



# Professional Development Week: Graduate School Application Basics

# Graduate School



# Overview – Application Materials

Online application

Test scores – GRE (depending on program)

Undergraduate transcript

Letters of recommendation (~2-3)

CV/resume

Personal Statement

*And sometimes...*

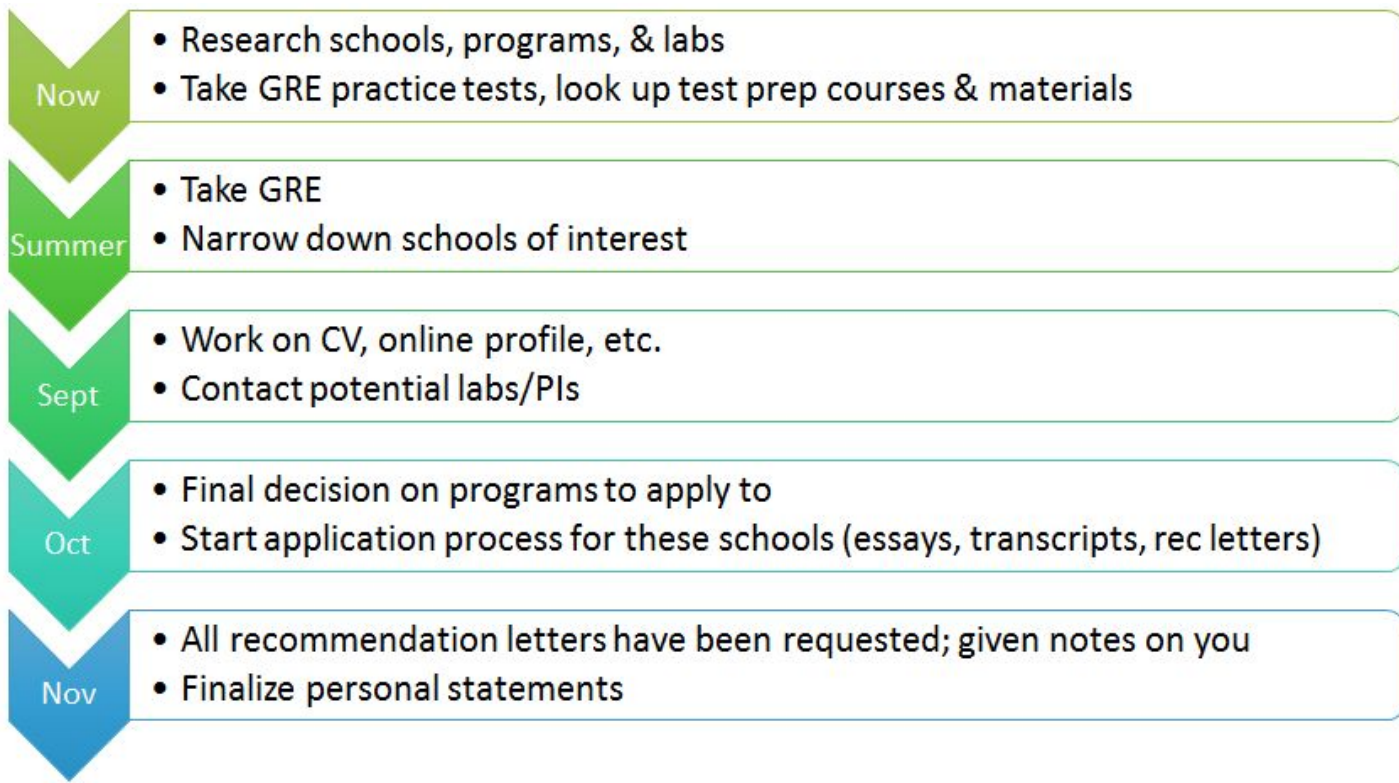
Writing sample

Supplemental forms

→ Make sure to check every program website for specific requirements – they vary!

