**The AMCAS Application**

**The AMCAS should be available the first week of May and open for submission first week of June** (Remember: earlier is always better.)

The AMCAS application is a "common application" form used by most of the medical schools in the country. The schools that do not use AMCAS are University of Texas Medical Schools. (http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/participatingschools.htm).

The AMCAS application fee is ~$160.00 for the first school, and ~$38.00 for each additional school designated. Those unable to pay this fee may apply for a waiver through the AAMC Fee Assistance Program (FAP; <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap/>). **The FAP can also assist with financial help for MCAT administrations—it is important to submit the form EARLY as it can take some time to be processed.**

**Because of the rolling admissions process, you should submit your AMCAS in June**. Once you submit your AMCAS, it may take up to 6 weeks or more to process your primary application before it is sent to schools. Schools may then send you secondary applications. Again, the earlier you send your AMCAS, the earlier you get secondary applications and interviews!

Some helpful hints on filling out the AMCAS:

* Fill out the application exactly as specified in the AMCAS Instruction Booklet. **If you still have questions, contact AMCAS directly. Errors lead to hassles and delays later.**
* About fee waivers: They may be requested if you received significant financial aid here. See the guidelines provided on the AMCAS website (note that they are very strict; some of those requesting waivers in past years have felt that it was not worth the time and the trouble since requests have often been denied.)
* Transcripts: Since AMCAS will verify your Academic Record by studying your transcript, you can facilitate this process by obtaining your transcripts and listing your courses as they appear there. Make a note on your calendar to **send AMCAS a transcript** as soon as Spring Term grades are available, even if you haven't completed the AMCAS yet.
* Non-Harvard study: If you have done coursework at any other college or university, even in high school, even if it does not apply towards your Harvard degree and even if the course appears on your Harvard transcript as having been accepted for credit, you **must** arrange for transcripts to be sent to AMCAS (as well as non-AMCAS schools), from that school.
* Abbreviations: It is helpful to abbreviate the department title and give a one- or two-word description of the course content (e.g., Chem-Organic; Bio-Cell). Remember to put Lab after the Title of each course with a significant lab (e.g., Chemistry 17 and Lab).
* Course Type: Make the best judgment you can on the basis of course content.
* Semester-hour equivalents: Four hours for each half-course; 8 hours for each full course. Laboratory courses are not different.
* Honors courses: You may designate as Honors courses all those courses which your field of concentration will consider when determining whether you will be recommended for the degree with Honors. Check with your department of concentration or the Handbook for Students to verify which courses are considered.
* Advanced Placement and Advanced Standing students: If you were offered and accepted Sophomore Standing, the University considers your academic status as: sophomore = first year, junior = second year, senior = third and fourth years. Register 32.0 as your advanced placement hours.
* Listing Work/Activities Experiences: 15 Limit. Choose the most relevant and most substantial. Repeated experiences should be entered only once. If an applicant makes Dean’s List each year, only enter it once, and note in the explanation that the experience occurred multiple times.
* Personal Essay: Some applicants in the past have experienced formatting issues when cutting and pasting essays from word processing software. We urge applicants to draft their essays in a **text-only format** such as Microsoft Notepad, instead of Microsoft Word.

Please make sure you are signed up for the OCS mailing list.

http://lists.fas.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/ocshealthandmedcareers

OCS has a very helpful workshop on the specifics of how to fill out the AMCAS application. Keep an eye out for this as well as meetings with visiting medical schools.

**The MCAT**

* It is recommended that you take the MCAT no later than **July 2017** (earlier is better). The earlier you complete your AMCAS application, including your MCAT score, the earlier schools will consider you for an interview. Make sure to register a few months in advance, as spots fill up quickly.
* Potential times to take the MCAT: End of J-term, spring or early summer
* Turnaround time for scores is approximately 30 days.
* In the event that you need to retake your MCAT, September 2017 is the last month where you can still submit your scores for this application cycle. Schools will not consider your application complete until they receive your MCAT score. **NOTE: We do NOT recommend retaking your MCAT. Aim to do well the first time! Minimal improvement will hurt more than help.**
* **Do not wait to submit your primary application. You CAN submit your primary AMCAS application without your MCAT score.** This will allow you to be considered by medical schools as soon as possible; some may even send you secondary applications without waiting to see your MCAT score.

**Practice Questions are online**: (May not be as difficult as real thing).

<https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/prepare/>

**Take as many practice tests as you can.** Space them out and use them to gauge progress as you study.

Many students have taken Kaplan or Princeton Review courses and practice tests.

Fellow students may be a good source of study material.