



William & Mary Arts & Sciences

What to Do and When to Do It: A Brief Guide for the Perplexed Premedical Student

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Freshman Year

- Get to know your pre-major advisor, your instructors, and one of our premedical advisors. Schedule a premedical advising meeting sometime this year.
- Subscribe to the Health Careers Advising listserv through lists.wm.edu.
- Join the Health Careers Club. At HCC meetings, speakers (often student panels) provide information on topics of interest. Meetings (and Zoom links, for the online meetings) will be announced via the Health Careers Advising listserv. You do not need to be a member of the Health Careers Club in order to attend the meetings.
- Get involved in extracurricular, service and clinical activities. School breaks are good times to shadow physicians, and while you're at William & Mary, you could volunteer in clinical settings in Williamsburg during the school year, as well as volunteering and shadowing at home over the summer.
- Get to know the nice people at the Cohen Career Center and sign up for Don Snyder's Blackboard site.
- Read the AAMC website's student pages. This website will be useful to you throughout your undergraduate and medical school years. Go to <http://students-residents.aamc.org> to get started.
- See the information at <https://www.aamc.org/services/admissions-lifecycle/competencies-entering-medical-students> to learn about the AAMC's fifteen core competencies for incoming medical students. Well-chosen coursework and extracurricular activities will help you develop and demonstrate these competencies.
- The checklists available in the AAMC's must-read "Anatomy of an Applicant" (available at <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/10606/download>) will help you assess your progress towards developing the competencies!
- Start reading the health-related articles in a good national newspaper such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. Note that William & Mary students can set up free online subscriptions to these newspapers through Swem Library! Swem also provides access to *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Health Affairs*, *JAMA*, and other journals; the policy and opinion pieces published in these journals might be interesting to you.

Sophomore Year

- If you are interested and qualified, apply to the EVMS and VCU early assurance programs. Both programs require three recommendation letters from William & Mary professors who have taught you: one from a non-science professor, and two from science professors.
- Stay in touch with your premedical advisor- sometime this year, set up a meeting to review your progress.
- Continue your involvement in clinical and other extracurricular activities.

Because most premeds now spend a year or more between college and medical school doing non-academic things, such as working in clinical settings (medical scribing, medical assisting) or doing research, the premedical track is no longer tightly coupled to the undergraduate track. Thus, the best way to think about the culmination of the premedical process is the following:

Pre-application Year

- Schedule an appointment with your premedical advisor in the fall to review your progress and plans. If you

are no longer in Williamsburg, meet with your advisor on Zoom!

- Give yourself at least four months to study for the MCAT. Health Careers Club hosts a Zoom panel on MCAT preparation in the early fall in which students who have done well on the exam talk about their study strategies; it will be announced via the Health Careers Advising listserv.
- The AAMC website has a useful guide to building a study plan: see <https://offers.aamc.org/mcat-study>
- MCAT registration information is available at www.aamc.org. Test center spaces are limited, so register early.
- To avoid delaying your medical school applications, take the MCAT no later than June of the year in which you intend to start applying to medical school (and May would be better.) DO NOT take the MCAT until you have finished the courses that cover the material on the exam!
- Continue your service, clinical, and other extracurricular activities.
- Prepare for interviews by scheduling a mock medical school interview at the Career Center. The Cohen Career Center works with alumni for up to three years after graduation.

Application Year

- Attend the Health Careers Club's annual Zoom presentation on the application process in mid-April. This will be announced via the Health Careers Advising listserv.
- Visit the AAMC website to familiarize yourself with the application process; if you are planning to apply to the osteopathic schools, do the same for AACOMAS; if you are a Texan, do the same for TMDSAS. Begin filling your applications out once the application for the upcoming cycle is made available. The AMCAS application goes live in early May.
- By the end of the final exam period in May, do the following:
 - 1) Request individual letters of recommendation; these will not be needed until the secondary application process, so your recommenders will not have to write them immediately. Note that you can submit your AMCAS application before any of your letters are available. Ask your recommenders to finish writing their letters by the end of July.
 - 2) Prepare a brief summary of extracurricular activities and awards for your recommenders, listing your clinical experiences (include shadowing!), service, research and other activities.
 - 3) Prepare a brief statement that answers the question "Why do you want to become a physician?" for your recommenders. This should not be your AMCAS personal statement! Two succinct, clear paragraphs would be plenty.
- Submit your medical school applications early in the application cycle! Submitting the AMCAS application in early June and completing your secondary applications quickly (within two weeks of the time you receive them) will put you at the front of the line in the rolling admissions process that many medical schools use. VCU suggests submitting the AMCAS application no later than August 1, and UVA has said that AMCAS applications submitted after September 1 are considered late.
- Remember that while early is important, error-free is essential- before you submit your primary and secondary applications, print the application out and have someone read it carefully to help you find any problems.
- No matter what you read online, the secondaries are just as important as the AMCAS application is- invest the time needed to do a professional job!
- For decades, Professor Coleman, who created the premed advising program at William & Mary, has suggested applying to no more than 10-12 well-chosen schools, and this is still excellent advice. Applying selectively will give you the time you need in July to complete your secondary applications, and it will also save money.
- If you are applying through AMCAS, your in-state public medical schools should be on your list. Talk with your premedical advisor about other schools that you are considering.
- Keep an eye on your junk mail as well as your in-box: you do not want an important email message, such as an interview invitation from a medical school, to languish, unread, in your junk mail!
- Discuss your application progress with your premedical advisor. They will be happy to answer your questions!
- Continue your clinical, service, and other activities.
- If you are still in school, maintain your academic standards- it's not over yet!
- Keep up your hope. Waitlisted applicants may be accepted well into the summer, even right before medical school classes start!