How do I know if a career in medicine might be for me?

First ask yourself what kind of future appeals to you. Do you want challenges, opportunities, a chance to make a difference? Many bright and motivated college students describe a "dream career" with the following characteristics:

**Service:** Allows you to help people and advance knowledge.
**Action:** Doesn't tie you to a desk all the time.
**Respect:** Your work and contributions are an important part of your community.
**Security:** Enables you to earn a good living with a secure future.
**Excitement:** Changes daily, so it's hardly ever boring.
**Mobility:** Your skills and knowledge are in demand, wherever you choose to live.
**Flexibility:** Offers you lots of career options from the same education base.

Few occupations meet all of these standards. None meets them better than a career in medicine.

What is a doctor's career like?

Few fields offer a wider variety of opportunities. Most doctors' professional lives are filled with caring for people and continuously learning more about the human body. Every day in communities around the country, doctors work in neighborhood clinics, hospitals, offices, even homeless shelters and schools to care for people in need.

But physicians also do many other things. Physician researchers are at work today developing exciting new treatments for cancer, genetic disorders, and infectious diseases like AIDS. Academic physicians share their skills and wisdom by teaching medical students and residents. Others work with health maintenance organizations, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, health insurance companies, or in corporations directing health and safety programs. People with medical skills are in demand everywhere.

Would medicine provide me with a good living?

Medicine has many rewards — personally, intellectually, and financially. On average, doctors make about $160,000 a year, but this amount can vary depending on where physicians live and what type of medical specialty they practice. As the American health care system changes, fewer doctors are working for themselves and more are joining health care systems, often as salaried employees. In these organizations, physicians often can command salaries comparable to executives in other occupations.
I've heard a lot about primary care doctors lately. What are their careers like?

About one-third of the nation's physicians are generalists — "primary care" doctors who provide lifelong medical services for the entire family. General internists, family physicians, and general pediatricians are all considered generalist doctors. They are the first doctors people consult for medical care. And they are trained to provide the wide range of services children and adults need. When patients' specific health needs require further treatment, generalist physicians send them to see a specialist physician.

Specialist physicians differ from generalists in that they focus on treating a particular system or part of the body. Neurologists who study the brain, cardiologists who study the heart, ophthalmologists who study the eye, and hematologists who study the blood are just a few examples of specialists. They work together with generalist physicians to ensure that patients receive treatment for specific medical problems as well as complete and comprehensive care throughout life.

Ask yourself some questions:

- Do I care deeply about other people, their problems, and their pain?
- Do I enjoy helping people with my skills and knowledge?
- Do I enjoy learning, gaining new understanding? Do I often dig deeper into a subject than my teacher requires? Do I understand the value of learning beyond just making good grades?
- Am I interested in how the human body functions? Am I intrigued by the ways medicine can be used to improve life?

If you answered "Yes" to most of these questions, chances are you have the right kind of personality for a medical career.

What is medical school really like? I hear it's long and tough. How long? How tough?

One of the important truths is "things that come easily usually aren't worth much." Medical school is challenging. If you want to take responsibility for people's health and well-being, you've got to be serious about learning. Once you've been accepted, the medical school faculty and staff will do everything they can to help you succeed. In fact, more than 97 percent of entering medical students obtain their M.D. degrees.

The curriculum at many medical schools has changed in recent years. However, here's a general, quick look at what you can expect during four years of medical school.

During the first two years you will study the basic sciences—anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, pathology, and pharmacology—as well as behavioral sciences. You'll also begin learning the fundamental techniques of taking a medical history and examining patients.
Next, you'll go into the hospital and various clinics to observe and work with experienced doctors and begin to learn how to take care of patients. At this time you'll begin to explore the wide variety of career paths within medicine, such as family practice, internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics.

Your final years are spent continuing your contact with patients and doctors in a clinical setting while taking elective courses.

After medical school you will spend three to seven years in a residency, where you will gain further experience and training in the specialty you have chosen. You already may have an idea of which specialties interest you; however, it's good to keep an open mind until your third year of medical school.

