This presentation is directed to those applying to medical schools. If you are applying to dental, veterinary or other health professions schools, you will find that they have similar expectations in terms of academic achievement, competencies and experiences. However, deadlines, application and national tests will be a little different.
If you wish to make an appointment with us to talk about your readiness to apply, we ask that you do this: (a) To schedule a meeting, schedule through calendly (see https://prehealth.duke.edu/advising), or call 919-684-6221, or email us directly. (b) When you schedule, let us know the reason for the meeting so that we can be prepared. And (c) send us your RMA or resume prior to the meeting. It is easier to advise you on readiness when we can see your experiences and achievements. Also, please only schedule a meeting with one of us. It is better when you maintain contact with one advisor as you go through the application process as this helps us to know you better and write a committee letter on your behalf.
Admission Information
National Statistics for 2018M

52,777 applicants to medical schools
3% more in 2017 to 2018

21,623 accepted
41% national acceptance rate

1,000–13,000 number of applications each medical school receives
The percentage of Duke students and alums accepted to medical schools has been 70% to 80% or more for many years.

| ~300 Duke students, alums apply each year for 1st time |
| 83% Duke acceptance rate for 1st time applicants       |
| 3.6 Mean BCPM GPA of accepted Duke students          |
| (range ~ 3.2 to 4.0)                                  |
| 515 Mean MCAT score for accepted Duke students       |
| (range ~ 505 to 525)                                  |
| ~24 Average age of entering class at U.S. medical schools |
| >75% Duke students will take a gap year or more       |
What Do Medical Schools Look For?
These are the things we have encouraged you to do over your 3 or 4 years at Duke. Why are they important now?

1. Academic achievement
2. Shadowing and/or observing physicians
3. Engagement with patients or individuals who are ill
4. Sustained service to others
5. Research
6. Leadership, teamwork, and activities
7. Communication and people skills

Why are these important?
The experiences you have had at Duke can demonstrate the 15 Core Competencies that medical schools look for. Being accepted to a medical school is more than just your GPA and MCAT. They will look for the above skills, values, attitudes and traits. (See the handout for more details.) You can read about the AAMC Core Competencies on our handouts webpage here: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies

15 AAMC Core Competencies for Entering Medical School Students

**Interpersonal:** Service Orientation, Social Skills, Cultural Competence, Teamwork, Oral Communication

**Intrapersonal:** Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others, Reliability and Dependability, Resilience and Adaptability, Capacity for Improvement

**Thinking and Reasoning:** Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Inquiry, Written Communication

**Science:** Living Systems, Human Behavior

https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/
Timeline
Applying to medical schools take a long time. In the beginning, you will need time in your schedule to study for and take the MCAT, review and choose schools to apply to, gather all the information you need to apply, do a draft of your application (RMA) and meet with one of us for an RMA appointment, and later to complete secondary application questions and interview.
December 2018 - February 2019

1. Start a draft of your application (RMA, Review My Application)
2. Look at the websites of medical schools you might want to attend
3. Subscribe ($28/year) to the MSAR for info on medical schools
4. Attend an “Assessing Your Candidacy” session
5. Schedule the MCAT if needed
6. If you are unsure about applying, schedule a meeting with one of us (send or bring a resume so we can talk about your experiences)

The next slides go into details about the timeline. A copy of the RMA is on the Apply section of our website (https://prehealth.duke.edu/applying-medical-school-summer-2019-matriculation-fall-2020). It is a word document so you can write and edit your own version. Be sure to also read the RMA instructions, which is a separate document. For the MCAT, you will need to choose a date, register, decide how you will prepare and the length of time you need to review.
What to know about MCAT dates in 2019 …

1. It is best to take your MCAT in April or before, so you will know your scores before you send in your application around June 1.

