

Saint Peter's University Hospital Physician Shadowing

Shadowing a physician can be an important experience for students planning a career in medicine. Having participated in a clinical experience can definitely help complete your medical school application.

The Health Professions Office is accepting applications for the Saint Peter's University Hospital Physician Shadowing Program for the summer and fall. This program links Rutgers students with a variety of practicing physicians. Selected participants will be given the opportunity to observe a physician on rounds, watch certain procedures, attend departmental weekly Grand Rounds, and participate in daily Medical Student/Resident Conferences.

In order to be eligible, competitive candidates will need to meet the following requirements:

Be rising juniors with at least one year in residence as a student of Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway;

Have completed General Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry;

Have a file with the Health Professions Office containing at least two letters of recommendation;

Have minimum GPA of 3.6;

Receive endorsement by the staff of the Health Professions Office.

Applications are in the Health Professions Office or on the HPO website.

I'M A JUNIOR. I SHOULD APPLY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL IN JUNE. TRUE OR FALSE?

It depends....

The answer is true IF you are able to present the best, most competitive application at that time. If not, consider these factors:

Grades: Is your GPA not as strong as it should be (optimally 3.5 or higher)? Would another year of grades help?

Primary application: Will you be able to file your primary application at the beginning of June?

Clinical experience: Have you had enough quality clinical experience?

Life experience and leadership: Have your experiences outside of the classroom and the lab been developed enough to show you have more to offer than just grades and test scores?

Have you had the opportunity to demonstrate significant leadership at Rutgers or your community?

Research: If you are doing research, will you have done enough to speak in-depth about your experience? Would another semester or two in the lab strengthen your application?

MCAT: Are you planning to take your MCAT before the end of June (mid-July at the latest)? MCAT scores take about a month to come in and you want the schools to get them as close to the time you file your primary application as possible. Is your score on the MCAT competitive enough?

Letters of recommendation: Will you have enough *quality* letters to support your application? Will you be able to get at least 5 letters and meet the other HPO requirements in time to get an HPO interview and committee statement?

There are many myths out there regarding the application process. We encourage you to meet with an HPO advisor to discuss your application game plan. A "gap" year is not a year off. It is a chance to make your application as strong as possible. As corny as it sounds, you only get one chance to make a first impression and you do not want to "throw your hat in the ring in case you get lucky."

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

While the HPOdrome will tell you which letters have been received, only an advisor can tell you about the *quality* of your letters.

Regardless of the type of program, you will need letters that are supportive and specific to your goal — be it a graduate program or medical or dental school. Only an advisor can assess the usefulness and value of the letters you have already collected. Only an advisor can tell you if something is lacking or if something more is recommended.

Combined, we have almost 100 years experience advising prehealth students, and we are happy to share our knowledge with you to ensure that the most supportive documents are sent on your behalf.

Just a reminder: letters on file at the HPO *cannot* be used for employment or non-health-related programs. Also, we will **NOT** send unsigned letters.

Current St. Peter's Applicants: The release of letters of recommendation is not automatic; requests for release cannot be fulfilled without a signature.

Attention 1st and 2nd Year Students

Rutgers University has two joint programs leading to a joint BA/MD degree and one program leading to a joint BA/DMD degree. These are very competitive programs which will allow accepted students to begin taking professional courses earlier than the traditional route. Additionally, select professional courses will count both toward the undergraduate degree and the professional degree, thus enabling students to finish their studies a full year earlier than traditional applicants.

There are significant differences between the programs and **students may only apply to one program.**

For more information, pick up flyers at the HPO or visit our website and select the Special Programs drop down box near the top of the page. Applications become available after Spring Break and may be submitted as early as April 1st.

TIPS FOR BA/MD APPLICANTS

Things you can do now if you are a sophomore:

- Start asking for letters of recommendation. You will need five RU Faculty letters (minimally, two science and two non-science; the fifth letter can be from either category). Recommendations from Teaching Assistants are acceptable. Additional letters are acceptable and need not be from RU faculty.
- Have your high school transcript submitted to the HPO.
- Transfer students must have an official transcript submitted from each institution attended.
- In anticipation of the interviews, continue reading medically-related current events article.

Things you must do later:

- **Rutgers transcripts should not be submitted until the spring grades are posted.** After your grades have been posted, go to the Registrar's Office and fill out the necessary form.
- Applications will be available after Spring Break. Applications will be accepted beginning April 1st. Deadlines vary.