Medical school usually lasts four years. In general, during the first two years, you study the sciences basic to medicine: anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, pathology, and pharmacology, as well as behavioral sciences; introductory patient interviewing and examination techniques; and an introduction to health care. In the third year, you gain experience with patients in hospital, clinic, and office settings in the fields of internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, and psychiatry. The fourth year is a mix of required and elective courses where you gain additional experience caring for patients. Each medical school differs in how it organizes its educational program. The Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™) has specific details.

Medical school is tough. A lot will be demanded of you both in the volume of information you will be expected to master and the rate at which you will be expected to learn. You will need good study habits and time management skills as well as a strong academic background. You also will need to be aware of and tap into the tremendous support, guidance, and mentorship that medical school faculty and staff provide to help you succeed. Medical schools are committed to their students and their education. In general, more than 95 percent of all students enrolled succeed in earning their M.D. degree.

Toward the end of medical school you will choose a specialty; after graduation you will spend at least thee years in a graduate medical education (residency) program. During that period you must obtain a license to practice.

**How do I select the right school for premedical education?**

Here are some questions to ask while you consider a college or university. Your career guidance counselor or science teacher can help you find the answers. You also should consult the many college guidebooks found in your school's guidance office, local libraries, and bookstores.

- Does the school have a good faculty and a reputation for high academic standards? Is it accredited?
• Does it offer a broad range of courses in the humanities and in the social, behavioral, and natural sciences?
• Does it have strong science departments with good laboratory facilities?
• Does it offer all of the required courses I need for acceptance to medical school?
• Does the college have a designated advisor specifically trained to help students interested in the health professions?
• Does it have a good track record for having its students accepted to medical school?
• Does it offer extracurricular activities that appeal to me? Are there programs to do volunteer work at local hospitals or clinics?
• Are there programs where I can demonstrate leadership and compassion?
• Does it "feel right" for me? Am I comfortable with its size, location, social life, and general atmosphere?
• Is it affordable for me and my family?

As you select a college remember that just as in high school, a good liberal arts education is a key ingredient to becoming a physician. You'll need a strong foundation in mathematics and the sciences that relate most to medicine: biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics. But it's important for your college experience to be broad. Taking courses in the humanities or liberal arts will help you prepare for the "people" side of medicine.

**How long does it take to get a medical education?**

Most would say a lifetime. Doctors are always learning as new discoveries are made and new technologies develop. However, it usually takes four years after college to obtain the M.D. degree. After that, you will choose a medical specialty and spend three years or more as a resident physician in a teaching hospital, where you train for certification in a specialty and will be paid, usually about $30,000 a year, to care for patients.

**So you Have Decided to Apply To Medical School – What Now**

Medical school admission requirements vary from school to school. Each school's specific prerequisites are detailed in the [Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™ - available in the Health PAC office)](https://www.aamc.org/), an annual publication of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The MSAR™ is highly recommended to all prospective applicants and is available at most school libraries and premedical advising offices. It also can be purchased from the AAMC [Publications](https://www.aamc.org/publications) Web site.

The MSAR aims to help students approach their goals realistically and to plan their education carefully. The book contains information on choosing a school, the admissions process, financing your education, opportunities for minorities, the nature of modern medical education, as well as the detailed admission requirements of each medical school in the United States and Canada.
In general, however, most medical schools will expect applicants to have attempted the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT®), and to have completed the following types of courses:

- One year of BIOLOGY
- One year of PHYSICS
- One year of ENGLISH
- Two years of CHEMISTRY (through Organic Chemistry)

Applicants should also consider volunteering at a local hospital or clinic to gain practical experience in the health professions. In addition, a well-rounded sample of extra-curricular activities or work experiences, both related and unrelated to medicine, will help broaden an applicant's knowledge and development.

Students interested in medicine are encouraged to research the wide variety of jobs available in the health professions, to discuss the nature and demands of medicine with a pre-medical advisor or health professional, and to ask a lot of questions before embarking on the application process.

Also, read about the Early Decision Program and the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS®)

How should I prepare to apply for medical school?

Your college or university's premedical advisor can help you through the application process. Medical schools will evaluate you on your college grades, extracurricular activities, and personal characteristics. Most also require you to take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT®), which analyzes your knowledge of the basic sciences, your reading and writing abilities, and your problem-solving skills.

