



Health Professions Advising  
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**MEDICAL SCHOOL  
APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**2016**

**ENTERING CLASS OF 2016**

**2016**

The Health Professions Advising Office offers centralized processing services to assist students who are applying to medical, dental, or optometry schools. These services include the following: the distribution of application support materials, compilation of faculty evaluations and other pertinent information on each student, and forwarding of these materials to the school(s) of the applicant's choice. We offer this service because most professional schools prefer a centralized system of gathering application support materials.

One of the goals of the Health Professions Office is to help you with all aspects of the application process. However, it is *your* responsibility to see that the required materials reach our office by the deadlines.

In order to assist you with the applications process, the following checklist is provided. Keep in mind that the steps below may not occur in exactly this order. For example, you may complete your UA committee interview before you submit your primary application, or after. The checklist below is merely a guide.

**Make arrangements to take the MCAT. Registration information is available online:**

[www.aamc.org/students/mcat/registration.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/registration.htm)

- The MCAT is typically offered from January through September of each calendar year. Almost all medical schools will accept MCAT scores taken prior to the September that precedes the matriculation year.
- Example: For a student wishing to matriculate in the fall of 2016, the September 2015 MCAT is the latest score medical schools will consider.
- For many students, taking the MCAT for the first time in April or May is a good strategy; if you are pleased with your spring score, you may apply much earlier in the cycle. If you need time to prepare for a second attempt in July, August, or even September, you have that opportunity.
- Attempting the test for the first time later in the summer of the year prior to matriculation only gives you a single opportunity in a given application year, but may be the best option for some.

**Contact (preferably in person) the faculty members and personal references who will be completing the evaluation forms for you, and request that those be returned to the Health Professions Advising Office.**

- Use the recommendation forms to request faculty and personal recommendations. Those forms can be found under the '2016 Applicants' tab of [www.prehealth.ua.edu](http://www.prehealth.ua.edu)
- Sign and date the forms prior to sending them to your recommenders.
- You should request a maximum of five letters: 2-3 from faculty who have taught you in a college course, and 1-2 personal references. **AT LEAST ONE LETTER** (preferably 2-3) should come from a science professor.
- Good choices for personal references include physicians you have shadowed, former employers, volunteer coordinators, etc. Do not ask a family member for a letter of recommendation.

- Letters of recommendation should be on letterhead, when possible, and always signed by the recommender.
- Upon completion, letters should be returned to the Health Professions Advising Office, either as an attachment to [PREHEALTHRECS@UA.EDU](mailto:PREHEALTHRECS@UA.EDU), or mailed to:

**Health Professions Advising Office  
Box 870268  
Tuscaloosa AL 35487-0268.**

- The Health Professions Advising Office submits all recommendation letters electronically, either directly to AMCAS via their letter service, or to non-AMCAS schools via VirtualEvals. The medical schools can then download your letters at any time.

**Complete the UA Pre-Application, and return it to the Health Professions Advising Office**

- **A recent photo is required and must be included with the pre-application. Ensure this photo is a headshot of you in professional/business casual attire. The goal is to present yourself as a mature, young professional. Email your photo along with your pre-application to [PREHEALTHRECS@UA.EDU](mailto:PREHEALTHRECS@UA.EDU).**
- The Health Professions Advising Office WILL NOT conduct your committee interview without your pre-application.
- The priority deadline for pre-application submission is March 25th. Pre-applications received after this date cannot be guaranteed a committee interview with our office.

**Request a committee interview with the Health Professions Advising Office.**

- Your UA interview WILL NOT be scheduled until you have submitted your pre-application materials and your recommenders have submitted their letters.
- Your UA Pre-App will become available by Jan.12<sup>th</sup>. It will simulate your AMCAS so be prepared to devote significant time to fill it out.
- To reiterate, committee interviews will be scheduled for the Month of MAY.
- You may submit your primary application before the committee interview and before your letters of recommendation are submitted!
- The committee interviews are held during the month of MAY. UA INTERVIEWS AFTER SEPTEMBER 30 ARE RARE AND ONLY SCHEDULED IN UNUSUAL OR EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES. YOU ARE SEVERELY DISADVANTAGED BY WAITING THAT LATE.
- The interview with the committee serves two purposes; first, it gives the committee an opportunity to spend some time with the candidate before preparing the committee letter of recommendation, and second, the UA interview allows the candidate to get a feel for what the professional school interviews will be like.
- We combine the letters of recommendation sent to us with our own letter to create a composite evaluation, which is sent to the medical schools.

