

Admissions Policy: Students

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Responsible Officer: Chair of Admissions Committee
/Dean of Admissions for the College of Medicine &
Director of Student Admissions

Policy Owner: Director of Student Admissions

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Policy Statement on Criteria for Medical Student Selection & Admissions

Admissions

The Committee on Admissions considers the total qualifications of each applicant irrespective of gender, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. Decisions regarding admissions are based on multiple factors including prior academic performance; completion of the courses required for admissions; the potential for academic success including performance on standardized tests such as the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). In addition, we pay a lot of attention to very good communication skills, character, evidence of altruism demonstrated by community services, health related experiences, and a clear motivation for a career in medicine. Admissions preference is given to USA citizens and permanent residents who are New York State residents, although well-qualified out of state applicants are also accepted. We welcome and encourage applications from women and members of groups underrepresented in medicine.

Throughout the selection process, the Admissions Committee looks for applicants with demonstrated abilities in the AAMC's enumerated pre-professional competencies with special emphasis on personal attributes, including but not limited to: (service orientation, social skills, cultural competence, ability to work collaboratively, communication skills, ethical responsibility, reliability and dependability, resilience and adaptability, as well as capacity for improvement; the depth and breadth of involvement in life experiences including clinical, service, and research experiences (which may, at times, intersect. Life experiences are not limited to traditional pre-medical activities. In order to matriculate a class that achieves our institutional mission and vision, the Admissions Committee gives weight to the "road travelled" (life challenges faced & conquered, disadvantaged background, socioeconomic status, military service, and underrepresented in medicine to name a few examples).

Pre-Screening

Once a verified AMCAS application is received in June of the application cycle, SUNY Downstate sends every applicant with a verified AMCAS application a link to the electronic Supplemental Application. The Student Admissions staff manually reviews every application to see if the following criteria have been met:

- **Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)**

- **Letters of recommendation (either premedical committee letter or letters from two faculty members) that have been received by AMCAS**
- **Citizenship or Permanent Visa**
- **Application Fee**

SUNY Downstate College of Medicine requires the following coursework for all applicants:

- Biology, one year with laboratory work
- Chemistry, one year with laboratory work
- Organic Chemistry, one year with laboratory work
- Physics, one year with laboratory work
- English, one year with laboratory work

The formal course requirements constitute the basic foundation for all applicants, but most successful applicants will have gone beyond these prerequisites and will have demonstrated the ability to perform at a higher level academically. Accordingly, the College of Medicine Admissions committee evaluates academic preparedness in the context of the type and level of courses taken, the academic performance and trajectory, and the applicant's scores on the MCAT exam. Although the College of Medicine does not explicitly require the following, the Committee on Admissions looks favorably on a program of study that includes at least one year of college mathematics and advanced science subjects. **A course in biochemistry is strongly recommended.** Other desirable courses include anatomy, physiology, histology, cell biology, genetics, neuroscience, social sciences, humanities, statistics, biostatistics, sociology and psychology.

Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT):

1. All applicants are required to complete the Medical College Admissions Test within three years of their planned year of matriculation.
2. The latest MCATs the College of Medicine will consider must be completed by September of the applicant's application year (one year prior to their planned year of matriculation).

Applicants are notified by an e-mail at each stage of the process (e.g., application is complete, hold for information, invite for interview, etc.). In addition to an e-mail, the Office of Student Admissions also uses fax, telephone, and postal mail to communicate with applicants.

Once the application is complete, a team of experienced screeners reviews all parts of the applications on-line using guidelines developed by the Admissions Committee. In the screening stage, all applications are reviewed for competitive applicants. All screeners look for personal attributes identified in the applicant's letters of recommendation, personal statements, experiences from the "roads travelled". The Admissions Committee searches for applicants who have demonstrated through their experiences that they have a motivation for service to others and their communities, particularly in underserved areas. Furthermore, the Admissions Committee looks for applicants from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, with a history of balanced employment, who are first generation college graduates and those who have served in the military. While this is not an exhaustive list, the Admissions Committee employs a holistic review of the applicant pool to offer Admissions to those who will enable SUNY DHSU to achieve its mission. Through the holistic review framework, all applicants are assessed for academic metrics, personal attributes and life experiences.

