

Information for Juniors and Seniors, or any RU alumni planning to apply to medical/dental school in 2024

*Note: this is for students who wish to start medical/dental school in July/ August 2025

NOW

STANDARDIZED TESTS

You do not need your scores to apply but your application process will be more efficient if you have a score in hand.

MCAT

If you have not taken the MCAT already, you should be studying and have a target date to take the exam. It takes at least 4 weeks for your scores to be processed so it is optimal to have taken the exam by May. Please note that if you have not registered for the exam yet, you may have limited choice in terms of date and location.

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/register-mcat-exam/registration-opening-january-june-2024-mcat-dates>

Please be sure to read MCAT Essentials for Testing Year 2024. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/11711/download>

Make sure to reserve a good portion of your final study time before the exam for 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 are 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:

http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Applicants/Pages/RegisterfortheDAT.aspx

NOW THROUGH JUNE 2024

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Work on getting your letters of recommendation in order.

YOU DO NOT NEED your letters to submit the primary application.

Most medical schools require a minimum of 3 letters of recommendation. The HPO recommends a minimum of 5. It is your responsibility to make sure you have letters in your file that meet the requirements of the schools to which you plan to apply. The HPO recommends the following breakdown.

Life sciences majors:

-2 RU science letters, preferably both, from upper-level major courses.

-1 RU non-science letters

-2 additional letters

Non-life sciences majors:

-2 RU letters from your major

-2 RU science letters from your premed prerequisites

-1 additional letter

Additional letters may be 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.

Letters that are recent in relation to the time you apply are more highly valued, as they reflect who you are now, not who you were.

There is no limit to the number of recommendations you may submit to your HPO file. Avoid letters that are subjective personal testimonials.

Some schools may require a letter from a professional in the field that you have shadowed or worked with. Check the requirements of the individual schools to which you plan to apply.

There is no specific due date for these letters to be your HPOdrome account but, optimally, all requested letters will be in your HPOdrome account by July 2024 so you can release them when you are submitting your secondary applications.

You will need to indicate on your primary application that your letters are coming from the HPO. See our website for instructions. DO NOT list your individual recommenders.

You will need to fill out and submit release forms (separate forms for each application service) for us to release your letters.

JANUARY

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS, SERVICES, AND EXPECTATIONS. THE HPO WILL ENDEAVOR TO KEEP YOU INFORMED BUT, ULTIMATELY, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.

AAMC (MD)

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/>

2024 AMCAS application opens on Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Tuesday, May 28 at 9 am is the first day that you can submit your completed primary application (official transcripts with spring grades, personal statement, list of activities, and other personal information).

Friday, June 28 is the first day that completed, verified applications will be sent to medical schools.

AACOMAS (DO)

2024 AACOMAS application cycle dates will be posted sometime in late winter/spring 2024. Typically, applicants can begin filling in their applications in April. See:

<https://aacomas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>

Application Info:

<https://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/apply-to-medical-school>

AADSAS (Dental)

2024 AADSAS application cycle dates will be posted sometime in late winter/spring 2024. Typically, applicants can begin filling out the application starting in May.

General information:

https://www.adea.org/GoDental/The_application_to_dental_school_ADEA_AADSAS.aspx

TMDAS (Texas Medical and Dental Application Service)

If you're applying to schools in Texas, they use their own system:

<https://www.tmdsas.com/>

NOW – MAY 2024

PERSONAL STATEMENT

You should have a working draft of your personal statement by now. Attend a Rutgers Career Exploration and Success workshop (careers.rutgers.edu), give it to friends to read, put it in a drawer for two weeks and look at it again. See link for more tips: <https://hpo.rutgers.edu/students/current-students/63-personal-statements-for-medical-school>

WORK/ACTIVITIES

Start thinking about this important part of your application. You will be asked to complete a section where you include the work and activities relevant to your application. For example, on AMCAS you can write about up to 15 activities with descriptions that are up to 700 characters in length. You can then select up to 3 of those activities as most meaningful and write an additional 1325 characters on each of those activities. It is important not to treat this as a resume. You need to elaborate as much as you can about your roles, responsibilities, insights gained and what you learned from the experience. It is also important to include detail about the difference/impact you made through the activity. This section is as, or more, important than your personal statement. While writing about your experiences you should also keep in mind how they connect to the AAMC's 17 core competencies.

Now is a good time to assess your strengths and address any weaknesses! Laying out a tentative template of what you would be able to include in your application now will help you see strengths and weaknesses in your non-academic profile while you still have time to do something about the latter.