**Identify and select the list of schools to which you plan to apply.**

- Note that there are three different application services for almost all US medical schools (AMCAS for MD-granting institutions; AACOMAS for DO-granting institutions, and TMDSAS for Texas schools).
- There are now FOUR medical schools in the state of Alabama: UAB, USA, VCOM-Auburn and ACOM. VCOM-Auburn will open in the fall of 2013.
- Most offshore medical schools require a separate application, which should be sent directly to those schools.

**Complete primary medical school application(s) through AMCAS, AACOMAS, and/or TMDSAS.**

- You must submit your primary applications to medical school online. The online application is your official and primary application to professional school. You are responsible for submitting your primary application. **Our office does not do this.**

- [www.aamc.org/students/amcas](http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas) - Allopathic (MD) medical schools  
[www.aacomas.aacom.org](http://www.aacomas.aacom.org) - Osteopathic (DO) medical schools [www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas](http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas) - Texas medical schools
- The due date for individual schools is not the date you submit your primary application but instead the date by which your application has been processed by AMCAS/AACOMAS. This processing can take up to six weeks in peak times, so plan ahead!
- If your AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS is ready to submit prior to your letters of recommendation being submitted, do not wait to submit your primary application.
- The recommendation letters are an important part of your *secondary* application, which the medical schools will send you directly *after* you have applied through the primary online application service. It is your *secondary* application that is not complete without letters of recommendation – not the primary.
- It is our *strong* recommendation that you submit your AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS application no later than August 1.

**Make arrangements to have your official transcripts sent directly to AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS from the University Records Office.**

- **The Health Professions Advising Office does not send transcripts.**
- Request your UA transcript online. Fees may apply.  
<http://registrar.ua.edu/services/transcripts/>
- If you have transfer work, you must also have AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT sent directly from each college/university you attended. This includes dual-enrollment credit from high school.

You will undoubtedly have questions about your application to medical school throughout the process. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you have.

Good luck with your applications! We look forward to working with you.

-The Health Professions Advising Team

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q. Do all my Letters of Recommendation need to be in before my committee interview can be scheduled?**

*A. YES!! The Health Professions Office WILL NOT schedule your committee interview until we have received ALL the letters indicated on your UA Pre-App (which also has to be completed before we will schedule your interview) These materials are due BY MARCH 25, 2015.*

**Q. I think I have all of my letters turned in and my UA Pre-App is complete, why can't I just schedule my committee interview?**

*A. The Health Professions Office will contact you with your interview date when we are sure that your packet is complete. Our office will determine availability and let YOU know.*

**Q. I have completed my AMCAS/AACOMAS application but have not submitted it. Do I need to wait for my letters of recommendation to be received?**

*A. Emphatically, NO. As soon as you are comfortable with your primary application (the AMCAS/AACOMAS), you should submit it. The letters of recommendation are part of your secondary application, which you will be invited to submit to the schools after they have received your primary application.*

**Q. I am disappointed with my first MCAT score. Should I wait to submit my primary application, for fear of being automatically rejected before schools see my newest score?**

*A. Again, no. Submit your application as soon as it is complete. If you are (re)taking the MCAT, receiving schools will evaluate your application once that new score comes in. If you wait until after your newest score is released, you may find yourself much later in the application cycle and at some schools disadvantaged as a result.*

**Q. Where can I go for help with my application?**

*A. There are extensive online guides and instruction manuals for the primary applications. Generally, 90% or the questions we are asked are answered in the online guides. If you cannot find the answer to your question online, contact our office at [premed@ua.edu](mailto:premed@ua.edu), or the AMCAS/AACOMAS office directly. The UA Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.ua.edu/>) is an excellent resource for help with editing and refining your personal statement.*

**Q. How can I determine which of my letters have been received?**

*A. You may check the status of your UA application at any time by emailing [premed@ua.edu](mailto:premed@ua.edu).*