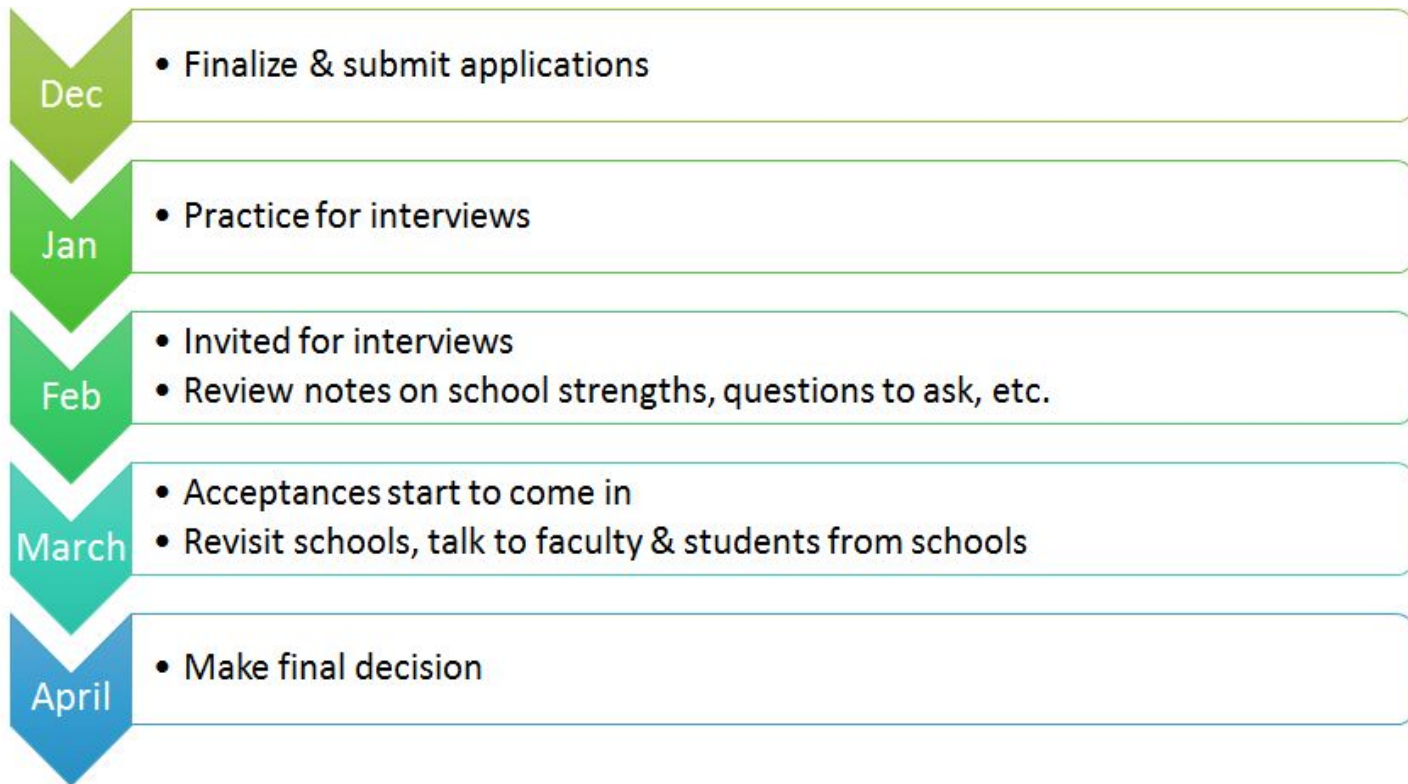
# Grad School Timeline:

(pt. 1)



# Grad School Timeline:

(pt. 2)



# GRE Resources

Kaplan

Princeton Review

Magoosh

ExamCrackers

AAMC Practice MCAT exams

(<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/online-practice-mcat-exam/>)

ETS - free practice test available when you schedule a test date

# Picking Programs

Recommended number of programs to apply to depends on the type of program (ask our panelists!):

Clinical: 10-15

Research-based: 4-10

Cost breakdown per program:

Sending GRE \$27

Transcript: *depends on college*

Application fees: \$50-100

→ ~\$100/application

**Keep in mind the cost of applying**

(and don't forget about the cost of travel for interviews)

# Letters of Recommendation

- 2-3 typically required
- People with authority (ex. PIs) carry more weight than people earlier in their careers (ex. postdoc)

When asking, give **AT LEAST 1 month's notice!!!** The earlier the better

**“Poor planning on your part does not necessitate an emergency on mine.”**  
-Bob Carter (and your recommenders, probably)



# CV Basics

- General components
  - Education
  - Work experience
  - Publications, abstracts, posters presented (if any)
  - Honours/ Awards
  - Skills
- Format
  - Dates, position, location, can include PI
  - Most recent experiences first
  - Include updated contact information

# Personal Statement Basics

- Format it like a cover letter
- Should complement your CV, not just repeat it
- Explain your career goals and how the program will help you reach them
- Some schools will give you more structure to what they're looking for, but in general you want to separate yourself from other candidates (why you? Why this program?)
- Tailor each personal statement for each program/lab

**Medical School**



# Overview – Application Materials

Online application (AMCAS)

Test scores - MCAT (take *no later* than June of the year you're applying)

Undergraduate transcript

Letters of recommendation (~4-5) or Committee letter

Personal Statement

Secondary Applications (submit within 2 weeks of receipt)

*And sometimes...*

CASPer (situational judgment test)

→ Make sure to check every program website for specific requirements - they vary!