Important Information about Release Forms!

The HPO must have the appropriate release form to send out letters for our students. This year, the HPO will be using the AMCAS Letter Writer Program for MD schools, the AADSAS (dental website) for dental schools, and for the first time, the AACOMAS Portal for DO schools.

Please note: We will not be able to add letters to packets for DO and Dental applicants' packets once they are sent. All letters must go together at the same time!

The fee for MD, DO and Dental Release Forms will now be \$60.00. The HPO will accept cash or checks made payable to Rutgers University.

Letters for foreign medical schools and podiatric schools will be mailed, so students will need to use the General Release Form and provide the proper address(es).

General Timeline for students applying to medical/dental school in 2017*

***Note: this is for students who wish to start medical/dental school in August 2018**

February-March

Letters:

Work on getting your letters of recommendation in order. Medical schools require a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation. The HPO requires a minimum of 5 as one of the qualifications for an HPO committee interview. These letters should include: 2 science letters, preferably from upper level courses and from professors but TAs are OK; If your major is a science, you should really have letters from courses specific to your major. **If your major is not science, you also need 2 letters from your major.** The remaining letters should be mostly from academic sources, including anyone who supervised you in research. You may also have letters from outside of the classroom experiences such as shadowing, volunteer work, paid work etc. There is no limit to the number of recommendations you may submit to your HPO file. Avoid letters that are subjective personal testimonials.

Personal Statement:

You should have a working draft of your personal statement by now. Attend a career services workshop (careers.rutgers.edu), give it to friends to read, put it in a drawer for two weeks and look at it again Cut & paste: <http://hpo.rutgers.edu/students/2012-01-12-20-10-39>

MCAT:

If you have not taken the MCAT already, you should be studying and have a target date in April, May, or June to take the exam. It takes at least 4 weeks for your scores to be processed. Remember a good portion of your final study time before the exam must consist of taking practice exams in conditions that

closely simulate the real exam conditions. Remember, most people score better on their practice exams so if you are barely making your target score on your practice exams, you are probably not ready for the exam. More information and registration information is available at: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/>

DAT:

Same as MCAT, except you can take the exam a bit later because scores are processed immediately. More information: www.ada.org/dat.aspx

Autobiography and resume:

Both are additional requirements to qualify for the HPO committee interview. The autobiography is **not** your personal statement. It is a brief story of your life from day one to the present. Please include experiences that exemplify the core competencies for entering medical students, as outlined by the AAMC

(<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/competencies/>). Only the highlights please, 2-4 pages. This is only used by the HPO to help prepare for your interview and to get to know you a bit better. You do not need convince us of how great you are for medical school, rather give us a narrative version of your life and experiences so we get to know you a bit better. Resume is self-explanatory. Post both resume and autobiography to your on line HPOdrome account by the end of March.

Late March/Early April:

Download an HPO interview worksheet. Fill it out and submit to the HPO. You must have completed all of the requirements listed on the worksheet before you can submit it for review. Once we have reviewed and approved your worksheet, you will be placed on the HPO interview waitlist. Interviews will start in late April/early May depending on committee members' availability. Preference will be given to candidates who have posted competitive MCAT scores. Try to

get on the waitlist as early as possible.

May:

Get excellent grades in your spring semester coursework.

Continue working on personal statement. Finalize by the time your application cycle opens.

Finalize MCAT plans (if not taken already).

Create an account with the appropriate application service:

AAMC:

<https://www.aamc.org/students/applyng/amcas> Applications open in May . First day to submit is on or near June 1.

AACOMAS:

<http://www.aacom.org/InfoFor/applicants/Pages/default.aspx> Applications open early May).

AADSAS: <https://portal.aadsasweb.org> Application opens early June.

Have transcripts sent to appropriate application services, following their directions. Be sure to have Rutgers send the transcripts that **include your spring grades.**

June:

Submit your primary application as early as possible.

June/July

Have your HPO interview and release your letters of recommendation.

Work on your secondary applications

Mid August

Have all of your application materials in to the medical schools. This includes your MCAT (or DAT), primary and secondary applications, letters of recommendation etc.

Podiatry and Optometry schools have later deadlines find out more here:

Podiatry: AACPM:

<http://www.aacpm.org>

Optometry: OPTOMCAS:

www.optomcas.org