

THE MAGAZINE OF THE TEXAS MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS APPLICATION SERVICE

2018-2019

# APPLY

## 6 WAYS

TO **WIN** AT  
BEING AN  
APPLICANT



Developing  
your personal  
competencies

**INTERVIEW  
PRO-TIPS**

**WHY THE  
METRICS  
MATTER...**

**INSIDE» APPLICATION  
ROADMAP FOLDOUT!**



# APPLY

is a publication of the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service. It is the mission of TMSAS to provide excellence in technical and customer services, accuracy and timeliness in application processing, and dedication to unbiased policies and procedures in the professional school admission process to student applicants and participating professional schools.

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# From the Editor



## DR. JAMES SCOTT WRIGHT

The process of applying to professional school, whether medical, dental or veterinary, is a long and complex endeavor. Planning and completing your undergraduate course work, seeking out and involving yourself in volunteer opportunities, filling out the application, interviewing and then waiting to hear the results... it's a mix of excitement, frustration and anxiety.

This edition of **APPLY Magazine** contains a great deal of information meant to help you through this long and sometimes confusing process. You will find many articles and features that will give you a better picture of how it works and what you can do to make your journey into medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine possible.

The *Six Important Steps* feature identifies what your focus should be throughout your preparation for applying to professional school...particularly early in the process. Pay attention to these basic six principles and you will have a good foundation for a successful journey.

In the *Why are the Numbers So Important* article, we explore the issue of GPA and standardized test scores and how they are used in the admissions process. Many applicants are frustrated by what they see as too much focus by admissions committees on these metrics. This article will help you understand better how and why the numbers are important.

*Developing Your Personal Competencies* is a fascinating feature intended to introduce you to the personal qualities that professional schools deem important both for students and for clinicians. Developing these characteristics in yourself will help you be noticed by admissions committees and will make you a better student, clinical practitioner and person.

There are also articles in this edition of **APPLY Magazine** to help you design a plan for getting noticed in the admissions process (*Your Application as a Marketing Campaign*), writing your personal statement, and being successful in the interview setting. There are also tips for re-applicants.

With a variety of other fun and interesting articles, I think you will find **APPLY Magazine** to be just what you need to help you navigate the admissions process to your future career in healthcare. **ENJOY!**







### What Our Students Say:

*"I chose UTSD because the minute I got here, it felt like such a family."*

*"The practice we had in the simulation clinic throughout our first and second years really prepared us to start seeing patients."*

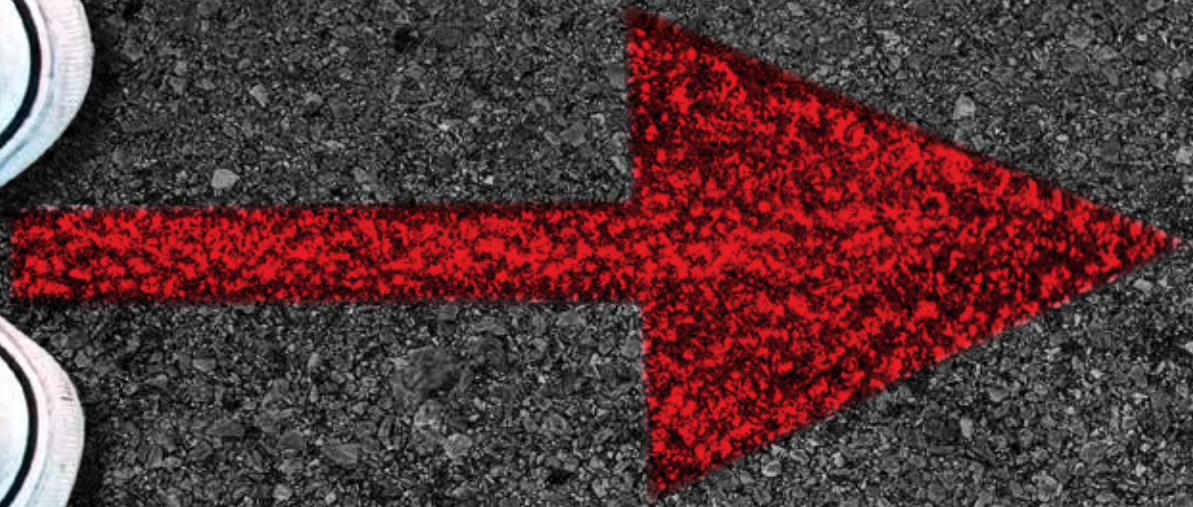
*"UTSD focuses on patient care and how we can provide the best care possible."*

*"We get the opportunity to be part of student organizations that teach us about organized dentistry that will benefit us when we graduate."*

# Your Future Is Here!







# SIX IMPORTANT **STEPS** TO HELP YOU BE THE BEST APPLICANT YOU CAN BE:

Every applicant to professional school wants to be the best that they can be in order to increase their chances of admissions success. There are a few general ideas that can help you attain that goal. These six steps are fundamental to building a strong application if you will endeavor to apply the sentiments to your preparation process.



1

## **BEGIN NOW**

Whether you are a freshman in college or a non-traditional student beginning a career change, you need to start working toward being a strong applicant TODAY. Don't wait until it's actually time to complete the online application...realize that every decision that you make today, tomorrow, or next week is going to affect how good your application will be. Make wise choices always considering how they might impact your main life and career goals of admission to professional school.

2

## **FOCUS & DISCIPLINE YOURSELF**

Engaging yourself in the pursuit of academic excellence, for example, is incredibly important. Through a disciplined and focused effort, you can achieve success. However, we live in world where our attention is constantly distracted. It takes a strong commitment to your life and career goals in order to keep yourself focused and engaged in what is really important in the long run.

3

## **EXPLORE**

There are many things in this world that are of great value...careers, college courses, hobbies, etc. Be willing to investigate the world around you in an attempt to find out who you are, what you enjoy, and where you want your life to go. An enlightened approach to daily life involves exploration and stretching yourself.

4

## **LEARN**

There are many great opportunities in daily life to learn important lessons. Of course, learning in the classroom is vital...but learning outside the classroom through experiences in life can be equally empowering. Listen and watch what is around you and be willing to spend time thinking (and maybe writing) about what you have heard and seen and ponder their meaning.

5

## **GET INVOLVED**

There is a world around you, regardless of where you live, that needs you to be involved. On your campus and in your community, there are people who need you. Whether you are volunteering at a local homeless shelter, reading to elementary school kids at lunch time, or working in a student organization, there are many ways to engage yourself with the people around you.

6

## **READ**

Being a thoughtful reader is a vital skill necessary for success in professional school. Start now to develop the ability to read and comprehend material that is difficult and complex. This does not mean just reading your textbooks and class materials. Read professional journals and other more general publications. Read novels. Read the newspaper. And always, read to understand!

If you commit yourself to following these six principles, you'll lay a good foundation for being the best applicant you can be.



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Critical Care Surgery • Nephrology

Maternal & Fetal Medicine

Oncological Gynecology

# APPLICATION CALENDAR

for the Entering  
Class of **2019**

<p><b>MAY 1</b> Application Opens, 8am CDT</p>	<p><b>Mid-July</b> through <b>Mid-Jan</b> <b>Medical &amp; Dental School Interviews</b></p>	
<p><b>Oct 1</b> Application Deadline, 5pm CST</p>	<p><b>OCT 15</b> Deadline for <b>Supporting Documents</b> (Letters of Evaluation and Transcripts)</p>	<p><b>OCT 15</b> Medical Schools <b>Non-Texas Residents &amp; Special Programs</b> Acceptance Begins</p>
<p><b>Nov 15</b> through <b>Dec 31</b> Medical Schools May Extend <b>Offers of Acceptance to Texas Residents Prior to the Match</b></p>	<p><b>Dec 1</b> <b>Dental Schools</b> Begin Extending Offers of <b>Acceptance</b></p>	
<p><b>[FEB 1]</b> <b>Medical School Match Results Announced, 8am CST; Rolling Admission Period Begins</b></p>	<p><b>JAN 5-6</b> Veterinary School Interviews</p> <p><b>March 15</b> <b>Veterinary School</b> Begins Extending Offers of Acceptance</p>	<p><b>JAN 18</b> Medical School <b>Match Preference Submission Deadline, 5pm CST</b></p>
<p><b>June 1</b> Texas <b>Medical Schools May Not Make an Offer of Acceptance to an Applicant who is Already Holding a Position</b> at Any Other Texas Medical School (including Baylor College of Medicine)</p>	<p><b>APRIL 30</b> Date by which <b>Medical School Applicants Holding Multiple Acceptances Must Choose One</b> and Withdraw from All Other Schools</p>	

# METRICS

## Why are the **Numbers** So Important in the Admissions Process?

**T**here are a variety of factors involved in selecting students for entry into medical, dental and veterinary schools. Some are of cognitive importance (grade point average and standardized test scores) and others are non-cognitive in nature (personal characteristics such as family background, demeanor, socioeconomic status and personal achievements). Many applicants to professional schools think that the cognitive factors are most heavily considered by admissions committees. In the current admissions environment, however, admissions officers seek to look closely at all parts of the application file...to understand who you really are in all facets of your life and how well you have prepared yourself for a career in healthcare. This process is called “holistic”

admissions. In other words, the admissions committees are looking at you holistically, trying get a sense of who you are and what you have experienced, as well as how you might fit with the school’s mission.

