

# APPLYING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

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1. Review the information at the Pre-Health Advising web site (<http://www.creighton.edu/health/prehealth/index.php>), especially the Applying to Medical School pages (<http://www.creighton.edu/health/prehealth/applying/index.php>).
2. **Timing is important.** Many medical schools (including Creighton's) have a rolling admissions policy, and classes usually fill long before the application deadlines. Most of the application process must be completed more than a year before you intend to start medical school. For example, if you intend to start medical school the August following a May graduation, begin your application steps (arranging for MCAT study and letters of recommendation, preparing a resume, identifying medical schools to apply to, *etc.*) in your junior fall semester. Plan to take the MCAT by April or early May of your junior year if you have (or almost have) completed the pre-medical course requirements. The AMCAS application should be started in the spring, and should be submitted in early June (14 months before you intend to start medical school). If you're taking an MCAT later than 15 months before you intend to start medical school, apply before those MCAT scores would become available. If you're taking an MCAT later than 14 months before you intend to start medical school, apply before taking that MCAT. Only if Creighton's medical school has a complete file (processed primary application, letters of recommendation, MCAT scores, and secondary application) by July 1 (13 months before you intend to start medical school) can you expect to interview in August or September, before the non-Creighton applicants are interviewed.
3. **Which schools to apply to?** Consult the publication Medical School Admissions Requirements, United States and Canada for the admissions criteria for specific allopathic (M.D.) schools. This book is available for use in the Advising Resource Center (Hixson-Lied G06), the Reinert Alumni Library, and in the Creighton Career Center, or may be purchased at the campus bookstore or directly from the Association of American Medical Colleges (<http://www.aamc.org/students/start.htm>, phone: 202-828-0416). Similar information for osteopathic (D.O.) schools is available free of charge from the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (<http://www.aacom.org/>), phone: 301- 968-4100). Nationwide the typical premedical student, who is often unable to predict schools most likely to offer admission, applies to over ten. Creighton students often apply to fewer schools because they know that the schools most likely to accept Creighton applicants are Creighton's own medical school and, depending on the state, their home state-supported public school(s). In some cases an osteopathic school may be more likely to accept than the allopathic schools. In general, apply only to those schools where you have a good reason to apply; don't apply to a school just because you can't find a reason not to apply! There are many good reasons for a particular applicant to apply to particular schools. Curriculum (e.g. problem-based versus traditional), clinical versus research emphases, cost, location, *etc.* vary among medical schools. A pre-health advisor can help you choose where to apply. If you have a clear first choice for medical school, see one of the Pre-Health Advisors about applying initially to only that one school via the Early Decision Plan (EDP); if not accepted through EDP, after October 1<sup>st</sup> EDP applicants can then apply to multiple schools.
4. **Evaluations (letters of recommendation).** A separate fact sheet provides more information (<http://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/docs/PHSAC/LettersOfRecFAQ.pdf>), but below are some of the essentials.

During the fall or early part of the spring semester of your junior year, select at least three faculty members from whom you've taken classes, preferably ones who know you well. Creighton requires that at least two be faculty who teach courses in which the subject matter (not necessarily the course or department name) is biology, chemistry, physics or math. At least one recommendation should be from faculty who teach in a social science or humanities area. Some schools further specify who should write the letters. One or two letters from supervisors of relevant activities (clinical or research experience, volunteer service, *etc.*) might be appropriate in addition to the three faculty letters. Seek the chosen recommenders' consent to evaluate you. Ask what information would help them.

Tell the evaluators that they will receive an e-mail from the Advising Resource Center (a function of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office but located in the Hixson-Lied Science Building, Room G06) directing them to an on-line web form on which to write the evaluation. Go to <http://puffin.creighton.edu/ccas/PHSAC/lrc/student.html> and fill out the "Request for Evaluation by Professors" form. List each school you are considering and be sure to contact the Advising Resource Center if you need to add schools to your request. Note that a hard (paper) copy of the request form must be printed, signed, and provided to the Advising Resource Center.

The Advising Resource Center will solicit evaluations from your evaluators. After all of the completed evaluations have been received, the information will be compiled in a manner that in no way changes the evaluations, with the exception of correcting obvious spelling errors. Each evaluator's ratings and narrative comments are transmitted in their entirety and clearly identified as being from that individual evaluator. The Advising Resource Center will notify you when the composite evaluation is ready and will confirm your readiness before sending to the medical schools you have designated. Soon thereafter you should inquire at each medical school to be sure the composite evaluation was received. Note that if you use the above-described service, you do not need an additional letter from a "pre-medical advisor or committee," and in most cases you will not use any letter of evaluation forms that might be sent to you by medical schools. PMED participants can also request a Campus Letter to accompany (not replace) the evaluation letters described above.

5. **MCAT.** The Medical College Admissions Test is currently given multiple times through the year. Test dates and registration deadlines are posted at <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/registration.htm>. It is better to take the test by April or May of your junior year if you have completed (or almost completed) the required courses and have reviewed them. An August or September test is normally the latest one that can be used for admission the next year. The MCAT is a multiple-choice and essay exam designed to measure the applicant's knowledge of biology, chemistry, physics, problem solving and skills in the interpretation and use of written and quantitative materials. Adequate preparation requires a systematic approach normally taking at least three months. Go to <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm> to order the official MCAT Student Manual and practice tests, including graded on-line tests that provide feedback. Whether you utilize a commercially available test-prep course or not depends upon your own learning style and study habits. Some other excellent resources to use for self study can be found here: <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/preparing/start.htm>. Several commercial do-it-yourself study books are available, and can be recommended by the pre-health advisors. Take plenty of practice tests under timed conditions that are as realistic as possible. You may re-take the MCAT test to improve your scores, but scores from previous tests will also be reported.
  
6. **Primary applications.** The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS, at <http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm>) is used by most M.D. schools, and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS, at <https://aacomas.aacom.org/>) is used by most D.O. schools. Both become available around May 1. Completed applications can be submitted starting about June 1. Submit the application(s) as soon as possible. There is a way to indicate in the application if you are planning to take a future MCAT; do NOT wait until after the MCAT to apply, unless you take an early MCAT. List courses completed, in progress, or to be taken (list what you expect to take as a senior; usually it's ok if these choices change a bit). A separate math/science GPA will be calculated. Math/science courses are those whose subject matter is primarily biology, chemistry, math or physics, regardless of level or department listing. Spend ample time crafting the best personal statement you can, and have at least one pre-health advisor, and perhaps other individuals, suggest improvements. Use clear, matter-of-fact narrative and avoid spelling and grammar mistakes. The statement should clearly convey your realistic understanding of both the medical profession and of yourself, and it should convince the reader that you could become a successful physician. Family background, high school and college extracurricular activities, work experience in health related fields, and the history of your interest in a medical career may all be appropriate. If there are any irregularities in your academic record, be sure to explain them briefly in the personal statement.
  
7. **Supplemental or secondary applications.** After receiving the primary application, medical schools usually send applicants additional forms to fill out, but the web sites of some medical schools make their forms available so you can complete and submit them even before the school has received your primary application. A photograph is usually required - dress appropriately (e.g., tie for gentlemen), as overly casual photos reflect poor judgment. A form to be filled out by the Vice President for Student Services may be included. Forms for teacher evaluations usually can be ignored if you have had letters sent as described in item #4.
  
8. **Interviews.** Creighton students who submit complete applications to our School of Medicine by July 1 can be scheduled during the first weeks of interviews. **GET THE EARLY INTERVIEW BY SUBMITTING YOUR AMCAS EARLY!!** Contact the Creighton Career Center for information on interview workshops, and to schedule a practice interview.