You also should consult Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™), published by the Association of American Medical Colleges, which provides the specific admission requirements of each U.S. and Canadian medical school.

Entrance requirements at most medical schools include completion of course work in biology, mathematics, chemistry, physics, and English. But keep your undergraduate experience well rounded by also studying humanities and the social sciences. The ideal physician understands how society works and can communicate and write well. Extracurricular experiences also are important. You may want to volunteer at a local hospital or clinic to gain practical health care experience.

How do I choose among 125 medical schools?

It's a process similar to choosing an undergraduate school. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I prefer a small or large school?
• Do I like a large class or a small class?
• Am I interested in a career in research, in clinical practice in academic medicine? While every school offers opportunities to prepare for careers in all areas, the variety of curricular experience varies from school to school. Try to select schools that fit best your career goals.
• Which schools have a learning approach that emphasizes primary care, patient education, prevention, and preparation for community practice? What schools have a teaching approach that will work well for me?
• What kind of financial resources will I need to attend medical school? What are the costs?
• What types of financial aid are available at the schools I am considering?
• Are the schools in a location that meets my needs?
• Are the schools connected to a university or are they free-standing institutions?

When should I be ready to apply to medical school?

Most people, about 90 percent, apply to medical school at the end of their junior year in college and begin their medical studies after graduation. Others finish college and work for several years before beginning their medical education. Still others participate in "early admissions" or other collaborative programs between undergraduate colleges and medical schools, through which students with a demonstrated level of maturity and academic achievement can proceed to medical education at an accelerated pace.

How do I apply for medical school?

Thanks to the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS®), applying to medical school is not as complicated as you might think. Of the 125 accredited medical schools in the United States, 117 participate in the AMCAS program. To apply to any of these 117 schools, fill out an application, and send it with one set of your official transcripts to AMCAS. After the service verifies the information you provide, it distributes your application to the school(s) you have selected. For schools not participating in AMCAS, contact the admissions office directly for application procedures and materials. Applications are available online for submission beginning around June 1st and usually open for keying information approximately two to three weeks prior to this (look for Health PAC announcements) – we strongly recommend that you submit your completed application by July 15th (with or without MCAT scores) – submit your transcripts early (even before you submit and as close to June 1st as possible as review can take up to 6 weeks)

After you have submitted your application, some schools will ask for additional information such as a secondary application, letters of recommendation, and your specific interest in their programs.

What will the schools look for and how do they decide?

The key factors affecting acceptance to medical school include the following:
• Successful completion of required undergraduate courses
• Grade point average
• Performance on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
• Extracurricular activities - especially those reflecting public or health-related service, volunteer work, and other evidence of your initiative
• Letters of recommendation from undergraduate health professions advisors and faculty members as well as physicians and other members of the health professions, community leaders, and other individuals who have employed you or supervised your volunteer experience
• Interviews with medical school admissions committees. Unlike colleges, which hold interviews early in the application process, medical schools arrange them near the end. As they narrow their selection of candidates, most medical schools invite the most promising applicants to interview with faculty and other members of the admissions committee.
• Personal statement

Please remember that your GPA and Admissions test scores will be what “get you through the screening process” – but after this – your application and personal statement should highly the unique attributes and achievements that will set you apart from the other students who also pass the screening process – what are the things other than intelligence that make you a good, strong candidate for medical school and show that you have evaluated your career choice.

The MCAT exam measures your knowledge of subjects within the biological and physical sciences, including chemistry, which are necessary prerequisites for the study of the sciences in medical school. It also tests your ability to read and interpret information and your communication skills.

The MCAT exam is administered twice a year. You should take the MCAT in the spring of your junior year of college or in the fall of your senior year.

Your campus health professions advisor has detailed information about MCAT schedules and information on medical colleges and medical careers. Your advisor also can help you evaluate whether your course mix, grade point average, and MCAT scores are competitive for the medical schools you are considering.

Is getting into medical school as tough as they say?

No question about it — medical schools are looking for the finest minds and the most motivated students who have a strong and demonstrated interest in working with people. It takes a special type of person to even dream of a career in medicine, and it takes hard work and commitment to make it to medical school. Today, only about one-half of those who apply are accepted.