Having said that, it is vital for you to understand that the metrics (the numbers that convey your knowledge base and critical thinking skills) are indeed very important in the admissions process. These numbers, grade point average and standardized test scores (MCAT, DAT or GRE), give evidence of certain characteristics that you have as an applicant. So, let’s look at these characteristics and how the metrics might enlighten an admissions committee about your chances of success in professional school.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

Your GPA is a cumulative track record of who you are academically. As you may know, TMDAS calculates the GPA to include all coursework that you have taken at any institution of higher education (college, university, graduate school, etc.). But, we calculate GPAs in many different ways to help admissions committees understand more about you and your academic efforts. For example, beyond the overall GPA for all of your coursework, we calculate GPAs for each semester (both science and non-science). This way, professional schools can learn more about trends in your academic history.



## GRADE POINT AVERAGE & STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES GIVE EVIDENCE OF CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS THAT YOU HAVE AS AN APPLICANT.

The GPA is a number that indicates who you are in the classroom...how hard you work in class, study outside of class, and how committed you are to the academic endeavor of college. Typically, students who work hard in school and focus themselves on learning, are able to get good grades and thus their GPA is strong. Notice, that this metric of GPA is not the same as (for example) a student's Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.), or how intelligent you are. After all, most of us have known people who are highly intelligent but not very good students. The GPA tracks, in some ways, how good of a student you are over time, how you may recover from academic setback, or how you improve as coursework becomes more challenging. This is important to professional schools because, after all, medical school, dental school, veterinary school...they are all school and more challenging than the undergraduate level. Professional schools need to know that you are capable of handling the day-in, day-out grind of doing school well.

### STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

While the grade point average is used to indicate your academic accomplishments over time, the MCAT, DAT or GRE, is used as a metric to indicate the strength of your test taking ability and your intellectual powers of memory, reading, problem

solving, critical thinking and using your knowledge to answer complex questions. These test scores are essentially a “snap shot” of your intellectual prowess during a given opportunity. While the GPA will vary by applicant depending on their academic institution, major, courses taken and course load, the standardized test evaluates applicants uniformly against all other applicants regardless of academic institution, major, etc. Every medical school applicant takes the MCAT...every dental school applicant takes the DAT...every veterinary school applicant takes the GRE. This enables, at some level, the professional schools to compare you with other applicants and to understand better what your GPA means in terms of intellectual capability.

In addition, professional schools need to assess your ability to take and be successful at standardized tests. This is because there will be more exams of this type in your professional future such as licensure exams, specialization board exams, etc.; the ability to score well on one standardized exam typically translates to scoring well on subsequent standardized exams. In order to practice medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine, you must be successful in this type of high-stakes environment.

### SUMMARY

So, as you can see, the two metrics of GPA and standardized test scores really give evidence to the professional school admissions committees about different qualities that you have. When applicants sometimes ask... “If I have a low MCAT score can a really high GPA balance that out?”, the response is often that the process doesn't really work that way. The two metrics indicate unique aspects about you and as such are considered differently by admissions committees.

In the end, the metrics are definitely important in the admissions process to professional school. The schools use them to understand who you are academically and intellectually. Admissions committees do recognize that these numbers are not perfect however, which is why trends in GPA and all of your standardized test scores are typically considered. Are there other factors in the admissions process that are important beyond these numbers? Absolutely! But you need to be clear that the metrics are important and work hard to do the best you can in class and on admissions exams. ♦

# BY THE NUMBERS

# for the entering class of **2017**

## TMDSAS Medical Schools

**5718**

Applicants

**23.3**

Average Age

**3.58**

Average GPA

**504.1**

Average MCAT  
Score

**1669**

Enrolled Students

**22.5**

Average Age

**3.75**

Average GPA

**509.1**

Average MCAT  
Score

## TMDSAS Dental Schools

**947**

Applicants

**23.9**

Average Age

**3.44**

Average GPA

**19.3/19.2**

Average DAT Scores  
AA/PA

**305**

Enrolled Students

**22.9**

Average Age

**3.68**

Average GPA

**20.9/20.2**

Average DAT Scores  
AA/PA

## TMDSAS Veterinary Schools

**590**

Applicants

**22.8**

Average Age

**3.45**

Average GPA

**153/153/3.89**

Average GRE Scores  
V/Q/A

**142**

Enrolled Students

**23.0**

Average Age

**3.68**

Average GPA

**155/156/4.12**

Average GRE Scores  
V/Q/A



## DENTISTRY WITH A HEART

In our corner of north Texas, students use their knowledge, hands and their hearts to help others. We go beyond our campus nestled in the shadow of downtown Dallas to take dental care to people where it's needed: community clinics, public schools and health fairs throughout the region and far beyond. At Texas A&M College of Dentistry, we are about compassionate care, not just performing dental techniques. [DENTISTRY.TAMHSC.EDU/FUTURE](https://dentistry.tamhsc.edu/future)

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**DENTISTRY**  
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# Developing Personal Competencies

Grades and test scores, often referred to as indicators of academic competency, are important to being a competitive applicant; however, academic competencies are only part of what makes a skilled dentist, physician or veterinarian. Personal competencies, the qualities that are important to making you a competent care giver, are equally if not more important. In this article we will be covering the core personal competencies that professional schools are looking for in an applicant.



First of all, let's examine what the term "competencies" really means. What does it mean to suggest that an applicant displays evidence of academic or personal competence? The word "competence" can be defined as "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently." Perhaps a more enlightening definition: "possession of required skill, knowledge, qualification, or capacity." So, to suggest that an applicant to professional school exhibits academic competence, would imply that the applicant displays the knowledge presented in her courses in college as well as the skill to be a good student. These competencies are typically indicated by the metrics of grade point average and/or standardized test scores.

This article, however, is concentrated on personal competencies. Medical, dental and veterinary schools are very interested in your behavioral characteristics that indicate you will be a strong member of the team of students in their school, both academically and personally. Ultimately, of course, they are interested in your ability to be an excellent care giver in the clinical setting. A good example would be your capacity to exhibit compassion toward others.

As you prepare for the application process, start to think about how these personal competencies apply to you, how you exhibit them to others, and how you will convey them through your application.

## INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal competencies, the skills dealing with how a person interacts with others, are crucial to the profession of a care giver. Certainly, medical, dental and veterinary schools recognize this fact and evaluate their applicants with an eye toward identifying those with substantial behavioral evidence of such skills. Conversely, the lack of interpersonal competencies can be a huge concern for a professional school admissions committee. There are a number of specific behavioral skills that fit into the broad category of interpersonal competencies. The Association of American Medical Colleges has identified the following as important. As you read each of them, think about how an examination of your life story might give evidence that you are, indeed, competent in these areas.

### SERVICE ORIENTATION

»» personality traits and a predisposition to be helpful, considerate and cooperative; in short, a concern for others.

### SOCIAL SKILLS

»» skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance.

### CULTURAL COMPETENCE

»» the ability to understand, appreciate and interact effectively with people of different cultures,

belief systems and socio-economic backgrounds other than one's own.

### **TEAMWORK**

»» cooperative or coordinated effort with others acting together in the interest of a common cause; work accomplished with each individual doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

»» the process of expressing information, ideas and meaning by word of mouth.