In selecting the personal attributes, the Admissions Committee annually reviews data and literature from AAMC core competencies for entering medical students and the comprehensive review of the MCATs and developed a modified list of interpersonal and intrapersonal attributes that serves as the focus during the Admissions process.

The Applicants who meet Downstate selection criteria and are deemed competitive are invited for an interview. Admissions preference is given to New York State applicants, but well-qualified out- of-state applicants may also be selected. Screeners also take note of the “road traveled” (life experiences, disadvantaged background, socioeconomic status, military service, and underrepresented in medicine).

Selection for the interview

Candidates are interviewed by a single faculty member for approximately one hour followed by a 30- minute peer-to-peer conversation by phone or SKYPE with a currently enrolled medical student. All interviewers must participate in a training session and are invited to repeat training annually. An interviewer manual is published and distributed every year. The interview format is semi-structured with both specific and open-ended questions that are outlined on an Interview Report Form, which is completed electronically by the interviewer and submitted to the Admissions Office. The interview day includes a presentation by the Chair of the Admissions Committee/Dean or Chair of Admissions of the College of Medicine, or the Director of Student Admissions and a tour led by currently enrolled medical students. The interview focuses on the attributes of Leadership, communication and interpersonal skills, intellectual ability, ethical behavior, teamwork and collaboration.

Personal attributes assessed during the interview process include altruistic activities, professionalism, compassion, empathy, maturity, integrity, commitment to community service, exposure to the medical field, self-expression, warmth, positive outlook, logical/critical thinking. Interviewers are provided with an evaluation form that facilitates assessment of these attributes. Additional questions and observations are also addressed during the interview.

The results of the interview

Once the Interview Report has been submitted, the applicant’s file is presented by a member of the Admissions Committee who has reviewed the entire AMCAS application and interview report. Each committee member (except for students) presents 2-3 applicant files during the weekly Committee meeting. All members of the Admissions Committee use an I-Pad to holistically review the current AMCAS application, letters of recommendation, supplemental information, prior application materials, interview reports of both faculty and student, and any supplemental materials provided by the applicant. After each presentation, the members discuss the applicant and then electronically assign a numerical score ranging from 1 to 5 (“reject” to “accept immediately”) by a secret ballot. Based on the Committee scores, applications are then processed by the Director of Student Admissions, with oversight by the Chair of the Admissions Committee & Dean Admissions of the College of Medicine, for acceptance, hold status, or rejection. Once the total number of accepted applicants reaches 300, all additional applicants who are considered acceptable for the class are placed on hold. Subsequently, these students are transferred to the waitlist based on their Committee scores. Students are selected for admissions from the waitlist group as accepted applicants withdraw. This process continues until all interviewed applicants are presented and the class is filled in August.

Acceptance

Acceptance notifications (except for early decision) will be sent starting early February of the matriculating year. The alternate list will be established in early April of the matriculating year. Acceptances from the alternate list occur in April and throughout the summer.

Notice of acceptance will be disseminated in writing and are conditional pending a satisfactory Certiphi Screening background report, health clearance, complete the American Heart Association's Healthcare Provider course, pay a deposit to hold their place in the entering class and must meet all Admissions requirements. All entering students in the College of Medicine must meet all of the technical standards, with reasonable accommodation if necessary, and each student will be expected to certify that each student meets these standards.

Offers of acceptance are made electronically using a secured platform. Students are asked to adhere to the AAMC acceptance protocol and institutional posted deadlines. Depending on the time period in the Admissions cycle, applicants are asked to submit a reply form within the posted deadline.

Applicants submit their acceptance deposits between May 1 and May 15, and deposits are refunded until May 15. Communication with accepted and waitlisted applicants occurs throughout the summer. Once applicants are matriculated, the alternates are notified that they are not accepted.

Deferral

Accepted applicants may request a delayed/deferred matriculation into the College of Medicine for a period of one year in order to participate in educational activities or social service projects. No extensions beyond one year are permitted without authorization from the Admissions Committee.

All deferred applicants are required to file a **Delayed Matriculation** application with AMCAS for the following year. To request delayed/deferred matriculation, the applicant must submit an email request to the Admissions Committee describing the reason for the deferral. It is the responsibility of the Admissions Committee to review and approve all requests. Requests for delayed/deferred matriculation received after May 1 prior to matriculation will be considered for medical reasons only. The policy on deferral is posted on the Student Admissions website and in the AAMC's Medical School Admissions Requirement Handbook.