2. Average number of hours spent studying for the MCAT: 300

3. Latest dates in 2019 for applying in summer 2019
   - April 5, 6, 13 (scores back May 7, 14)
   - May 11 (score back June 11)
   - May 18 (score back June 18)
   - May 23, 24 (scores back June 25)

The April MCAT date (or before) is optimal so that you will have your scores back before you apply. The May dates are probably the last dates that will allow you to apply early enough to be among the first applications considered. Talk with your peers about their experiences in studying for the MCAT and the differences among the ways to review. You should only take the MCAT once, and prepare well for it.
About those May MCAT dates …

1. If really needed, you can take the MCAT in May
2. Submit your application around June 1, but list just one school, so that AMCAS will verify your application
3. After you receive your scores, complete your choice of schools to apply to and update your application before the last week of June
4. By the end of June, AMCAS will release your application to medical schools and you want to be in the first set of applicants they evaluate

In 2018, AMCAS released applications to schools on June 28.
February - May 2019

1. Complete your RMA form
2. Schedule an RMA appointment in February, March or April
3. Develop the list of schools you will apply to and check their course requirements; keep notes; contact their admissions committees for questions; attend a "School Selection" session if needed
4. Take the MCAT
5. Ask individuals for Letters of Recommendation

If you make plans to be outside the US during the application period, be sure you have reliable internet service and will have an email address that will remain active for the entire cycle
February - May 2019 (continued)

6. Make plans for the summer and/or gap year
7. In May, send your final transcript to AMCAS once spring grades are recorded
8. In May, begin working on your actual AMCAS application
9. Schedule a CASPer test (if required/recommended at your selected schools)
   • CASPer (Computer-based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics) is a 90 minute, web-based, situational judgment test
Why should you submit as early as possible in June? Your application will be verified and complete faster and you'll have earlier secondary applications and possible interviews. Many schools have a rolling admissions plan, and if you apply late in the cycle for those, you may competing for the last seats in a class. Note that Texas residents use a separate application program (TMDSAS) with different deadlines; if you are applying to DO schools, you will also follow slightly different dates.
June 2019 (continued)

5. If you want the HPA Office to write a Committee Letter on your behalf, email a PDF of your verified application to us at prehealth@duke.edu

• Check the Apply section of our website for similar AACOMAS and TMDSAS instructions.

• We will then send your committee letter to AMCAS within 10 business days

6. Check on your LORs and politely remind any writers if they have not submitted a LOR for you. Although you (and they) should aim for June 1, remember that schools will not receive your application until late June, so a later letter is not going to hold up review. However, you want your application to be complete as early as possible.
Secondary applications often require you to answer more essay questions and there is a fee that you will need to pay.

July 2019 (continued)

2. Don’t forget to send $$.  
   • Secondary application fees can range from $50 to $150.
   • You are not considered a completed applicant until both your secondary application and your secondary application fee are received. You will not be considered for an interview until this is complete.

3. Don’t forget to schedule/take CASPER if needed. At some schools, you will not be considered for an interview until this is complete.
August 2019 - April 2020

1. Patience, patience, patience

2. Receive invitations to interview
   - Review/study that school prior to an interview
   - Prepare by scheduling a mock interview with us in late summer or fall
   - Possible outcomes: Acceptance/Waitlist/Defer Action/Denial

3. Send updates to medical schools as appropriate

4. Did we mention patience?

Remember that this is a long process. Some medical schools send out acceptances in October and November, others in March. See our website on how to schedule a mock interview with us in late summer or fall, and when to send medical schools any updates about a new job, more experience, publications or achievements.
The Application
Components of an Application

PRIMARY APPLICATION

1. Send your primary application to AMCAS (TMDSAS for TX; ACOMAS for DO)
2. Web-based, one central application
3. Your application will be sent to all schools that you list
4. 9 sections, including
   • Personal information
   • MCAT score(s)
   • Courses and grades
   • Work, activities, experiences
   • List of recommenders
   • Personal statement
   • List of schools

These are the basic components of an application.
SECONDARY APPLICATION

1. Secondary applications are sent to you by individual schools
2. Consist of short essay questions
3. Require another application fee ($50 to $150 per school)
4. Some schools send secondaries to all applicants
5. Some schools send secondaries even before your primary application is verified

These are the basic components of an application.
Doing a Draft of your Application (RMA)
You should start the process this spring by doing the RMA form. The RMA can also be useful to you if you are unsure of whether or not to apply this year.

