Health Professions Graduate School

The Application Process

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Health Professions Advisory Office
Things to be doing the spring before applying

- Visit the AAMC website (aamc.org)

- If you qualify for the Fee Assistance Program (FAP), apply PRIOR to submitting AMCAS Application
Draft Your Application
Spring before applying (or sooner)

- Advisor’s Student Applicant Portfolio (ASAP Packet)
- Personal Statement
• Use the ASAP Packet (from our website) as your Application Draft! Start thinking about your significant experiences, and perfect your wording. Verbalize why you want to be a physician, and what makes you a strong applicant.

• AMCAS allows 15 total entries, so focus on significant experiences. Twelve can be 700 characters, and three (most meaningful) can be up to 2025 characters.

• Medical schools are interested in quality, rather than quantity.
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- A Good AMCAS Essay by Dr. Agnes Fogo, VUSM Admissions Committee Member
- Writing the AMCAS Essay by Dr. Tom Oeltmann, former Pre-health Professions Advisor
- The Application Process by Dr. David Charles, M.D., Associate Professor & Vice-Chairman of Neurology for Education & Development
- Critical Elements of an AMCAS Personal Statement by Dr. Jayant Shenai, VUSM Admissions Committee Member
- Essay Examples 1-5 Writing a better application essay doc by Laurence Solberg, MD, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
- Tips for Writing a Successful AMCAS Essay ppt by Laurence Solberg, MD, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Vanderbilt University Writing Studio

The Vanderbilt Writing Studio offers free consultation services to Vanderbilt students. Students have the opportunity to meet individually with trained consultants to talk about any writing project including the application Personal Statement. (The Writing Studio is unavailable during the month of May, so please plan accordingly.)

Writers Workshop materials
- Consider Your Reasons AMCAS.ppt
- Essay forms and structures AMCAS.ppt
- Show don’t tell AMCAS.ppt
Personal Statement Resources

“Medical School Essays That Made a Difference” by The Princeton Review – (Checkout a copy at the HPAO.)

The Vanderbilt Writing Studio
(Located beside the HPAO. Closes each May, so plan ahead!)

Family Members, Friends, Professors…
(Everyone needs an editor/proof reader!)

Things to do Jan–Mar
Prepare for the MCAT
(and schedule the test date – Dates fill up quickly!)

- The best time to take the MCAT is WHEN YOU ARE COMPLETELY PREPARED!
  - Be prepared as early as you can
  - Be aware of school deadlines.
    (Some medical schools require that you complete the MCAT by a certain date.)

- Take Practice Tests!
Things to be doing in April

- Research Schools of Interest
- Request Recommendation Letters
- Review the AMCAS FAQs
- Review the AMCAS Instruction Manual
- Attend the HPAO Health Professions Graduate School Fair (April 5, 2016 2:00-6:00 PM) (17 US allopathic medical schools have registered! You **NEED** to meet them!)
- Visit the Writing Studio (Closed in May)
Each school is independent, and each has its own requirements, deadlines, and policies & procedures!
(There are ~150 US allopathic medical schools, and applicants apply on average to 15–20 schools.)

Be aware of your schools’:
- Eligibility Requirements (US Citizen, State Resident, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Requirements
- Pre-requisite Coursework Requirements
- Notification Process (Mail, email, phone, online)
  - Have professional/appropriate voicemail greeting, auto reply, social media posts, etc,
- Deadlines
  - Primary Application (Ranges from Aug 1 – Dec 15)
  - Supplemental/Secondary Application (Can be due as early as 1 week after sent)
  - Letters
  - MCAT (No later than Sept, and some schools require earlier dates)

Things to do in April
Research Schools of Interest

- The HPAO Annual Report (located on our website) has a lot of information and statistical data on VU applicants over the previous 3 years.
- See where Vandy students were previously accepted. (Pages 21–26)
Research Schools of Interest

- The Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) has valuable information including:
  - Average & range of GPAs of previous cycle’s accepted applicants
  - Average & range of MCAT scores of previous cycle’s accepted applicants
  - Statistical data for in-state and out-of-state applicants

(Access can be purchased at AAMC.org for $25/yr. The MSAR can also be viewed at the HPAO.)