## **INTRAPERSONAL COMPETENCIES**

Intrapersonal competencies, the attitudes and qualities existing or occurring within you as an individual, lay important groundwork for the behaviors we exhibit to others.

Medical, dental and veterinary schools are intensely interested in these attitudes and personal qualities because the clinical setting in which doctors, dentists and veterinarians practice are sensitive places which need individuals with strong personal characteristics.

There are many specific areas of the human heart and mind that are important to effective professional behavior. Following are four that are considered crucial by the Association of American Medical Colleges.

### **ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF AND OTHERS**

»» the duty to follow a morally correct path; particularly for care givers, the

ability to live and work in a way that accounts for the welfare of people.

### **RELIABILITY & DEPENDABILITY**

»» the quality of a person to be consistently good in quality of work or performance; an important aspect of reliability and dependability is that the person be trustworthy and believable.

### **RESILIENCE & ADAPTABILITY**

»» the capacity to withstand stress and difficulties; the ability to effectively deal with changed circumstances or environment.

### **CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT**

»» the inner ability of a person to recognize the need for personal improvement and the willingness and motivation to effectively initiate such an effort.

Intrapersonal competencies involve the ability to introspect and self-reflect. They are also about a person's capability to be aware of their own emotional states, feelings and motivations. Within the context of clinical practice, care givers are expected to exhibit a personal presence which focuses on the needs of the patient.

## **THINKING & REASONING COMPETENCIES**

Thinking and reasoning competencies mean more than simply producing thoughts. It is really all about the process of using your mind to consider or reason about something; the mental process that we apply when we seek to make sense of experience. Further, reasoning is the ability to use

your thought process to form conclusions, inferences, or judgments.

The complexities of modern human and veterinary medicine and dentistry require that practitioners be effective thinkers; to exhibit attributes such as analytical skills, numerical problem solving, and good judgment.

**How have you demonstrated these competencies through your activities, work and/or research? How will you communicate these in your application?**

### **CRITICAL THINKING**

»» the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment. It also involves the type of disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.

### **QUANTITATIVE REASONING**

»» the application of mathematical concepts and skills to solve real-world problems.

### **SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY**

»» seeking for truth, information, or knowledge through the act of inquiring through questioning or interrogation.

### **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

»» communication by means of written symbols (either printed or hand written) in a form that enables others to understand meaning. ♦

# LONG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**Our mission is a vital part of us,** to create and sustain a spirit of diversity and inclusion by fostering an environment of cultural competency, sensitivity and awareness. We celebrate distinctive perspectives and the uniqueness of each individual. This culture of acceptance and collaboration enriches the learning environment for all. As you embark upon the life-changing undertaking of becoming a physician, ponder this...it is through the affirmation of one another's experiences that we become better suited to understand each other and to achieve a greater capacity to impact the world around us.



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## Our Students Tell You Why



Anum Azimuddin  
Class of 2017

"When I was looking for medical schools, I wanted a program that really fostered group collaboration, and I wanted to be a part of a great team. That is what I had at college, and I knew that made a difference."

"LSOM has helped me discover myself and the type of physician I want to be. The endless support, encouragement, and guidance I have received from faculty and my classmates is amazing. I couldn't have made a better decision than to choose to train at LSOM!"



Evelyn N. Ashiofu  
Class of 2017



Eric Bready  
Class of 2017

"This school is the complete package. With such high quality teaching, the value of your education here is immense! This, along with faculty who are supportive and approachable and dedicated to helping us succeed, has made my medical school experience comparable to none."

## Go Long!

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- ★ Explore TMDSAS participating schools with Deans and Admissions Officers
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# JAMP

## HELPING ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS



**A**s a special program created by the Texas Legislature, the **Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP)** represents a joint effort between medical schools and public and private universities in Texas. With the first group of undergraduate students joining in 2003, JAMP has provided support and encouragement to highly qualified, economically disadvantaged students pursuing entrance into a Texas medical school and a career in medicine through:

- Undergraduate scholarships and summer stipends
- Placement into JAMP Summer Internship experiences
- Hands-on experience through clinical enrichment opportunities
- Comprehensive, multi-phase MCAT preparation
- Personal and professional development through dedicated mentoring
- Guaranteed admission to a participating Texas medical school
- Scholarships to attend medical school

When asked what aspects of JAMP were particularly helpful, Dr. Taylor Fitch, a JAMP alumnus, commented that “The summer program helped immensely with learning time management skills and having the opportunity to study on an actual medical school campus was huge.” Dr. Rachel Marinch, another JAMP alum, adds “The program provided guidance every step of the way, from MCAT prep to applications and financial support.”

Over the past 15 years, more than 1500 students have been admitted to JAMP and more than 400 have graduated from medical school. The Joint Admission Medical Program is devoted to reaching out and supporting students in achieving their dreams of becoming physicians. Check out the JAMP website at [texasjamp.org](http://texasjamp.org) in order to find more information about the program.

**Undergraduate students interested in being admitted to JAMP must apply to the program and meet admission criteria.**

**These include:**

- Have an SAT or ACT score not less than the average for the state of Texas
- Be economically disadvantaged as evidenced by an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of up to 8000 calculated from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Enroll in an institution of higher education not later than the first fall semester following graduation from high school or a home-schooled program
- Complete at least 27 hours of college credit during the first year of college after graduation from high school including two semesters of General Chemistry
- A minimum 3.25 grade point average overall and minimum 3.25 grade point average in Biology-Chemistry-Physics-Math (BCPM) courses





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# ROUNDING UP!

On October 7, 2017, more than 500 college students from around Texas came to the Texas Med/Dent Roundup to learn more about realizing their dreams.

There were dozens of presentations on interesting and relevant topics, chances to meet admissions officers from around the state, and a great opportunity to make new friends.

Keynote speakers Dr. Jen Arnold (from the TLC network show *The Little Couple*) and Dr. Patricia Adesanya motivated attendees to “THINK BIG”!



# Your Application as a **MARKETING** **CAMPAIGN**

In marketing theory, there are important ways to communicate and track your progress and outcomes in order to be successful in achieving your goal.

For example, think about the steps that the Coca Cola Company goes through to market their products to the public such as identifying their audience, deciding on the appropriate advertising content, promoting the product in interesting and memorable ways, and tracking their progress toward the goal.

The same can be said about the nature of your application to professional school. You should see the process of application as the development of a marketing campaign. But rather than marketing soda pop, you are marketing yourself! So, what are the elements of a good marketing campaign?