Application and Admission Timeline
This general guide will prepare college students for the medical school application and admission process. Consult your prehealth advisor to devise an individualized schedule that works best for you.

**College Year 1**

**Fall Semester**

- Meet prehealth advisor and investigate prehealth advisory program
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations, as applicable
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements

**Spring Semester**

- Explore the AAMC's [Considering a Career in Medicine](https://www.aamc.org) Web site
- Identify summer paid/volunteer medically related opportunities
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Summer**

- Complete summer paid/volunteer medically related experience
- Attend summer school, if necessary

**College Year 2**

**Fall Semester**

- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Identify available paid/volunteer medically related clinical or research activities
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Spring Semester**

- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Participate in paid/volunteer medically related clinical or research activities
- Identify summer paid/volunteer medically related opportunities
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Summer**
- Complete summer paid/volunteer medically related experience
- Participate in a summer health careers program, if available
- Attend summer school, if necessary

**College Year 3**

**Fall Semester**

- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
- Explore the following AAMC Web sites:
  - Applying to Medical School
  - Medical schools in the U.S. and Canada
  - Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
  - AAMC Fee Assistance Program
  - Minorities in Medicine to get information for groups underrepresented in medicine
- Begin preparation for spring MCAT administration
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Spring Semester**

- Consult regularly with prehealth advisor regarding:
  - Schedule for completion of school-specific requirements for advisor/committee premedical evaluation
  - Advice about medical education options
  - Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
  - Prepare for spring MCAT administration
  - Continue review of medical education options
  - Take spring MCAT
- Explore the following Web sites:
  - AMCAS
  - Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS)
  - Ontario Medical School Application Service (OMSAS)
  - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)
  - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS)
  - AAMC Curriculum Directory for information about medical school curricula and joint, dual, and combined-degree programs
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Summer**
• Participate in a summer health careers program, if available
• Complete AMCAS application
• Take summer MCAT
• Attend summer school, if necessary
• Explore the following AAMC Web sites:
  o Recommendations Concerning Medical School Acceptance Procedures for First-Year Entering Students
  o Applicant Responsibilities

**College 4**

**Fall Semester**

• Complete supplementary application materials for schools to which you've applied
• Consult regularly with prehealth advisor regarding:
  o Completion of school-specific requirements for advisor/committee premedical evaluation
  o Status of application/admission process for schools to which you've applied
• Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
• Interview at medical schools
• Continue review of medical education options
• Explore the following AAMC Web sites:
  o (MD)^2: Monetary Decisions for Medical Doctors online program
  o Financial Aid Forms Required by Medical Schools searchable database
• Successfully complete first-semester elective science and non-science coursework and other degree requirements
• Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Spring Semester**

• Make interim and final decisions about medical school choice
• Immediately notify medical schools that you will not be attending
• Ensure that all IRS forms are submitted as early as possible
• Successfully complete second-semester elective science and non-science coursework and other degree requirements
• Graduate

**Summer**

• Prepare for medical school enrollment: purchase books and equipment and make appropriate living arrangements
• Relax and prepare for medical school
• Attend orientation programs and matriculate in medical school
How much does medical school cost and can I afford it?

Annual tuition and fees at state medical schools in 2004-2005 averaged $14,607 for state residents and $33,036 for non-residents. At private schools, tuition and fees averaged $32,092 for residents and $33,666 for nonresidents. These figures do not include housing or living expenses. But don't let these costs discourage you. A wide array of grants and loans are available to those who are determined to get a medical education. According to the LCME-1B, about 82 percent of medical students graduate with some educational debt. Many receive substantial financial assistance through programs that provide loans guaranteed by the federal government.

You will need to plan your budget carefully, however, so that you don't end up with more debt than is necessary. Once you have been accepted to a medical school, work with the school's financial aid officer to develop the best package to meet your needs.

Most medical students borrow at least a portion of the money they need to finance their education. In 2005, the median debt was more than $120,000. That's significant debt for a young doctor; however, a medical education is an investment that keeps returning dividends throughout your life.

