

# Top tips for premeds on getting into medical school

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As another medical school admissions cycle begins, some students have their ducks in a row and will apply. Others may just be at the outset of considering a career in medicine.

No matter what stage you are at in your potential pursuit of a career as a physician, these tips from the AMA offer insight on what it takes to create a portfolio that will present a standout medical student candidate.

**1**

## **The MCAT is not just another standardized exam**

The primary function of the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) is to determine how a prospective medical student will perform in medical school. In that way, it doesn't differ significantly from standardized tests, such as the American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), that high school students take as part of their college admission portfolio. Learn why the MCAT is a totally different animal.

**2**

## **A low GPA may not sink your medical school application**

Matriculants entering medical school in the 2018–2019 admissions cycle registered a 3.72 mean grade-point average (GPA) in their undergraduate coursework, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Still, if you underperformed in undergrad but dream of working as a physician, you have options.

**3**

## **Know why are you pursuing a career in medicine**

Medical school admissions interviews vary in format by school. You may speak to one person or a number of people. They may be students, alumni, community members, professors, deans or some combination thereof. Still, while the audience and venues for these interviews may change, one question is likely to remain constant: Why do you want to go into medicine?

#### **4 Make your time off count**

For most students, the route to a career as a physician is an indirect one, in that they take time between completing their undergraduate studies and applying to medical school. If you are taking time off between undergrad and applying to medical school—or if you are considering that option after undergrad—make it count by adding relevant experiences to your resume.

#### **5 Understand expectations**

Medical school aims to take bright students and transform them into physicians prepared for the transition to residency training. Still, that requires a certain skill set from first-year medical students. Laid out by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the core competencies for entering medical school consist of a list of 15 traits the ideal medical student should possess.

Medicine can be a career that is both challenging and highly rewarding but figuring out a medical school's prerequisites and navigating the application process can be a challenge into itself. The [AMA premed glossary guide](#) has the answers to frequently asked questions about medical school, the application process, the MCAT and more.

Have peace of mind and [get everything you need to start med school off strong](#) with the AMA.