

HEALTH PROFESSIONS NEWSLETTER

Keeping Rutgers PreHealth Students Informed and Involved

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I'm a Junior. I Should Apply to Medical School in June. True or False?

The answer is true IF you are able to present the best, most competitive application at that time. Ask yourself these questions as you consider when to apply:

Grades: Is your GPA not as strong as it should be (optimally 3.5 or higher), both overall and science)? 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? What will you be able to offer besides grades and test scores?

Community Service/Volunteering: How have you demonstrated your passion for helping others in a sustained, meaningful way?

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 qualify?

Note: workshop attendance is required for an HPO Portfolio Review, and the last one is scheduled for Thursday, 1/28 at 4pm. See the HPO Town Hall posted on our website for more details.

“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.”

There are several ways to virtually, privately contact an advisor:

- Use the chat button on our website, to make a virtual appointment, or contact staff/advisors.
- Use the link in the HPO calendar, on our website, to attend virtual walk-ins.
- Email us at hpo@dls.rutgers.edu



What Can I do Now to Make Myself A Better Applicant in the Future?

A first step you can take is to meet with an advisor to ensure that you are taking the right classes to maximize your potential, grades and test scores. Please see above for virtual appointments, virtual walk-ins, and email instructions.

Aside from classes, grades and **MCAT** scores, there are a few things that you can begin working on now to make yourself the best applicant you can be. For example:

Experience in the field is crucial. Without some sort of experience, you cannot really answer the “How do you know that you want to be a doctor” question. In addition, a lack of experience may lead the interviewer to question how committed you are to your stated goal. Therefore, volunteer, work and/or shadowing in the medical field will help to solidify your passion for medicine to admissions committees.

Letters of recommendation are another vital part of your application, no matter your current class year. While you are required to have five, you should try to get as many **quality** letters as possible. It is the experience of many students that one (or more) potential letter writers are unable to write or do not write in a timely fashion. Therefore, it is a good plan to ask for more than five letters. It is also a good idea to meet with your instructor before asking for a letter, since the more they know about you, the more detail they can include in their letter.

Finally, do your best to stay out of trouble, as any disciplinary/academic action has the potential to tarnish the integrity of your application.



Quality, rather than quantity

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.

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. Finally, we will keep letters on file for 5 years after you graduate but older letters may not be very helpful to your application.. Generally schools want letters that reflect where you are now, not where you were several years ago.

Watch out for Upcoming Programs:



Alpha Epsilon Delta, the National Premedical Honor Society, applicant worksheets are available on our website. Sp. '21 Deadline: 2/15/21

Alumni Shadowing Program reopening 2/3/21.

GAP Year Presentation planned for March. When available, details will be posted through the HPO listserv.

New Jersey Medical School BA/MD Program Virtual Presentation — featuring Dr. George Heinrich, Tu. 2/9/21 at 4pm. Hold the date/time. The link will be coming soon

Rutgers School of Dental Medicine BA/DMD Program Virtual Presentation — featuring Dr. Rosa Chaviano Moran, Tu. 2/16 at 3pm. Hold the date/time. The link will be coming.

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School BA/MD Program Virtual Presentation — featuring Dr. Sonia Laumbach, W, 2/24 at 4pm. Hold the date/time. The link will be coming.



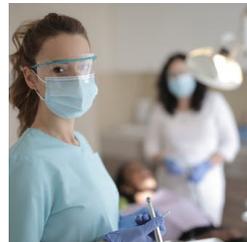
Attention 1st and 2nd Year Students

Rutgers University has two joint programs leading to a joint BA/MD degree and one program leading to a joint BA/DMD program. These are very competitive programs which will allow accepted students to begin medical or dental school a year early. Certain courses and credits from that first year of medical or dental school will count both toward the undergraduate degree (BA) and the professional degree (MD or DMD). This acceleration (3 years of undergraduate plus 4 years of medical or dental school) saves a full year compared with the traditional application process.

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

For more information, flyers are available on our website: <https://hpo.rutgers.edu/special-programs/academic-programs>.

Qualified applicants will be encouraged to request an application after Spring Break. Applications may be submitted as early as April 1st, though no applications are reviewed, **by the committee**, until after the deadline.



Tips for Joint Program Applicants

THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW IF YOU ARE A SOPHOMORE:

Start asking for letters of recommendation. The number of letters required varies **by program** (visit <https://hpo.rutgers.edu/special-programs/academic-programs>) for specific requirements for each program. Recommendations from Teaching Assistants are acceptable. Additional letters are acceptable and need not be from RU faculty.

Have your high school transcript **emailed** to the HPO.

Transfer students must have an official transcript emailed to the HPO from each institution attended.

In anticipation of the interviews, continue reading medically-related current events articles.

THINGS YOU MUST DO LATER:

Rutgers transcripts should not be submitted until the spring grades are posted. When you fill out your transcript release form, please check off the box that states HOLD for Spring Grades.

Applications will be available after Spring Break. Applications will be accepted beginning April 1st.