There are many options for loans and scholarships, some of which may minimize your potential debt. Some are based on need. Others are not. Some loans are targeted specifically to individuals who are seeking careers in primary care.

Federally sponsored loans include the Perkins, the subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford FFEL (Federal Family Education Loan), the subsidized and unsubsidized Ford FDSL (Federal Direct Student Loan), and the Health Education Assistance Loan (HEAL). Several non-federal alternative loan programs also are available.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) sponsors a comprehensive loan program, MEDLOANS®, that provides students access to several federal programs, and an alternative loan program, through the completion of one loan application. MEDLOANS also provides pre-approval of access to alternative loan funds for four years of medical school to qualified students.

Various grants and scholarship programs also are available from the federal government and from individual medical schools. Federal programs include the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship and the National Health Service Corps. Scholarships for underrepresented minority students also are available through the National Medical Fellowships.

The best plan is to meet with the medical school financial aid office after being accepted to develop a budget and financial aid program based on your need and resources.
Early Decision Programs – Remember – if you submit to these – your application will not be reviewed or processed by any other school until you have received notice of acceptance or denial from this program – we strongly encourage students to pursue the traditional route of application – if you are competitive enough to receive acceptance under early decision – then you should be competitive enough in the traditional process – but if you are not – then you significantly hinder your application with other schools due to the later submission

To apply through the Early Decision Program (EDP), applicants must follow the guidelines listed below:

1. Apply to only one U.S. medical school by the stated deadline date (August 1 for those schools which participate in AMCAS®);
2. Provide the school with all required supplemental information by the stated deadline date (August 1 for those schools which participate in AMCAS); and
3. Attend only this school if offered a place under the Early Decision Program.

If these guidelines are met, applicants will be notified of the school's admission decision by October 1. If not accepted under the Early Decision Program, applicants will automatically be placed in the regular applicant pool by the school and may then apply to additional schools. EDP regulations apply to both AMCAS and non-AMCAS participating schools.

For the 1999 entering class, 91 medical schools offered admission through the Early Decision Program. Since most participating schools admit only a small portion of their entering class through the program, only applicants with an excellent chance of admission to a particular school should apply under the Early Decision Program.

Before submitting an EDP application, students are strongly urged to refer to the AAMC publication, Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR™). This publication provides specific admission criteria for each medical school in the United States and Canada and indicates whether each school participates in the Early Decision Program. For those schools which have an EDP, the MSAR lists not only the deadline dates, but also any residency restrictions schools may place on applicants. Some schools will consider only in-state residents through the EDP; others will consider out-of-state residents only if they apply as Early Decision applicants.

The MSAR is available at most medical and undergraduate college libraries and premedical advising offices.
The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) is a non-profit, centralized application processing service for applicants to the first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools. For the 2007 entering class, most medical schools will be participating in AMCAS. Applicants to medical schools that do not participate in AMCAS, as well as all advanced standing and transfer applicants, should contact schools directly for application instructions. You should also contact schools directly for application information regarding joint or special programs, such as BA/MD, MD/Ph.D., MD/JD and so forth.

AMCAS does not render any admission decisions and does not advise applicants where to apply. Each participating school is completely autonomous in reaching its admissions decisions. AMCAS provides only the application processing service. The AAMC and AMCAS neither endorse, nor have any relationship to, commercial counseling services concerned with admission to either U.S. or foreign medical schools.

Regardless of the number of AMCAS schools to which you apply, you submit just one application to AMCAS via the Web. You must also request an official transcript from each college of registration in the United States and Canada. AMCAS then assembles your application file, verifies it and forwards the application to your designated medical schools. AMCAS also sends your MCAT scores for tests taken since April 1991, provided you have released them to AMCAS.

**Deadlines**

All deadlines are set by the individual medical schools and represent when materials (application and fees) must be received by AMCAS. Submitting materials as early as possible avoids any processing delays or missed deadlines. You are responsible for ensuring that all required information is received by AMCAS according to the school-specific deadlines set forth in the application. In addition, applicants are responsible for checking the status of their submitted application.