# Med School Timeline:

## Medical School Admissions Timeline



Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
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Take MCAT & Get Scores

File Primary Applications

File Secondary Applications

Interviews

Acceptance

\*Some institutions require that you apply internally via committee. These deadlines may be as early as the fall prior to the submission of your application. Check with your specific undergraduate institution for deadlines.

Ideal time to prep - Most students will prep between October and April of their junior year.  
Ideal time to test - Most students will test between January and May of their junior year.

# MCAT Resources

Kaplan

Princeton Review

Magoosh

ExamCrackers

AAMC Practice MCAT exams

(<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/online-practice-mcat-exam/>)

# Picking Programs

Recommended number of programs to apply to depends on the type of program (ask our panelists!):

Medical School: 18–25  
(use the [MSAR](#) to research schools)

(and don't forget about the cost of travel for interviews – unless applying MD/PhD, *programs won't cover this*).

Cost breakdown per program:

AMCAS App	\$160
	+\$38/school
Transcript:	<i>depends on college</i>
Secondary fees:	\$80–120

**→ Averages to ~\$136/application for 20 schools**

AMCAS Fee assistance:

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

# Letters of Recommendation

- Either 4-5 letters or a Committee Letter
  - Have a diversity of letters (show multiple sides of who you are from people who you know and trust, at least 2 from science professors, others from research advisors or community service liaisons, art professors, etc.)
  - Give recommenders your personal statement or some indication of what your application will be focused on, so that they can highlight your aptitude/personality through that lens
- Committee Letter: Undergraduate Institution committee compiles all of your letters, and writes a composite letter after you interview with them. They “recommend” you, and can help shepherd you through the application process with their own internal deadlines.
- When asking, give AT LEAST 1 month’s notice!!! The earlier the better.



# AMCAS Primary Application Basics

- Demographic Info
- Activities (list up to 15 with short description, including 3 that are “most significant” activities, which allow for a longer description)
- Transcript
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement: WHO YOU ARE and WHY MEDICINE
  - Get a TON of feedback, but ultimately you have to know when the personal statement best reflects the best version of yourself
  - Use specific examples/anecdotes to frame who the kind of person you are (SHOW, don't TELL)
  - Start this EARLY so you have time to get feedback (January/February before you submit)

# Secondary Applications

- Unique to each school, but share common themes:
  - Why “X” School?
  - What are you doing currently (between undergraduate studies and medical school)?
  - Share something that is not addressed elsewhere in your application.
  - Area of weakness in your application?
  - How would you contribute to the diversity of our school?
  - How did you address an unfair situation/how did you solve a challenging problem?
  - Time you failed?
- Have anecdotes/sketches of ideas in mind that can be tailored to each individual school’s prompt.
- Remember, each of these is \$80-120!
- **Submit these within two weeks of receiving them!!!!**

# Interviews

- Meeting with 1-2 faculty/students OR Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)
- Standard interview: KNOW YOUR APPLICATION and be yourself.
- MMI: Medical school interview speed dating.
  - Students are given ~2 minutes to think through a prompt-it's usually an ethical dilemma or a moral quandary-and then have ~6-8 minutes to present their thoughts on the prompt to the "listener". The listener tends to do just that: listen. Different schools have different styles (the interviewer may have a conversation with you, or ask follow-up questions, or may be completely quiet throughout your time in the room).
  - In general: articulate the question/dilemma, talk about multiple sides of the issue, come to a conclusion, and then, if you have time, talk about a personal anecdote that can connect to the situation.
  - E.g., "You're working on a group project, and one student is not pulling his/her weight. How would you address the situation?"

# Interviews (cont.)

- Stay up-to-date with current events, trends in healthcare
  - Medicare-for-all, Affordable Care Act, intersections of social justice and medicine
- Some MMIs involve team activities that highlight your communication abilities (describing a picture to someone, etc.)
- Dress formally: neutral colored suits, tights for a skirt/dress, comfortable walking shoes (heels are optional)

# 3/16 Panelists:

- **Kylie Isenburg**, applied to Neuroscience and Psychology PhD programs
- **Kelsey Lowman**, applied to Clinical Psychology PhD programs
- **Libby Desruisseaux**, applied to Clinical Neuropsychology PhD programs
- **John Samuelsson**, applied to Engineering PhD programs
- **Joshua Goldenberg**, applied to Medical Schools