If you have been working with a particular advisor, you should try to schedule your RMA with that person. However, if you have not met with one of us before and/or your schedule dictates when and who will conduct your RMA, that is understandable.
You can find the RMA form (a word document) and RMA Instructions for this on the HPA website. You can begin at any time and continue to work on this through the spring.


The RMA form can be found on the Applying to Medical School in Summer 2019 For Matriculation in Fall 2020 page of our website

Letters of Recommendation
There is a helpful guide here as to what makes a strong letter: https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf
Advice on who you should ask ....
1. Choose 1-2 from someone who has taught you in a science course
2. Choose 1 from someone who has taught you in a social sciences or humanities course (some schools require this)
3. Add 1 more or others who can add value:
   • Include your research mentor, especially if you are doing Graduation with Distinction
   • Major advisor or faculty who taught you
   • Your supervisor from an internship, a volunteer or work-related experience, a physician you have shadowed, or a significant extracurricular activity including leadership

There is a helpful guide here as to what makes a strong letter: https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf
The experiences you have had at Duke can demonstrate the 15 Core Competencies that medical schools look for. Being accepted to a medical school is more than just your GPA and MCAT. They will look for the above skills, values, attitudes and traits. (See the handout for more details.) You can read about the AAMC Core Competencies here: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/
How to Select Schools
The average number of schools to which Duke students apply is ~ 23

1. Check a school’s Mission Statement and website
2. Check MSAR for their metrics range (BCPM GPA and MCAT score)
3. Check residency requirements (in-state vs. out-of-state applicants, citizenship requirements)
4. Check the emphasis they place on research, service to others, and factors important in selection of applicants
5. Check the specific the number of LORs required, required courses (including AP credit and writing/English), if they send secondary applications and the fees, require CASPER, specific courses, interview policies, and other data.

The year’s subscription to the MSAR (a detailed online database from AAMC listing all medical schools, their requirements and statistics) is currently $28; it can be found here https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/#/landing
The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University is an example of one that focuses on primary care and underserved populations.
Duke University Medical School places an emphasis on research and leadership; the ability to study an area of interest in your third year is an important part of their education.
Example: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, NY

“We pursue innovative approaches to education, research and patient care, combining the best traditions of medicine with the principles and entrepreneurial thinking of a startup, to uncover novel insights about disease...

We seek a variety of students who can contribute open-mindedness, empathy, social insight, medical, scientific, technological and engineering expertise, to change the very nature of medicine. We have developed a number of admissions and training programs to foster these advances and recruit multi-talented students from richly diverse backgrounds, in a non-traditional way.”

http://icahn.mssm.edu/about/vision
This example is a medical school that accepts in-state and out-of-state applicants. An in-state resident has about a 1 in 12 chance of being accepted. But because the medical school also accepts out-of-state students, the number of out-of-state applicants is very large (4000) and the ability of an out-of-state applicant to be admitted is less (about 1 in 50).
Costs
Note that these costs accrue over 18 months so you don’t need to pay all at once. However, you should think strategically about finances. The AAMC has a fee assistance program (do an internet search for AAMC fee assistance program and the website will show up)
Ethics, Conduct and Professionalism
The AAMC application will state this: “If you were ever the recipient of an institutional action by Duke (or any other school that you attended) for unacceptable academic performance or conduct violation, even if such action did not interrupt your enrollment or require you to withdraw, you must answer YES in AMCAS, even if the action does not appear on or has been deleted or expunged from your official transcript due to institutional policy or personal petition.” If you have any questions about this, schedule an appointment to talk with one of us and/or the Office of Student Conduct. This is by no means meant to be punitive, but meant to prepare you to reflect upon the experience in an advising setting.

Also be careful that you appear professional in all ways of communication. Your email address should be professional and should be active throughout the entirety of the cycle.
Are You Ready?
If you are unsure, begin with filling out the RMA. It can help you see evaluate your progress, accomplishments and experiences.

You should also attend an “Assessing Your Candidacy” workshop this spring.
Good Luck!