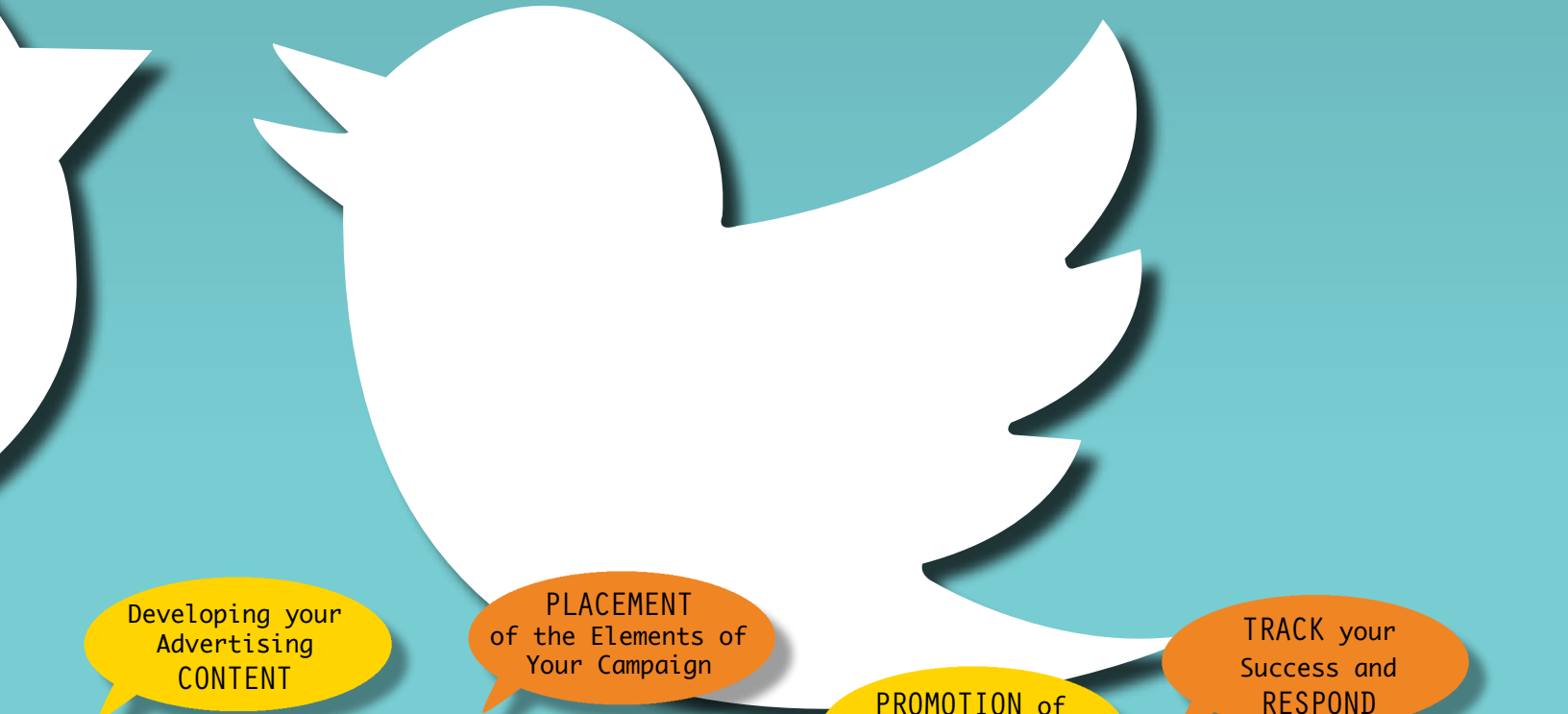
## Determining Your AUDIENCE

Generally, your audience is the members of the profession you want to enter...whether medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine. Specifically, your audience are the schools to which you decide to apply. This involves a little research to determine the schools in which you have an interest and where you are relatively competitive. Further, you must recognize that the audience is not just “the medical school” but is rather the individuals at the school that will be reviewing your application. Though you clearly don’t know them personally, you can make some assumptions about them such as that they are professionals in the medical school admissions process, probably physicians or basic scientists. You can also assume that they will, at least initially, spend only a short time reviewing your application as they have thousands to read every year. This fact will make the next part of your marketing campaign vital.

## KEYWORDS for Your Application

You need to optimize your marketing campaign, your application, to highlight the best parts about you as a professional school candidate. This process will definitely involve some deep thinking about yourself, what are the best parts of you as a person, what qualities make you a good applicant...essentially, what are your characteristics that you want a reviewer to remember after they read your file. You should determine ahead of your application what these keywords will be, maybe 10 to 12 of them. Keywords such as passionate, organized, motivated, energetic, compassionate...whatever qualities that you think describe you well. You will then integrate these keywords into your application content. Pro tip: appraise your keywords against the core competencies found on page 12.





### Developing your Advertising CONTENT

The content of your application are the details of your personal story. The who, where, when of your story. This content comes out in a variety of parts of the application file such as the courses you have taken in college, your academic, social and extra-curricular activities, your healthcare and/or research activities and, most importantly, your personal statement and other essays. These combine to tell your story...the story of who you are and why you want to go to medical, dental or veterinary school. This story needs to highlight the **KEYWORDS** that you developed and be easily understood by a reviewer of your application. Your content needs to be interesting, to the point, and memorable...you want the reader to think, after they have read your application, "wow, I want to meet this person!"

### PLACEMENT of the Elements of Your Campaign

Once you have determined your keywords and developed the content of your campaign (application), you will need to understand the best areas of the application for the placement of your content. There are multiple parts of the application where this content can be included. Some content will fit well within the listing and brief descriptions of your activities. Other content really needs to be fleshed out more and will fit better in the context of your personal statement or the other application essays. Avoid too much duplication between these sections of the application. In other words, if you include a lot of explanation of what you did in certain activities, don't cover that same information again in the essays. Essays should focus on the outcome of those activities...not just what you did but what did you learn from them and why are you a better professional school candidate for having learned these things?

### PROMOTION of Yourself as an Applicant

Highlighting the best parts of who you are as an applicant is an important part of the admissions process. You will do this in a number of different ways. Clearly, in the application itself you will do this in ways described above through keywords, content and placement. However, you will also do this in the selection of the letters of recommendation you solicit... how well those letter writers know you and how much you have impressed them over time in the classroom, lab or volunteer experiences. You will also promote yourself in the interview setting. Being prepared and self-confident in your interviews is an important way to promote yourself. Return, in this self-promotion effort, to your keywords and vital content highlights when appropriate.

### TRACK your Success and RESPOND

The final step of a good marketing campaign is tracking and response. In the admissions process, you will track your status at TMDSAS and at the professional schools. You will also track receipt of transcripts and letters of recommendation, notification of interview invitations, and the timeline related to acceptance. Further, your timely response to this tracking is vital. You want to respond immediately to invitations for an interview, for example. And, clearly, once you are accepted to a school, you will want to respond to that acceptance as soon as possible.

# Writing Your Personal Statement

The application personal statement is a very important part of your application. It is a narrative way for you to **personalize your application**, to tell the schools more about yourself and your motivations and goals. However, many applicants have trouble writing the personal statement...**putting into words what they are thinking and feeling**. So, here are some suggestions on how to get started writing it.

The first step is to **clearly understand the prompt** in the application. In other words, what are the schools wanting to know? In most cases, they want to **better understand your motivations** for seeking admission into their school and entry into the given profession. They also want to know things that you have done to support these motivations, and what meaning you have taken away from those experiences.

Once you clearly understand what you are to be writing about, you can **begin to put together ideas**. It is sometimes easier to do this initially in a series of incomplete thoughts. Just **jot down words and phrases** that seem to resonate with you about your motivations and goals. Maybe they are words that indicate **your abilities or personal characteristics**, or possibly phrases that remind you of experiences that you have had. They might even be **philosophical thoughts** about what you think a healthcare professional should do or be. The key here is to think outside of the confines of a formal essay and to just **get some ideas out of your head**. Don't limit the number of things you include on this list. You will likely only use a

limited amount of this information in the formal personal statement that you write.

After you have completed this process of thinking about the ideas and topics you want to include in your personal statement, you can **begin to organize the ideas** you now have into some kind

of coherent outline. You are probably going to start seeing some redundancies and/or some clear direction on where you want to go with it. Begin to **group like thoughts into categories** so that you can get organized. A meaningful outline might even begin to emerge as you do that.

Before you actually start the formal writing process, think about the following **three key elements** of the essay:

**WHAT?** This is the part of the essay that is about your **motivation and the experiences** that you have had in support of that motivation. You do not need to reiterate in detail things that you have already included in the application. You simply want to **focus on a few experiences** that you feel really do support your internal motivation for seeking a career in healthcare.

**SO WHAT?** This is the part of your essay that really differentiates a good essay from a great one. **What value or meaning did you take away from the experiences you have had**. Did you learn anything from those experiences? What did you learn about yourself or about the healthcare career you are seeking to enter?

