

Leland's Med School Application Checklist

Pre-AMCAS

MCAT

- Take any prerequisite classes required for the MCAT
 - General Chemistry
 - Organic Chemistry
 - Physics
 - Biology
- Select your test date
See the 2023 calendar [here](#)
- Study for the MCAT
 - Study the content
 - Practice questions, going through the [AAMC resources](#)
 - Review content based on the questions that you missed

*It's recommended that you spend *at least* 300 hours preparing. For a three-month study window, that translates into an average of three hours a day, but that is also the bare minimum. If you have a couple more months (or even years) before the deadline, spend more time studying and taking practice tests. MCAT scores are one of the application's most important parts (if not *the* most important).

- Take the test—unless you void it directly after completing it, the scores are automatically sent to AMCAS

School Selection

- Assess your medical school application candidacy. Think about factors like research experience, internships/other work experience, MCAT scores, academics, extracurricular activities, awards/honors, strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- Research top MD programs
 - Read: [Acceptance Rates and Class Profiles of the Top 15 Medical Schools](#)
 - Talk to current students and alumni, attend webinars, and visit campuses

- Select the list of schools you will be applying to
 - Check and make note of deadlines
- Read: [MD Application Deadlines of the Top 50 Medical Schools](#)

Application Strategy

- Go through and document your lists of things for each of the following categories
 - Strengths
 - Areas of Improvement
 - Work Experience
 - Career Goals / Why medical school?
 - Extracurriculars
 - Fun Facts
- Find a coach to help you with your MD applications - You can browse our world-class, vetted coaches [here](#)

AMCAS

AMCAS Registration, ID, and Schools Attended

- Register with [AAMC](#)
- Add your identifying information—legal names, ID numbers, birth/gender info, etc.
- Enter information for the high school(s) you attended
- Enter information for the college(s) you attended—include every institution where you were enrolled for at least one course (even if no credits were earned, you withdrew, or transferred)
 - Add the degree earned as well as any majors or minors completed

Transcripts

- Request copies of your official transcripts
 - *These should include any college-level courses *for which credit was granted*
- List the schools you're applying to in AMCAS; you will then be able to create and print an AMCAS barcoded transcript request form
- Send these forms to the respective registrar(s)
- When submitting the transcripts, it's highly recommended that you submit the barcoded request form along with the transcripts themselves

(Transcript issues are the number one cause of processing delays; make sure that you fully understand your target schools' requirements)

Biographic Information

- Fill out the following information in the AMCAS application:
 - Address (preferred and permanent)
 - Citizenship
 - Legal residence
 - Race/ethnicity self-identification
 - Languages
 - Childhood information
 - Military service
 - Felony/misdemeanor history
 - Disadvantaged status
 - Parents/guardians, siblings, and dependents

Coursework

- Enter the course information, corresponding grades, and credit hours for every course that you've ever been enrolled in at any US (/US territorial) or Canadian postsecondary institution, regardless if you earned credit
 - Use the official requested transcripts to ensure that the information you provide is accurate – the courses must be listed in chronological order exactly as they appear on the official transcript
 - Make sure that you have correctly classified the course using the Course Classification Guide in the [2023 AMCAS Application Guide](#) (page 31)

*Note: The courses should include the academic year and term. The AMCAS year starts in the summer and ends in the spring. Courses taken during the summer should be entered with the next academic year, even if your institution considers them as part of the previous year.

Work/Activities

- Enter up to 15 experiences, including full/part-time work, extracurriculars, awards, honors, publications, research opportunities, internships, etc.
 - *Schools receive this section in chronological order and as plain text, i.e. no bulleted lists, indented paragraphs, or bold/italic fonts

- Select the three experiences that you consider the most meaningful
 - Add ≤1,325 characters for each of them explaining what was particularly powerful about each—consider what made it transformative, the impact it made, and the growth you experienced

Letters of Evaluation

- Research target schools instructions, limitations, and preferences regarding evaluators
- Brainstorm recommenders—the number and type will depend on the schools you’re applying to (AMCAS allows up to 10 but most schools have a limit of fewer than that)

**According to AMCAS, there are 3 general types of letters:*

1. Committee/Composite Letter – A letter from a prehealth committee or adviser that represents the institution’s evaluation of you.
2. Letter Packet – A set of letters by your institutions, often by the career center.
3. Individual Letter – Written by a single author. If that person has already been included in a Committee Letter or Letter pack, do not add a separate entry for them.