Waitlist

An unranked hold list is created for those not immediately accepted. In the spring, this list is further refined into a waitlist or alternate list based on committee scores, which is then used to fill vacancies in the class as accepted applicants withdraw throughout the spring and summer. Once the alternate list is established, letters of rejection are sent to unsuccessful applicants. It is Downstate policy to offer advice to unsuccessful applicants, if they ask for it, and on how to strengthen their applications. When the matriculation occurs in early August, the Admissions Office sends a rejection letter to all applicants who are not part of the class.

The criteria to move an applicant from the waitlist to the accept list is as follows:

- Interviewees with a committee score of 4.0 or higher
- Interviewees with a score between 3.5 - 3.99
- Interviewees with a score between 3.0 and 3.49
- Interviewees with a score less than 3.0 are denied

After the Admissions Committee extends acceptances to approximately 300 applicants, the waitlist/alternate list is created by the Admissions Committee according to school policy and procedure. The Chair of the Admissions Committee & Dean Admissions of the College of Medicine in consultation with the Director of Student Admissions, acts on behalf of the Admissions Committee formally approves all applicants for a waitlist/alternate list from a Hold list of remaining applicants who have received a score of 3.0-5.0 by the Admissions Committee. This waitlist list is ordered, though not in a final rank, according to the Admissions Committee score that had previously been voted upon. Applicants who are placed on the waitlist are encouraged to provide updated grades and information.

By Admissions Committee policy the Dean of Admissions and Director of Student Admissions have been formally delegated the authority to accept students from the score ordered list to be moved from the waitlist/alternate list to an accepted list based on the priority personal attributes criteria previously approved by the Admissions Committee to create balance in a class and to support one or more of the missions of the school. These criteria are that the applicant is(has): a New York State resident, under-represented in medicine, a first-generation college graduate, a low socioeconomic and disadvantaged status, US military service, and experience in serving in urban communities. The Admissions Committee should receive a report, including how many waitlist/alternate list individuals were admitted and on what general bases the admissions decisions were made (e.g., rank order, create balance in the class, contribution to school admissions). Once a final decision has been made, applicants are notified in writing regarding their status. The Admissions Committee receives a report that includes how many waitlist individuals were accepted/admitted and on what general basis the decisions were made (e.g., rank order, contribution to school missions) by the Director of Student Admissions and the Dean of Admissions for the College of Medicine.

Joint baccalaureate BA-MD /Dual degree programs (e.g., MD/PhD, MD/MHA & MD/MPH), Linkage programs

The Chair of the Admissions Committee/Dean or Chair of Admissions of the College of Medicine, or the Director of Student Admissions meet on a yearly basis with the program director at Brooklyn College (BA-MD) to review the progress of the students in the B.A. phase of the program. As of 2012, all candidates for Admissions consideration under the BA/MD program are presented to the Admissions Committee for conditional approval during September or October of their senior year at Brooklyn College.

Applications for the MD/PhD program are screened by both the College of Medicine Admissions Office and the School of Graduate Studies to assure that the candidate has met the requirements for both programs. Any candidate deemed to have satisfied the basic requirements for both programs is interviewed by a faculty of the School of Graduate Studies and an interviewer of the College of Medicine on the same day. A candidate must be accepted to the College of Medicine in order to be admitted to the combined degree program. All interviewed applicants to the M.D./Ph.D. are presented to the Admissions Committee during February of the matriculating year. If not acceptable for the combined degree program the candidate is either rejected or considered for the M.D. program alone.

Applications for the M.D./MHA or MD/MPH program are screened independently by both the College of Medicine Admissions Office and the School of Public Health to assure that the candidate has met the requirements for both schools. Candidates deemed to have satisfied the basic requirements for the College of Medicine are screened for an interview. The School of Public Health does not interview candidates for the MHA or MPH program. A candidate must be accepted to both the College of Medicine and the School of Public Health in order to be admitted to the MD/MHA or MD/MPH degree program. If not acceptable for the College of Medicine, the candidate is either rejected or considered for the MHA or MPH program alone.