**MCAT® and GPA Scores for Accepted Applicants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School's accepted scores ranging from 10th to 90th percentile</th>
<th>School Median</th>
<th>National Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall GPA</td>
<td>2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8 2.9 3.0 3.1</td>
<td>3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 3.7 3.8 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science GPA</td>
<td>2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8 2.9 3.0 3.1</td>
<td>3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 3.7 3.8 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAT Total Score</td>
<td>15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Reasoning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Matriculation Data for First Year Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>In-state</th>
<th>Out-of-state</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verified Applications</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Assurance Program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Early Decision Program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate/MD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD/PhD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattediculated</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Request Recommendation Letters

- Be aware of EACH INDIVIDUAL school’s requirements!

- In general, consider getting 4–5 letters
  - (2) letters from science professors
  - (1) letter from a non-science professor
  - (1) from a research PI (if applicable)
  - (1) additional letter could also be from an employer, organization, physician you shadowed, another professor, etc.

- Choose individuals who can best assess your qualities, characteristics, and capabilities.

Things to do in April
Recommendation Letter Request and Waiver

- You must give a signed waiver to your letter writers (They may also request a copy of your CV and/or completed ASAP packet)

- The waiver must be completed by the writer and sent to the HPAO along with the recommendation letter (email, mail, hand delivered)

- The waiver is the last page of the ASAP Packet

- Request a mid-May due date. (Soft deadline)
Recommendation Letter Request and Waiver

STUDENT/APPLICANT: You are to complete the top portion of this form and give a copy to each of your letter writers. (You must also include a signed copy in your ASAP packet for the HPAO.) Please ask the letter writer to complete the bottom portion of this form and return it to the HPAO, along with his/her recommendation letter.

EVALUATION FOR: ___________________ GRADUATION DATE: ____________

As Part of my application to ___________________ school, I am requesting your written evaluation. Your letter/comments will become part of a letter packet that is prepared and transmitted verbatim to one or more professional schools by the Health Professions Advisory Office (HPAO) at Vanderbilt.

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I may inspect evaluation letters unless I waive this right.

☐ WAIVE my right to inspect any letter of evaluation at any time.
☐ I DO NOT WAIVE my right to inspect the letters of evaluation.

Student Signature: ___________________ Date: ____________

TO THE EVALUATOR: We would appreciate receiving a candid and comprehensive letter on your letterhead bearing the date, your hand-written signature, and your title. Letters may be addressed to "Dear Admissions Committee". In your letter, please indicate such items as: how long and under what circumstances you have known the applicant, size and quality of students in the class, and final standing & grade the student received in your class. The schools would also appreciate your evaluation, where possible, of the applicant's motivation, curiosity, initiative, perception, intellectual ability, independence, maturity, reliability, common sense/judgment, ability to communicate, and ability to work with others.

Please attach your letter to this form so that we may record the conditions of the privacy waiver. Your letter will be forwarded to the admissions committees, but the waiver will not. It will be held on file in the HPAO.

Requested Due Date: ____________

[Yes] [No] I provide permission to have this letter forwarded to post-baccalaureate programs or other health professions programs, if applicable.

Date: ____________

Signature of Evaluator

Name and Title (Please PRINT or TYPE)

Department

Institution/Company (if not Vanderbilt)

City/State/Zip (if not Vanderbilt)

Please RETURN this Recommendation Letter Request & Waiver AND Your Recommendation Letter to

hpao@vanderbilt.edu (scanned PDF, on letterhead, with signature)
or

Health Professions Advisory Office
Vanderbilt University
PMB 3221
230 Appleton Place
Nashville, TN 37203-5721
Review the AMCAS FAQs

AMCAS® FAQ
Frequently asked questions (FAQ’s) regarding the AMCAS® application process.

Topics

Early Decision Program FAQs
- Medical School Deadlines FAQs
- Reapplying with AMCAS FAQs
- AMCAS Work/Activities FAQ
- AMCAS Course Work FAQ
- AMCAS Transcripts FAQ
- AMCAS Letters of Evaluation FAQ:

Early Decision Program FAQs
- What is the Early Decision Program?
- What is the Early Decision Program (EDP) Deadline?
Review the AMCAS Online Instruction Manual

Excellent Resource!!!

(Approx 90 pages – just Ctrl/F to search for specific topic)
Things to be doing in May

- Finalize your Personal Statement
- Confirm that your letters have been received by the HPAO
- Complete your AMCAS application
- If applying to any Texas state public schools, also complete the TMDSAS Application (Opens in May – Can submit immediately)
AMCAS Application OPENS early May!