**Refunds**

AMCAS will not issue refunds for missed deadlines. You will be eligible for a refund of your AMCAS application fees—minus a $160 non-refundable service fee—if you withdraw your application before it has completed the verification process. You will receive a refund only for those schools for which the published deadline has not yet passed at the time you withdraw your application.

**Fees**

The fee for applications for the 2007 entering classes is $160 for the first designated school and $30 for each additional school, regardless of the point at which you add school designations. Those unable to pay this fee may apply for a waiver through the AAMC Fee Assistance Program (FAP).
About AMCAS Application Processing

1. How does AMCAS process applications?

Once your application has been submitted to AMCAS, acknowledgment of its receipt will be sent to you via e-mail provided you have included a valid internet address. Such acknowledgment does not indicate that your materials (that all official transcripts) are complete or that deadline requirements have been satisfied.

AMCAS will then determine if all official transcripts have arrived. If not, your application will be held until they are all present. When your application and all transcripts are on file, AMCAS verifies your course work against your official transcripts.

2. What is the Verification process?

During the Verification process, AMCAS verifies your course work against your official transcripts, ensuring that the course information entered in your application matches that on your official transcripts.

AMCAS may return your application to you and you may miss deadlines if major errors or omissions in course listings are found during verification. AMCAS will stop verifying your materials and an e-mail notification will be sent if any missing or incomplete transcripts are discovered during verification.

AMCAS will verify your application using the following symbols:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>any course verified without correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗</td>
<td>any course verified with any correction, change or addition made by AMCAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>any course listed on the Academic Record but not reflected on an official transcript; format corrections were not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧</td>
<td>any course listed on the Academic Record but not reflected on an official transcript; format corrections have been made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⚫</td>
<td>a type of coursework not intended to be verified by AMCAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After your application is verified, your AMCAS GPA is calculated. Your AMCAS GPA may differ from the GPA calculated by your school.

3. What do the "X"s to the right of my course work in my processed application mean?
An "X" to the right of a verified course indicates that a change to your course entry has been made by AMCAS in order to accurately reflect the official transcript on which that course appears. Changes may also be made by AMCAS if you neglect to include certain pertinent information in your course work section. For example, if you do not enter the AMCAS grade for a particular course, AMCAS will add the appropriate AMCAS grade and an "X" will appear to the right of that course entry.

4. **What happens to my application after Verification?**

   Following the final step of Verification, the calculation of your AMCAS GPA, an e-mail informing you that your application has completed processing will be sent to you.

   Your AMCAS Application will then be made available to your designated medical schools. Medical schools do not receive a listing of the other schools to which you have applied.

5. **My application has been there since XX, why isn't it verified?**

   Please note that AMCAS application processing normally takes 4-6 weeks, and can take significantly longer during peak processing times.

   However, the processing of an individual application can also be delayed due to one or more of the following reasons:

   o **Missing or incomplete transcripts** - If your application is experiencing what you consider to be an excessive delay, and you have not yet confirmed that your official transcripts have been received by AMCAS, you can check your transcript status by contacting AMCAS at amcas@aamc.org using "Transcript Status" as a subject line. Please allow 1-3 business days for a response.

   o **Application Fees** - Application Fees must be submitted by credit or debit card, or electronic check.

   Major errors or omissions in the Coursework section - **Applications that include a significant amount of incorrect course information, or that omit a significant amount of coursework data, will be returned. AMCAS informs applicants via e-mail in these cases**

**Fees and Refunds**

1. **How much does it cost to use AMCAS?**

   AMCAS charges an application processing fee of $160 for one (1) medical school designation, and $30 for each designation thereafter.
2. If my request for a deadline extension is denied, will I receive a refund?

AMCAS does not issue refunds for missed deadlines.

3. What is the policy regarding refunds?

You will only be eligible for a refund if you withdraw before your application begins the AMCAS verification process. You will receive a refund only for those schools for which the published deadline has not yet passed (at the time you withdraw your application). If no published deadlines have passed at the time you withdraw your application, you will receive a full refund minus a $160 non-refundable service fee.

Deadlines

1. When is the deadline for applications to be received by AMCAS?

There are two sets of application deadline dates. The Early Decision Program (EDP) has a deadline of August 1 for all medical schools. The Regular Admissions Program deadlines vary from school to school. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) of the deadline date.