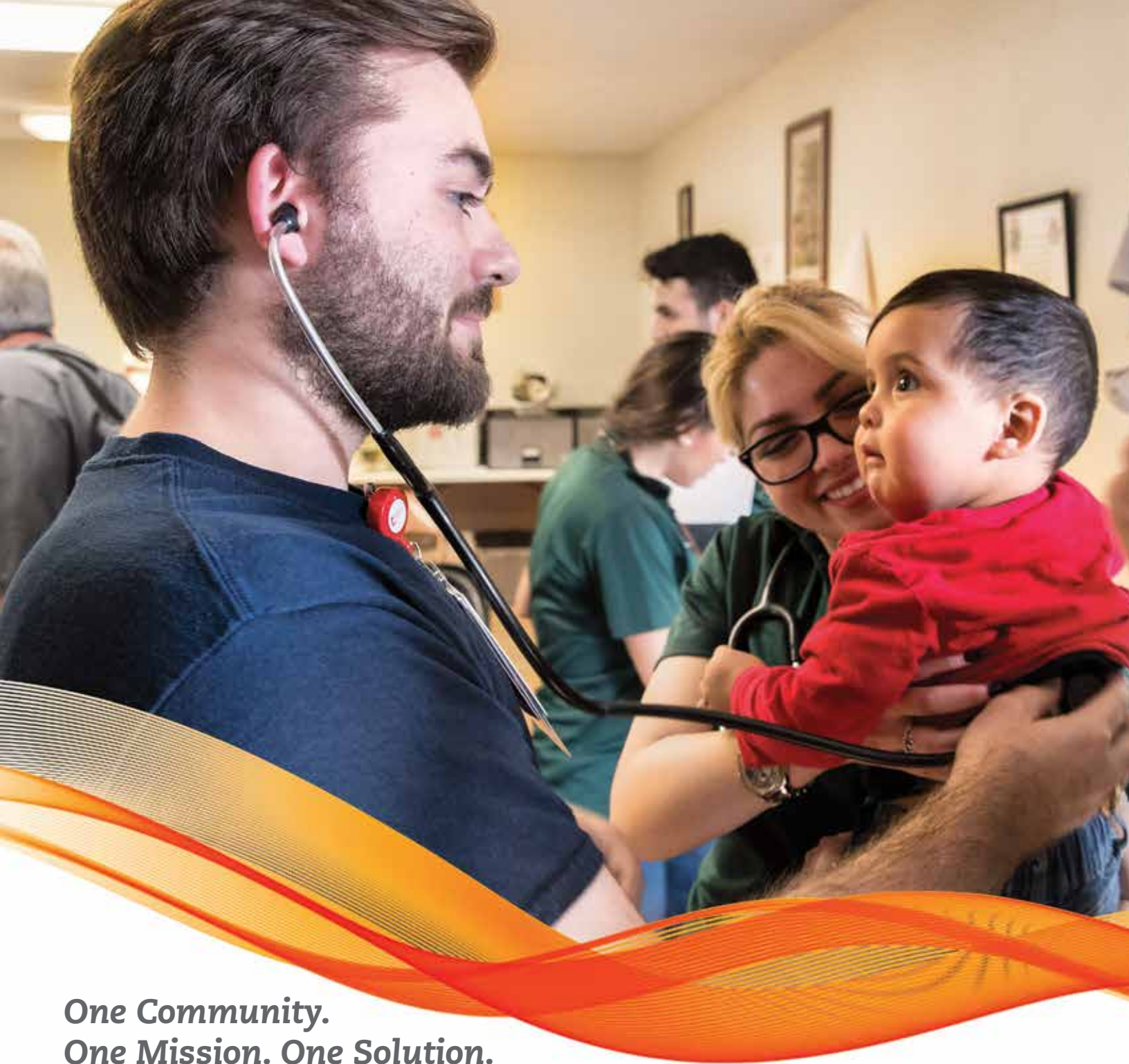
**NOW WHAT?** This is the part of the essay where you **explore what you want your future in healthcare to look like**. This doesn't mean that you have to explore the details of your future in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine. It does mean that you need to have some thoughts about what you want out of a professional life...**how you envision your career evolving**. For example, what are the personal traits that are important to you that you would want to exhibit in your career as a healthcare professional?

If you will include coverage of these three general areas in your essay, you will go a long way toward helping the professional schools understand more about you.

Clearly understand the personal statement prompt.

Write down words & phrases related to your personal characteristics.

Organize your thoughts into broad categories



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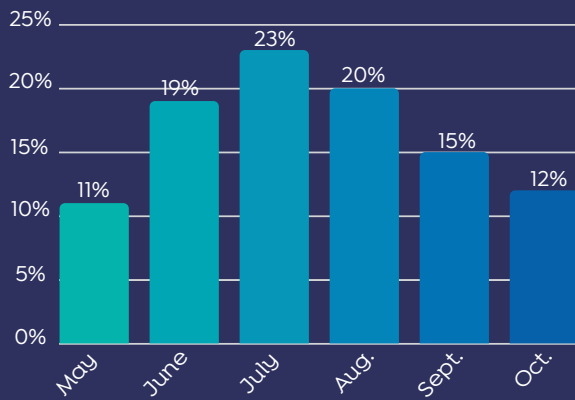
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# BY THE NUMBERS

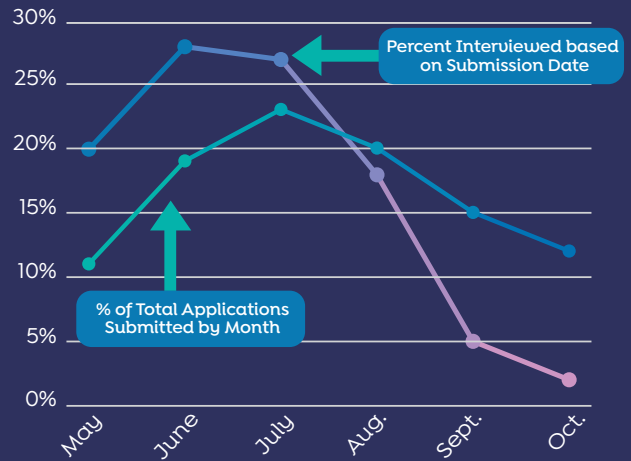
# application submissions & interviews

## % of Total Applications Submitted by Month

TMD SAS EY 2017 Applicant Pool



## Comparison



## Numbers Don't Lie



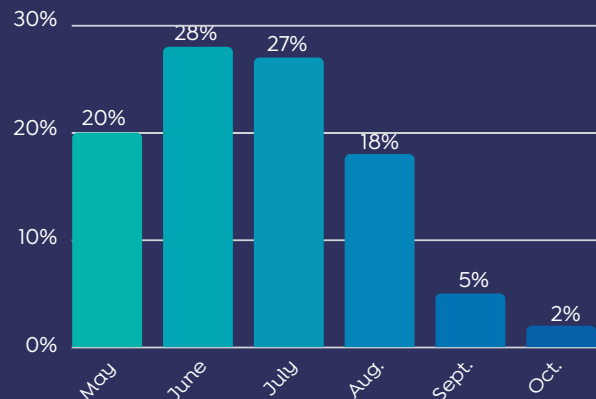
The 50% of applicants that submitted their application by August received 75% of the interviews offered to the EY 2017 class.

Applicants who submit their application closer to the deadline have to compete for less interview spots at all schools.

Only 25% of applicants who submitted after August 1 were interviewed.

## % Interviewed based on Submission Date

TMD SAS EY 2017 Applicant Pool



# HOW TO WIN YOUR INTERVIEW



## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

### Application Process

The interviews are one of the final steps in the application process where admissions committees determine whether they will extend an offer of admission.

When you are offered an interview, an admissions committee is expressing interest in learning about who you are and how well you can fit into the schools' missions. You should make sure to provide the same care and attention to the interviews as you did in your application. You should always be professional and courteous when you contact a school for any purpose.

We've developed this article to help you learn more about the interviews, expectations of applicants, and what you can do to leave the best impression of who you are and what you offer as a candidate.

### Interview Formats

There are several different formats for interviews: panel, one-on-one, and multiple mini interview (MMI) are most commonly used.

Panel interviews will consist of more than one interviewer at a time. One-on-one interviews are the most commonly used interview formats where there is only one interviewer and one applicant. Multiple mini interviews (MMIs) are short interview sessions in a timed circuit of about 6-10 stations dealing with different scenarios.

In addition, schools also vary in the amount of information available to your interviewers. Some schools may provide interviewers with

your entire application, only select information (e.g. no GPA or MCAT scores), or may not provide anything from your application at all. Be prepared to talk about your application at varying levels.

### Expectations

There is a level of decorum and formality during the interviews that applicants need to recognize and follow.

If a situation arises where you need to cancel or reschedule your interview, submit your request in writing at least two weeks before the interview date and follow up with a phone call. Do not demand that your interview be rescheduled as these spots are extremely limited and are often not flexible.

Considerable time, resources, and effort are put forth for interview day. Lack of notification is inconsiderate and unprofessional.

Applicants who are no-shows or provide last minute cancellations are shared among the schools.

Therefore, be considerate and cancel your interview with the school well in advance so they can extend the interview spot to another applicant.

## WHAT TO DO ON INTERVIEW DAY

### Dress to Impress

Interview day is your opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism and maturity—this begins with how you present yourself.