- Reach out to recommenders (at least 2-3 months before the application deadline)
- Print out the Letter Request Form from the “Letters of Evaluation” section of AMCAS
- Add your medical school designations (in Section 7) and designate which letters go to which schools
- Touch base with your recommenders before submission

**Note: You can submit your application, even if your letters have not yet arrived at AMCAS. They will be sent to medical schools after the application is verified on a rolling basis. However, you should still try to have them in before the deadline as most schools won’t guarantee that they’re included when your application is reviewed.*

Personal Comments Essay

- Brainstorm and outline the personal comments essay (section 8)

- Draft the response, considering the following:
 - Why are you pursuing medicine?
 - What motivates you to study and continue practicing medicine?
 - What do you, uniquely, bring to the field of medicine?
 - What do you want your target medical schools to know about you that you have not yet addressed in the other parts of your application?
 - What qualities do you want to highlight?

- Review your response with peers/mentors/[coaches](#) and make edits
- Re-edit and review once again
- Get a second round of feedback, etc. (continue through as many drafts as necessary)
- Final review and spell check
- Paste into the personal comments essay section

*Note: If you're applying to MD-PhD Programs, there are additional essays you will need to complete.

AMCAS: MCAT Scores

- Verify that all the MCAT exams you've received scores for are listed in this section (scores are automatically released to AMCAS unless voided at the time of exam)
- Provide info for any upcoming or recently taken MCAT exams so that the schools know to expect additional scores

AMCAS: Certification and Submission

- Print out a hard copy and carefully review the entirety of the application
 - Double-check that all coursework grades match the official transcripts
 - Spell check personal comments essay and work/activities section
 - Review everything else
- Certify a set of statements, accept the conditions, and submit the application
- Pay the application fees (accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover)

Post-AMCAS

Permitted Updates/Changes

- Monitor application status and make changes as necessary

*Once the application has been submitted, there are limited changes that you're allowed to make. If needed, you can update:

- ID Number
- Names/Birth/Gender
- Contact Info
- Letters or Evaluation
- New MCAT Date
- Additional Med School Designations

Complete the Secondary Application

Your target schools may only extend this by invitation only, or it may be open to all applicants.

- Brainstorm, outline, and draft secondary application essays

These essays vary but usually fall within one of six categories:

- *Diversity* - Can you show that you are respectful of all health beliefs, practices, and needs of diverse patients? What do you, uniquely, bring to the table?
- *Adversity* - How do you respond to difficult situations?
- *Why this school?* - What about this school appeals to you *outside* of the normal considerations (location, prestige, etc.)?
- *Gap Year* - e.g. If you're not attending school this year (or have taken a gap year), what are your plans or what have you been doing?
- *Leadership* - Prove that you will be able to drive change in healthcare. What problems will you fix?
- *Anything else you'd like us to know?* - Is there anything else about your candidacy that isn't included elsewhere in the application?

- Provide any requested biographic/academic information
- Submit
- Pay the application fee

Prepare for Interviews

- Study your AMCAS and secondary applications—be ready to expand on any experiences you provided and make note of anything missing that you'd like to talk about
- Do additional research on the programs you've applied to, including interview structures and common questions
 - *Leverage the schools' Student Doctor Network (SDN) pages; they provide a ton of interview info directly from former applicants
- Practice explaining why you're interested in medicine and that specific school
- Practice other commonly asked interview questions
- Do a mock interview with an expert [Leland medical school coach](#)

Once the interview is complete, all that's left to do is sit back and wait for the admissions decision. Regardless of the outcome, congratulate yourself on an application well done. Getting through it in its entirety is an accomplishment in itself, and one that you deserve to celebrate.