There are 18 categories that you can select from when entering your activities. You do not need to list something from each category and these are listed in alphabetical order, not order of importance.

Artistic Endeavors

Community Service/Volunteer - Medical Clinical

Community Service/Volunteer - Not Medical/Clinical

Conferences attended

Extracurricular activities

Hobbies

Honors/Awards/Recognitions

Intercollegiate Athletics

Leadership – not listed elsewhere

Military Service

Other

Paid Employment – Medical/Clinical

Paid Employment – Not Medical/Clinical

Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation

Presentations/Posters

Publications

Research/Lab

Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant

DISCIPLINARY CLEARANCE

Please contact the Office of Student Conduct <https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/records-transcripts> to find out if you have ever been the subject of institutional action. If so, ask to review your file. The centralized, primary application services for health professions schools (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, OPTOMCAS, etc.) will ask if you have EVER been the subject of disciplinary action by your institution (Rutgers) and expect you to be honest. Some require verification as part of their secondary or final admissions process. Be informed and proactive! It is far better to be truthful than to forget or ignore something and be found out later. It might appear that you are trying to cover something up.

APRIL – MAY 2024

Finalize school list.

Use the MSAR for allopathic medical schools: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/medical-school-admission-requirements/medical-school-admission-requirements-applicants>

Use choosedo.org for DO schools: <https://choosedo.org/us-colleges-of-osteopathic-medicine/>

Use ADEA for dental schools:

[https://www.adea.org/GoDental/Application Prep/The Application to Dental School ADEA AADSAS/Deciding where to apply.aspx](https://www.adea.org/GoDental/Application%20Prep/The%20Application%20to%20Dental%20School%20ADEA%20AADSAS/Deciding%20where%20to%20apply.aspx)

MAY 2024

Finish the spring semester strong, both in terms of grades and activities.

Contact the Rutgers registrar and have transcripts with final grades sent to the appropriate application service.

<https://transcripts.rutgers.edu/transcripts/index.html>

Remember, if you have credit from other colleges or universities, you must contact the registrar at those schools and have official transcripts sent from there to the application service. Neither Rutgers, nor the HPO can do this for you. This includes college credits earned while in high school.

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

Finalize MCAT/DAT plans (if not taken already).

Register for and take the CASPER: <https://takealtus.com/dates-times/>

Submit applications to AACOMAS and TMSAS

LATE MAY/EARLY JUNE 2024

Submit your AAMC application as early as possible. This is really important. The longer you delay the further and further back you get in the line of thousands of applicants medical schools have to review.

Remember: you do not need your test scores or letters of recommendation to submit your primary application. You do need your personal statement, transcripts (unofficial to fill out the application, official to send to the application service), and at least one school you plan to apply to (if you are waiting for scores, you may want to do this and add more schools once you get the score).

Start prewriting your secondary responses.

JULY 2024

Check to make sure all the letters you have requested are showing in your HPOdrome account.

When it is time to release your letters of recommendation, typically after you have submitted your primary applications and definitely by the time you have submitted the secondary applications, you need to fill out an HPO release form and payment. We will then review the letters in your file and choose the strongest (a minimum of 3 letters, 2 science and one non-science but we may choose more if they provide strong support for your application, or at your request) and upload them as a packet to your applications. See instructions on our web site.

Release your letters of recommendation. Forms available in the HPO or at www.hpo.rutgers.edu, under Forms.

Work on your finishing your secondary applications, optimally within 2 weeks of receiving the request to fill them out.

MID-AUGUST 2024

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.

Start preparing for interviews!

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

Podiatry: AACPM: <http://www.aacpm.org>

Optometry: OPTOMCAS: www.optomcas.org

September 2024 – March/April 2025

Continue preparing for interviews.

Send letters of interest, with updates. You can do this prior to receiving interviews, if accepted by schools and if appropriate (for example, if you have significant updates to add and at least a month has passed since you submitted your secondary application).

Send letters of interest/intent after having interviews and/or getting placed on a wait list (again if accepted by the school(s) and if appropriate. Note: a letter of interest should show that you are a good fit for the school and are interested in attending if admitted. A letter of intent should show that you are a good fit AND intend to matriculate, if admitted.

Considering a gap year??

As the competition for entrance to medical school intensifies, the role of the gap year has become more common. The gap year can be an excellent opportunity to gain further clinical experience, prepare for or retake the MCAT, or complete a biomedical masters' degree to enhance your academics. Consider speaking with an HPO advisor to weigh the pros and cons of applying during the traditional end of junior year timeline versus a gap year to enhance your overall strength as an applicant.