Applicants should ensure that they are rested, well groomed, and dressed professionally. Your



attire should be reflective of the impression you wish to leave on your interviewers and on the school's admissions staff.

If you have any concerns about what you should or should not wear, you can find several resources online about what is acceptable for an interview.

In general, you want to make sure that your clothes are not your defining characteristic on interview day. Use your best judgement on what you should or should not wear. If you have concerns about a certain aspect of your attire, it is best to err on the side of caution.

### Be Ready

If your travel arrangements allow, preview the route you will take to arrive at the school and verify that you can find the parking location and building.

As you plan your outfit for interview day, make sure you plan on using appropriate, but comfortable, footwear. You will need to be able to walk during campus tours without being disruptive to the activities of the day.

On the morning of your interviews, provide yourself plenty of time to get ready, eat breakfast, and arrive at your interview site well before the set time.

Your interview begins from the moment you enter the campus; be respectful, courteous, and professional with everyone you meet.

### Reflect

Bring small notebook and pen to write down important facts throughout the day. You will likely be overwhelmed at first with how much happens on

interview day, and these notes will help you keep your ideas together. If you interview at multiple schools, these notes can be beneficial to help you make a decision on how you would like to rank your schools prior to the TMDSAS match.

At the end of the day, write down your impressions of the school.

Consider these questions:

- Did you like the school?
- What do you like about the curriculum?
- How do you feel about your interviews?

Having clear notes about your interview day can help you make a better decision when you create your match preference list.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEWS

### Responding to Invite

After years of preparing, you finally receive an invitation to an interview! You want to make sure that you proceed to the next step of the application process by being as prepared as possible.

Interview invitations can come through a phone call or, most often, via email. If you receive this information via a phone call, make sure you write down their instructions.

When responding to an interview invitation through email, fully read the email as it can contain instructions for interview day, location information, and other information that will be vital to a successful interview.

Respond to emails from schools as soon as possible. Be sure that you check your Spam/Junk inbox frequently throughout the interview cycle.

### Planning

Once you've confirmed your interview, you may need to miss 1-2 days of class. Inform your professor(s) of your absence and discuss how you can catch up with the course. Some schools may have activities before or after your interview day so make sure you accommodate accordingly.

Your interview day will likely be a full day of activities that help you gain better insight into each school as well as your actual interviews. Be sure to get sufficient sleep to remain engaged and alert throughout the entire day.

Your interview day is when you can make an impression on admissions committees, professors, and other professionals. Practice your handshake, dress appropriately, and act in a courteous and professional manner.



### Prepare

It is normal to be nervous on interview day! Reflect on what makes you nervous and identify what may trigger your nerves so you can avoid them on interview day.

During your interview, you'll want to present yourself in the best way possible. You should meet with an advisor or mentor to have a mock interview where you can practice your responses to questions and handle your anxiety on interview day more effectively.

Make sure that your responses, body language, and confidence reflect the best version of yourself.

Being invited to an interview is an important step closer to achieving your goal— be respectful and courteous to make a positive impression.

*This article was adapted from [Guide to Becoming a Physician](#) by R. Sanker, L.E. Diaz, and B.A. White, (2014) Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.*



# → The ← TEXAS MATCH

A HELPFUL EXPLANATION *of an* OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD PROCESS

The Texas Match process often confuses applicants. So we thought we would try to help make it more understandable.

## → PRE-MATCH OFFERS

Medical schools in Texas may extend offers of acceptance to Texas residents between **November 15** and **December 31**. Applicants may accept offers from more than one medical school without the risk of an offer being withdrawn during this time period. Applicants who receive more than one offer should decline any offer from a school that they definitely do not plan to attend.

## → THE MATCH PROCESS

The Texas Match is then conducted to confirm the pre-match offers applicants are holding and to fill the remaining open slots for the medical schools.

Applicants must rank all schools where they interviewed regardless of whether or not a pre-match offer was received. Applicants holding a pre-match offer who have interviewed at school(s) that did not extend an offer may rank one or more of those schools higher than the pre-match offer school without risk of losing the pre-match offer. If an applicant holds a pre-match offer and matches to a higher ranked school, the pre-match offer will be withdrawn. Pre-match offers will also be withdrawn from all other lower ranked schools. The applicant will remain open to be selected by schools ranked higher than the school matched to. If applicants are holding multiple pre-match offers, they will come out of the match holding only one offer.

Following the match, standard rolling admissions continues through the beginning of orientation at each medical school. Medical schools will continue to make offers from their alternate lists which may well include applicants who are

currently holding an offer at another Texas medical school. However, the Texas medical schools have agreed that after June 1, no school may make an offer to an applicant already holding a place at another Texas medical school..

## → ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

Applicants often try to overthink the match details and make assumptions that can confound an otherwise straightforward process. Essentially, students will be required to rank all medical schools at which they interviewed according to their preference of attendance. The key is for applicants to rank the medical schools honestly and sincerely evaluating only their level of interest for each medical school and ranking them accordingly. Applicants should only use their own feelings about where they would prefer to attend medical school in developing their rank list. Additionally, at no point in the process do medical schools know how applicants ranked their schools.

### IMPORTANT MATCH DATES FOR EY 2019

MAY 1	TMSAS Online Application Opens – 8am (CT)
OCT 1	Application Deadline – 5pm (CT)
OCT 15	Deadline for Receipt of Application Documents (letters, transcripts, etc.)
NOV 15	Early Offer Period Begins for TX Residents
DEC 31	Early Offer Period Ends
JAN 21	Deadline for Submission of Match Preference Rank List – 5pm (CT)
FEB 1	Match Results Announced – 8am (CT)





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# So What Do I Do Now?

## Helpful Advice *for* Re-Applicants

No applicant to professional school wants to be in the position of having to reapply because they were unsuccessful previously. However, the reality is that many applicants, indeed many very good applicants, will not be admitted to a medical, dental or veterinary school on the first try. Which leaves them with many difficult questions. What now? How do I proceed from here? Am I disadvantaged on the next application cycle because I am a re-applicant? So here is some advice for unsuccessful applicants who are trying to figure out how to be better candidates for the next go round.

### **Settle Down**

The fact that you were not successful is NOT the end of the world or the end of your dream. In fact, nationally, upwards of 20% of applicants admitted to medical school each year are re-applicants. You are not going to be disadvantaged in the admissions process simply because you are applying again. So, try to settle down emotionally and view the additional year you have as an opportunity. Maybe you will have the chance to do some things you have been wanting to do (like travel) or perhaps it is a chance to re-evaluate your life goals to make sure you are on the right trajectory.

### **Do Some Soul Searching**

Now is the time for you to examine yourself as an applicant and to determine why you may have not been successful. What are the areas of your application that need improvement and how might you go about addressing those areas? Where are your strengths and how can you better emphasize them in a future application? These are tough questions to ask and answer for yourself. You may need to seek input from knowledgeable people around you, like pre-health advisors, admissions officers, or others whom you trust. A rigorous, honest self-examination is very important for a potential re-applicant to complete.





### Consider Carefully Where To Spend Your Energy

You must carefully consider what the biggest weaknesses of your application were and how to address those issues. For example, if the MCAT or DAT score was significantly weaker than the average of the admitted class, then you need to spend your energy studying for and re-taking the exam. More and better volunteer experiences will not help bolster your application if the main area of weakness was the entrance exam. Similarly, if your GPA is not necessarily strong, then you probably are going to need to address that issue by taking additional courses in the sciences and doing extremely well. Retaking the DAT, will not address the same issues as sub-standard academic performance. (See page 8 for a related story on the Importance of the Academic Metrics in the Admissions Process.)

### Learn More about Yourself by Developing Your Personal Competencies

There are a variety of areas related to interpersonal, intrapersonal and thinking/reasoning skills that you should examine and address during your gap year. These non-cognitive

areas of an application can be vital to helping an admissions committee better understand who you are. Regardless of the chief weakness(es) of your previous application, you should strive to develop yourself personally and become a better, stronger and more purpose-driven person. (See related story on Developing Your Personal Competencies on page 12.)

### Address the Differences

Once you are determined to reapply to professional school, you must address what differences exist between your previous application and the new one. In particular, it would be very helpful and beneficial for you to relate what lessons you have learned from not being successful. Lessons about yourself and, potentially, about the profession you are seeking to enter. What impact will your unsuccessful application have on your career journey? Your new application will have many areas that are largely the same as your previous application. However, you need to look very carefully at ways in which you can better market yourself in the admissions process (see Your Application as a Marketing Campaign on page 20).

### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- You should apply early in the application cycle... don't wait until the end. Chances are better at getting an interview early in the application cycle.
- Proof read your application very carefully. Mistakes in spelling or grammar are never a good thing.
- Plan to get new letters of evaluation for your next application. They very well may be from the same evaluators, but you want the letters to be current and not a year or two old.
- Stay positive and optimistic. If you work hard at making yourself a better, more competitive candidate, you can make huge strides in the application review process.



“We physicians are a privileged lot—privileged to serve, to share the human drama of our patients, and to contribute to their health and well-being. To be properly educated to practice his or her art, it is essential that a knowledge of science be supplemented by familiarity with the humanities.”

*-John P. McGovern, M.D.*



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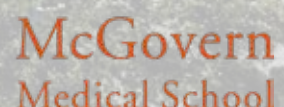
- Our curriculum integrates basic science and clinical experiences with an emphasis on active learning in small groups and new pedagogical methods. Weekly opportunities for student self-assessment and frequent feedback from faculty engage students in shaping their learning experiences. Second semester students begin a yearlong longitudinal patient care experience supervised by community preceptors. Required core clerkships start in the spring of the second. Our accelerated schedule opens more elective opportunities for students to focus on career and residency preparation.

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*During her first year of medical school, Amber Dunbar assists with caring for a patient at the C.D. Doyle Clinic — a free, student-run clinic in Austin, Texas.*



# FINANCING YOUR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

There are many different ways to pay for your education; however, student loans are a reality for most professional school students. The keys to successful repayment are careful planning and budgeting, learning how to effectively manage your debt, and educating yourself about the various repayment options.

## HAVE A PLAN

One of your first stops on the road to creating a sound financial plan should be online resources. They contain extensive information about the cost of applying to professional schools, information about various loan types, repayment information, and other financial topics. Even with these resources, the process can seem overwhelming, so your next step is to identify a financial aid advisor to assist you.

## GET GOOD ADVICE

The importance of getting sound, accurate, and timely advice cannot be overstated. Whether it's your pre-health advisor, a current professional school student or resident, the admissions or financial aid officer, there are people who can help you navigate this often complex topic. Look at the professional schools' financial aid website to see school specific information about financing options.

When visiting and interviewing at prospective schools, take your financial aid questions with you and speak with the financial aid administrator(s). They are there to help you, so take advantage of their assistance.

## LEARN ABOUT REPAYMENT/ FORGIVENESS OPTIONS

There are many ways to fund your professional school education and there are programs to help you repay your student loans. If you are interested in pursuing a career in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine, but are concerned about paying back your loans, know that there are flexible repayment options for federal loans that are based on the borrower's income. These repayment plans typically make loan payments manageable regardless of a practitioner's

debt or specialty choice. Other opportunities for repayment and/or forgiveness may be found through service programs (such as the military, Public Health Service, or a variety of state and local programs). These programs may provide repayment assistance in exchange for a service commitment.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Stay true to your passion. Explore your options. Find a good advisor and/or mentor. If you can, enter professional school with little or no credit card debt, and be aware of the status of your undergraduate loans. The less debt you bring to professional school the less debt you'll have when you graduate.

Medical, dental or veterinary school debt and cost may be high; however, so is the starting salary for the average healthcare provider. Generally, it allows for a comfortable monthly budget if finances are managed wisely. ♦



Adapted from the  
Association of American  
Medical Colleges  
([students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid](http://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid))



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# PRE-MED STUDENT READING LIST

If you're interested in medicine, medical education and/or health care reform, expand your personal library with these nonfiction reads.

## *Being Mortal*

by Atul Gawande, MD

Medicine has triumphed in modern times, but when it comes to the inescapable realities of aging and death, what medicine can do often runs counter to what it should. Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced.

## *The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Medicine*

by Eric Topol, MD

Pioneering geneticist and cardiologist Eric Topol introduces a radical new approach; by bringing the era of big data to the clinic, laboratory, and hospital. With personal technology, doctors can see a full, continuously updated picture of each patient and treat each individually.

## *Hallucinations*

by Oliver Sacks, MD

With his usual elegance, curiosity, and compassion, Sacks weaves together stories of his patients and of his own mind-altering experiences to illuminate what hallucinations tell us about the organization and structure of our brains, how they have influenced every culture's folklore and art, and why the potential for hallucination is present in us all.

## *How Doctors Think*

by Jerome Groopman, MD

This book provides a window into the mind of a physician and an insightful examination of the all-important relationship between doctors and their patients. Groopman explores the forces and thought processes behind the decisions doctors make, pinpointing how doctors succeed and why they err.

## *How We Do Harm: A Doctor Breaks Rank About Being Sick in America*

by Otis Webb Brawley, MD,  
with Paul Goldberg

This book exposes the over treatment of the rich, under treatment of the poor, financial conflicts of interest that determine the care that physicians provide, insurance companies that don't demand the best care, and pharmaceutical companies concerned only with sales.

## *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

by Rebecca Skloot

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells, taken without her knowledge in 1951, became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and more.

## *Intern: A Doctor's Initiation*

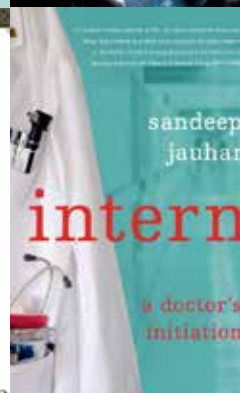
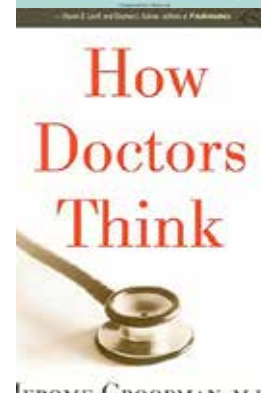
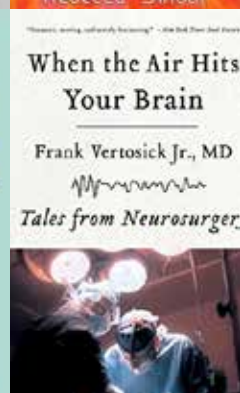
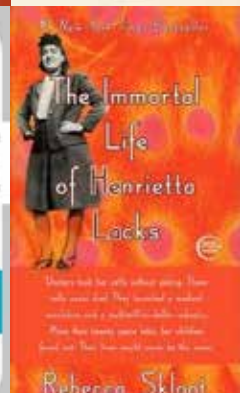
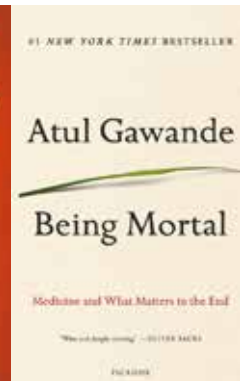
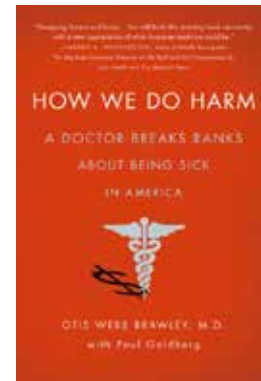
by Sandeep Jauhar, MD

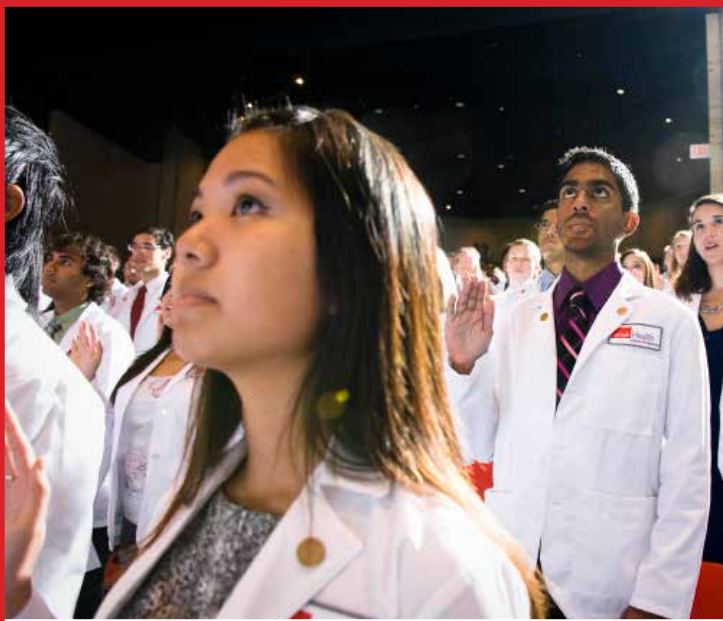
This is Jauhar's story of his days and nights in residency at a prominent teaching hospital in New York City, a trial that led him to question every conventional assumption about doctors and medicine, and that makes him an ideal figure to speak to our own misgivings about doctors and medicine today.