IMMEDIATELY log in and complete Section 1 (Identifying Information – name, address, etc.) so you can proceed to Section 2 (Schools Attended)!

Print the AMCAS Transcript Request Form (Section 2)

AFTER you have confirmed that the last semester grades have posted – send that AMCAS Transcript Request Form to the Vanderbilt University Registrar (and anywhere else you have received college credits.)

Request an official copy of your transcript for yourself.

✓ Enter your coursework in AMCAS exactly as it appears on your transcript(s)
Things to be doing in June

- Submit your AMCAS application! ($160 for 1st school, $37 for each additional school. Submit to at least one school to begin the processing/verification. You can always add schools later and they will join your app already in progress.)

- Many schools have rolling admissions. Applying early is best. (But not at the expense of a weaker application! Don’t sacrifice quality for speed.)

- Before you submit your application, print a copy and proofread it carefully. Limited changes can be made after submission!

- AMCAS will process/verify your application then forward it to medical schools. (This process takes 4–6 weeks)

- AMCAS only needs your transcript(s) and application to process your primary application. (Your MCAT score and recommendation letters can be received later.)

- No primary applications are sent to medical schools until early July.
Things to be doing in July

- Complete Supplemental Applications (Secondaries)

(Each may have associated fees and deadlines)

✓ Have a photo/headshot ready – Depict yourself as a PROFESSIONAL! (senior picture type) Avoid too casual, cropped photo, untraditional pose.

- Prepare for Interviews

✓ Dress as a professional: A suit and shirt with a tasteful tie for the men, and a suit with a skirt or pants for women. Most schools suggest you wear comfortable shoes because you’ll be on a walking tour. (Pay attention to the local weather. Consider a winter coat or raincoat.) Avoid “inappropriate” attire. If you think it might be inappropriate (tennis shoes, short skirt, etc.), then it probably is!
Review the links on preparing for interviews at the HPAO website

**INTERVIEWS**

- Students are encouraged to schedule a mock interview with the [Center for Student Professional Development](#).

- Ever wonder how you come across during an interview? Why not have a virtual mock interview and critique yourself? The Center for Student Professional Development provides a [Virtual Mock Interview Module](#) in DoreWay which is an excellent resource to guide you to being a great interviewee. [Click here](#) for instructions on using the interview module.

- [How to have a good interview](#) - by Dr. Zic, Associate Dean of Admissions for Vanderbilt Medical School. PowerPoint from AED meeting 9/18/2007

- [Medical School Interview: Interviewer’s Perspective](#) - by Dr. Jayant Shenai, VUSM Admissions Committee Member

- [Preparing for Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)](#)

- Vanderbilt student applicants are encouraged to visit the HPAO to review the Interview Survey Binder containing interview surveys completed by previous applicants. After interviewing, students are encouraged to complete the [Medical School Interview Survey](#) and return it to the HPAO. (It will not be added to the binder until the next application cycle.)

- Students interviewing for medical school may be asked questions about medical ethics. Here is a link from the AMA website which has a large database of clinical situations which highlight the role of medical ethics in the context of actual patient care. After each situation is outlined, there are commentaries written by physicians from a variety of specialties. We think this will be useful for students as they prepare for their interviews, especially those students who have not taken a medical ethics course. Here is the link: [http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/site/cases.html](http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/site/cases.html)
Interview Resources

- Visit the HPAO and review Interview Surveys filled out by previous VU students after interviewing.
- Schedule a mock interview at the Center for Student Professional Development.
- Do virtual mock interviews in DoreWay.
Things to be doing in August and beyond

- **Interview!!!**
  (Note the interviewers’ names so you can send prompt thank you notes)

- Fill out an Interview Survey immediately after the interview and send to the HPAO
  (These will not be made available to students until after your cycle ends.)

- Send medical schools updates on grades, awards, and significant experiences
  (Check with each med school to see IF and how they prefer to receive updates)

- Consider sending a “Letter of Interest” to any/all schools you are waiting to hear from

- Consider sending a “Letter of Intent” to the ONE SCHOOL you would pick above all others if accepted
It’s a complex process filled with ups and downs, as well as long periods of waiting.

If unsuccessful at a particular school, seek feedback from that school on opportunity areas and ways to strengthen your application.

Remain optimistic and hope for the best.

Consider “Plan B”

Share your ups and downs with the HPAO. We celebrate with you when you are up, and we pull for you when you are down!

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS!