistance Program (described above) if you qualify. For AACOMAS, the cost of the application is \$195 for the first application and \$45 for each additional school. Secondary application fees typically range from \$0 to \$150. Interviews can cost up to \$2,000, depending upon where candidates are interviewing. AACOMAS also offers a [Fee Assistance Program](#), which can reduce costs. Waivers are limited and often run out by August. It takes about ten days for an application for Fee Assistance to be processed and then benefits must be used within the next fourteen days.

Dental School Application Costs

For AADSAS, the 2018 application fee is \$245 for the first school and \$98 for each additional school. Secondary application fees typically range from \$45 to \$100. Interviews can cost up to \$1,500, depending upon where you interview. The [Fee Assistance Program](#) can help with costs for those eligible. It takes about five days for an application for Fee Assistance to be processed and then benefits must be used within the next fourteen days.

Deciding upon Schools to which to Apply

The resources listed below, which can be purchased the spring prior to application submissions, include a summary of admission requirements of each accredited school in the United States and Canada, including profiles of accepted applicants from the previous year such as GPA, MCAT/DAT scores, and financial aid information. You should also review the schools' websites to learn more about their programs.

Allopathic medical schools: [Medical School Admissions Requirements](#) (MSAR)

Osteopathic medical schools: [Osteopathic Medical College Information Book](#). The PDF version is free to download.

Dental schools: [ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools](#)

When selecting the schools to which to apply, keep a primary focus on programs for which you meet or exceed the averages. If you are not a resident of the state in which the school is located, pay special attention to the percentage of students accepted from out of state. Be sure as you select schools, to apply only to schools where you have a genuine interest in both interviewing and attending.

Preparing the Application

AMCAS – M.D. Medical School Programs

The AMCAS application has a number of sections to complete. These include the following: identifying information, schools attended, biographic information, course work, work/activities, letters of evaluation, medical schools to which you will apply, essay(s), and standardized tests. While most sections will be fairly straightforward, you will want to spend significant time on the essay(s) and the work/activities sections.

The essay includes the personal statement, a space to go into depth about who you are, why you want to be a doctor, and what you hope to accomplish as a physician. Candidates to MD-PhD programs complete two additional essays – the MD-PhD Essay and the Significant Research Experience Essay.

The work/activities section permits up to fifteen entries for work, extracurricular activities, awards, honors, and publications. Candidates then select up to three experiences that were their most meaningful and will have extra space to elaborate on those experiences.

AACOMAS – D.O. Medical School Programs

The AACOMAS application is similar to the AMCAS application; however, the Work/Activities section is replaced with an Experience section, which requires applicants to list professional experiences under the following categories: non-healthcare employment, extracurricular activities, non-healthcare volunteer or community enrichment, and healthcare experience. Note that you cannot report experiences that began before college nor can you report experiences that have not yet begun. Additionally, there is a section of the application for listing "Achievements" including publications and research.

AADSAS – Dental School Programs

The application for dental school includes the following sections:

- The Fee Assistance Program (optional)
- Add Programs, Submit Application, and Check Status Tabs – designate and apply to schools
- Personal Information – share your background and respond "yes" to the Advisor Release
- Academic History –list schools attended as well as grades in coursework and DAT score

- Supporting Information – provide letters of evaluation and personal statement; list experiences, achievements, and certifications
- Program Materials – review information about selected schools, answer additional questions dental schools may have, provide transcripts, and designate which courses fulfill the pre-requisites.

Within Program Materials, the Experiences section details the following: academic enrichment, dental shadowing, employment, extracurricular activities, research, and volunteer. Each experience permits up to 600 characters.

Experiences Section

On each application there is space to list experiences. Though each is, organized differently, as outlined above, your approach to describing experiences should be similar. Namely, use this space to denote the experiences on your resume. The best descriptions of activities will begin by detailing the job, itself, but keep going to tell the admissions committee what you learned about *yourself* through an activity. As you answer these questions, be sure to highlight the ways in which you have mastered the [Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students](#) or the skills you will undoubtedly need as a dentist—critical thinking, professionalism, communication and interpersonal skills, leadership, and patient care.

Reporting Past Infractions

AMCAS, AACOMAS, and AADSAS application portals will ask whether you have ever been subject to a disciplinary action by the university. They will also ask if you have ever been accused or convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor. Schools will run background checks on accepted applicants, so you must be upfront. Start by getting a copy of the police report or report from the Dean of Students, so you know what the schools will read. Then, explain what happened, stating the facts, not your opinions, and sharing only relevant information. Be sure to both express regret and to talk about what you learned from the situation. How did you take responsibility for your actions and grow from the experience? Be sure to run your response by a Pre-Health Advisor. Please see "[Facing Your Past: Disclosing Conduct Violations on Applications](#)" by [the Director of Pre-Health Advising](#).

Appendix A: Application Checklist

Suggested Deadline	Formal Deadline	
OCTOBER		
A.S.A.P.	---	Register for the Pre-Med/Pre-Health Newsletter.
Mid-Oct.	Varies	Register for the MCAT or DAT if you have not yet taken it. MCAT: Each of the 30 exam dates has its own registration deadline. Desirable exam dates fill early. DAT: The exam is offered at Prometric testing centers year-round. Desirable exam dates fill early.
NOVEMBER		
----	Late fall & early spring	Attend the mandatory meetings for applicants. If you cannot attend, speak with someone in the Pre-Med/Pre-Health Advising Office. These will explain in detail the steps to applying and will be announced through the email list.
Nov. 30	----	Make an appointment with your pre-health advisor if you have not spoken with him/her this semester.
DECEMBER		
----	Early Dec.	Attend the personal statement writing workshop.
Dec. 30	----	Decide who to ask to write a letter of recommendation.
Dec. 30	---	Google yourself; review to ensure only appropriate information appears.
Dec. 30	---	If you have a record of university sanctions or a criminal background, obtain a copy of the report from the Dean of Students Office or from the police, so you know the exact language of those charges.
JANUARY		
Jan. 1	---	Apply for DAT Partial Fee Waiver if applicable.
Jan. 21	---	Complete a draft of your personal statement.
Jan. 31	---	Begin to research school options if you have your MCAT or DAT score.
Jan. 31	---	Review AMCAS Applicant Guide and Instruction Manual (MD), AACOMAS Application Instructions (DO), and/or ADEA AADSAS Application Instructions (DDS).
----	Late Jan.	Attend the second personal statement writing workshop.
FEBRUARY		
Feb. 28	---	Check your unofficial transcript to ensure that all grades are accurate.
Apr. 30	---	Meet with a pre-health advisor between now and April to ask questions and to provide an update on your academic and extracurricular activities.
MARCH		
May 1	---	Set up an appointment to do at least one mock interview with Career Services before you leave campus for the summer.
APRIL		
---	Apr. 20	Complete the self-assessment and waiver forms on the UMass Pre-Health website. These forms must be complete before the advising team can write your committee letter.
Apr. 30	---	If you have your MCAT/DAT score, make a tentative list of schools for application. For medical school, apply to 15 to 20 schools. For dental school, apply to around 10 schools. Be sure to apply primarily to schools for which you match the admissions criteria.
MAY		
Early May	July 1	Begin to complete online application(s) for medical school. For dental school, use AADSAS website to find application components; compile responses in a Word doc. AACOMAS application opens and may be submitted. AMCAS applications are open but cannot be submitted until June. Within the application, release your test score and application to advisors.
---	May 20	Have all letters of recommendation on file with email address All letters must be received before the advising team can write your committee letter.
Late-May	---	Through the Registrar's office have ALL transcripts submitted to the application services that you are applying to.
May 31	---	Send thank you notes to those who wrote you letters of recommendation, preferably hand written and within two weeks of receiving.
JUNE		

	June 1	July 1	After beginning the application and having your spring grades posted, send transcripts from each college you have attended to AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS. Transcripts can be acquired through the Registrar’s Office, using the AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS Transcript Request Form. AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS must receive all transcripts by August 1 st to be eligible for a committee letter.
	June 1	July 1	Begin to complete online application for dental school. Release your test score and application to UMass advisors.
	1 st wk. June	Aug. 1	Submit application to AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS. Candidates who have yet to receive MCAT/DAT scores can submit an application to one school. This will begin the verification process with the hope that the candidate’s application will be verified by the time the MCAT/DAT score is available—speeding up the time it will take for a complete application to be in the hands of medical or dental schools. Once the candidate receives the MCAT/DAT score, he can use the online application to submit to more schools.
	June 2	June 30	Take MCAT—preferably done the summer or winter prior—if not already complete. Admissions are rolling, so odds of admission go down the longer you wait. It will take a month to receive your scores. The 30 th is the deadline if you want a committee letter.
	---	June 15 th	AACOMAS begins sending processed applications to medical schools.
	June 30, ongoing	Sept. 1	Complete secondary applications as they come and prepare for additional secondary applications that will likely come by researching online what the schools to which you have applied have asked candidates in the past.
	---	Late June	AADSAS/AMCAS begin sending verified applications to dental/med schools.
JULY			
	June 15	July 17	Take DAT if not already complete. Admissions are rolling, so odds of admission go down with waiting. It will take two weeks for your scores to post to the AADSAS application. The 17 th is the deadline for a committee letter.
	Ongoing	---	Prepare for interviews—doing research, watching tutorials, doing mock interviews.
AUGUST			
	1 st wk. June	August 1 st	FINAL DEADLINE: Submit application to AAMC/AACOMAS/AADSAS. Candidates must submit an application and have all materials received (transcripts, test score) by AAMC/AACOMAS/AADSAS by August 1 st to receive a committee letter. MD applicants must also send the letter request form to the appropriate Pre-Health Advisor by this date.
	Late Aug.	---	Obtain an interviewing outfit, preferably a black or navy suit. Those wearing a skirt or dress should be sure it reaches the knees.
	ASAP	---	Schedule interviews as requested to do so.
	Late Aug.	Mid-March	Interview(s). Ongoing through March.
FALL			
	---	October 15 th	Medical schools begin notifying applicants of admissions decisions.
	---	December 1 st	Dental schools begin notifying applicants of admissions decisions.
	Ongoing	---	Send updates to medical and dental schools as necessary. Follow protocol established by your prospective schools to send meaningful updates only.
	Ongoing	---	Complete online interview reflection form after each interview.
	Ongoing	---	Assume that you will not be admitted to medical/dental school in this cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate your application for weaknesses—working in concert with the UMass Pre-Health Advising team—and begin to address them.Continue to work hard in all three areas that schools evaluate: service, clinical experience, and academics (if relevant).Maintain your connection with your letter writers.
	Ongoing	---	
	Ongoing	---	
	Ongoing	---	
SPRING			
	---	A.S.A.P.	Initiate the financial aid process with the school you plan to attend.
	Ongoing	---	Update Pre-Health Advisor of progress.
	Ongoing	---	Update letter writers of progress and maintain your connection.
AUGUST			
	---	---	Matriculate to medical or dental school. Come back to UMass in April to share your experience at the Pre-Health Networking Dinner.