## *When the Air Hits Your Brain: Tales from Neurosurgery*

By Frank Vertosick, Jr., MD

With poignant insight and humor, Vertosick describes some of the greatest challenges of his career, including a six-week-old infant with a tumor in her brain, a young man struck down in his prime by paraplegia, and a minister with a .22-caliber bullet lodged in his skull.





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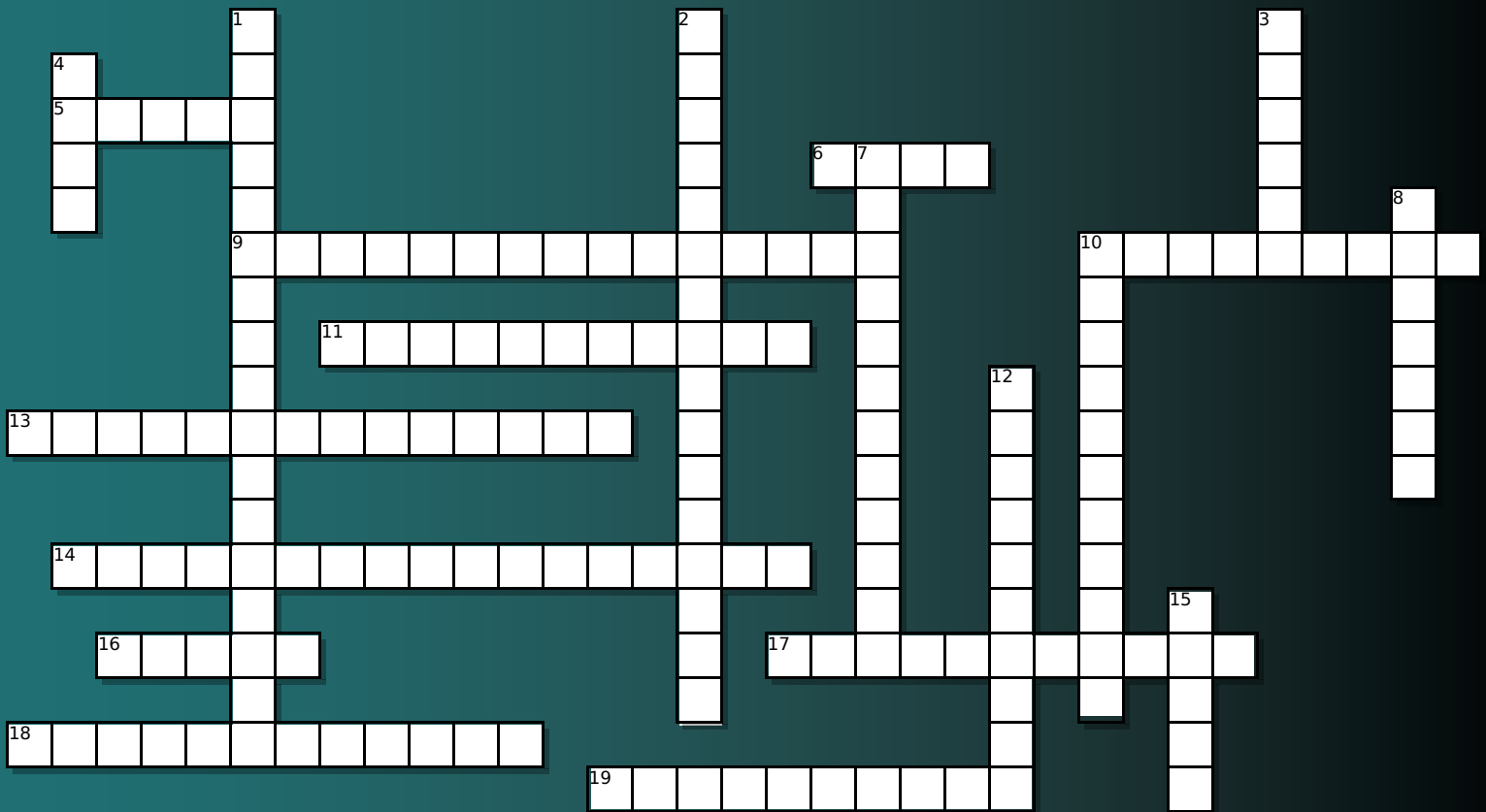
[www.utmb.edu](http://www.utmb.edu)



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# APPLY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## ACROSS

- 5 Required topic in an acceptable statistics course
- 6 Science GPA acronym
- 9 Behaving within appropriate career standards
- 10 Location of first Texas medical school
- 11 El Paso Medical School
- 13 Admission process considering all part os the application
- 14 DAT section
- 16 A&M Medical location
- 17 TMDSAS home base
- 18 Lipids, amino acides, and DNA replication
- 19 Form of medicine founded in 19th century

## DOWN

- 1 Academic track record
- 2 University staff offering guidance
- 3 How you complete the TMDSAS application
- 4 MCAT administrator
- 7 Other than the numbers, work on your personal \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 McGovern location
- 10 One of six important messages for sucessful applicatnts
- 12 Animal medicine
- 15 Rank the medical school for the Texas \_\_\_\_\_

Check the TMDSAS website for the solution to this crossword puzzle.

# Mrs. Cherry Gonzalez



**How long have you worked at TMDSAS?**

I came to work at TMDSAS in 2006 after working 10 years in the worker's compensation insurance industry. Much of what I did there was auditing submitted claims and documents and making corrections to reports that had errors. So when I came to TMDSAS, the work was very similar.

**What did you do at TMDSAS when you first started?**

Initially, I was an application processor. I would take the applications that had been submitted and review them for any mistakes and also review their coursework for accuracy with the transcripts that had been received.

**Back in 2006, things were a lot different than now. Right?**

Oh yes, everything was in paper form. We would print out the applications and do all of our review manually. It was very time consuming. Then we would spend an entire day making copies of the processed applications so that we could overnight mail them to the professional schools. Hours and hours we would spend at the copier making many, many copies of the applications.

**So, now things are much better?**

Technology has definitely changed the entire process. Everything is online, from the application that the student completes, to our processing software. There is very little paper involved in the process now. It is also much easier for us to track where the student has, perhaps, made errors so that we can make the necessary adjustments.

**What is your role at TMDSAS currently?**

I am the Operations Specialist for TMDSAS. I supervise all operations related to receipt and processing of the mail including transcripts and letters of evaluation. We get lots of mail during the application cycle and making sure it is all processed in a timely and accurate way is very important.

**Tell us a little bit about yourself personally, Cherry.**

Well, I am a native Texan from a small town in the central part of the state. I've been married for 24 years and my husband and I love UT sports. We are season ticket holders for the football and women's basketball teams, but we love going to other UT sporting events also. In our spare time, we are into crafting

especially hand-making various styles of holiday wreaths. We started this hobby several years ago and really find it fun and relaxing. It's amazing the things that you can learn to accomplish by watching "how to" videos on YouTube! Oh yea...and my favorite color is purple!

**Any advice you'd like to give potential TMDSAS applicants?**

Oh yes, definitely! First, use all the resources available on our various social media sites. We have a lot of application help for students to use that can help them avoid problems. Also, applicants should start the process early. Don't wait until the last minute to start or submit the application. If they will do that, there will be much less anxiety and panic. Finally, submit a photo with their application that is professional. Every year, we are amazed at the number of students who submit photos that are less than professional. Although some photos can be amusing and do show a sense of humor, they really don't help the students in the admissions process.

*Thank you, Cherry,* for your efforts at TMDSAS on behalf of the students!





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Veterinary Medicine  
& Biomedical Sciences

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- View receipt of transcripts and letters
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