AGAIN – WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE APPLICANTS TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATION NO LATER THAN JULY 15TH

2. What is meant by an AMCAS deadline?

An AMCAS deadline is the date by which the application and fee must be received by AMCAS. You must certify and submit your web-application and pay the fee by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) of the deadline date. It is NOT the date that the application must be received by your designated medical school(s).

3. If I missed a deadline, can I substitute or change my list of schools?

No. Once your application has been received, the schools designated in your application cannot be changed, although you can designate additional medical schools provided the school’s deadline has not passed.

For example, if you originally applied to Schools A, B, and C by their application deadlines, but missed the transcript deadline of School A, you can not substitute School D for School A. However, you may add School D and pay an additional $30 application fee. To do so, return to your completed application, open it, add
an additional school choice, then re-certify and re-submit it to AMCAS along with the appropriate application fees before the school's AMCAS deadline.

4. **What is a Transcript Deadline?**

The AMCAS Transcript Deadline is the date that all transcripts required in support of your application must be received.

Transcripts must be received by the following dates:

- Early Decision Program applications: August 1
- Regular applications: 14 calendar days after the school's stated application deadline, by 5:00 p.m. EST.

If the transcript deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, materials are due on the following business day. Transcripts should be accompanied by the Transcript Request Form, which is located within the AMCAS Application.

5. **What recourse do I have for missed deadlines?**

AMCAS does not grant deadline extensions for any reason. Schools may grant deadline extensions. Contact the individual medical schools directly to request a deadline extension. If your request is approved, the school will notify AMCAS to process your application after the deadline.

6. **Will I be penalized if my application is delayed due to missing materials, such as transcripts or other missing documents? What if those missing materials cause me to miss a deadline?**

AMCAS will not transmit to schools applications that are not complete by the appropriate deadlines. For example, if your AMCAS application for School A was received before its October 15 application deadline, but one of your transcripts was received on October 30, one day after their transcript deadline, AMCAS will not transmit your application to the school. You have missed the deadline, and you are not eligible for a refund.

**Transcripts & MCAT Scores**

1. **Missing, incomplete and unmatchable transcripts are the number one reason for processing delays.**

To prevent these delays from occurring, applicants should use the AMCAS Transcript Request form, available within the AMCAS application, when requesting that official transcripts (OTs) be sent to AMCAS in support of their application. This form, which registrars submit to AMCAS alongside the
requested OTs, includes the AAMC ID, the Alternate ID identified by the applicant as being used by the transcript-issuing institution, and other information helpful to the matching process.

2. **When are transcripts due?**

AMCAS accepts transcripts starting on or about May 2. Transcripts are due 14 calendar days after the deadline date. For example, if School A's application deadline is October 15, their transcript deadline is October 29.

**Exception:** Transcripts in support of an Early Decision Program (EDP) application are due on August 1, the EDP application deadline.

3. **I applied last year, so you already have my transcripts. Do I need to send them again?**

Even though you applied previously to AMCAS, you will need to re-submit official transcripts. Since we must verify to your designated medical schools that you have not taken any additional courses at a particular school, you must submit new transcripts each year you apply. In addition, AMCAS does not keep transcripts on file from previous years' applications. Thus, transcripts submitted in previous years cannot be reactivated.

4. **Can I send an official sealed copy of my transcripts?**

AMCAS will **not** accept transcripts from applicants under any circumstances. Transcripts must arrive directly from the Registrar's office. Registrars should forward transcripts to: AMCAS, Attn: Transcripts AAMC Medical School Application Services, P.O. Box 57326, Washington, DC 20037.

5. **If I received transfer credits, do I need to have transcripts sent from those schools?**

AMCAS requires that official transcripts from all U.S. and Canadian post-secondary institutions are submitted, regardless of which school(s) accepted this credit. For example, if you take a summer course at a community college and transfers the work to your primary/home institution, AMCAS requires BOTH official transcripts; the one from the community college and the one from your regular year college, even if the community college course work also appears on your home institution transcript.

6. **Do I need to send my MCAT scores to the schools directly?**

No. All MCAT scores released to AMCAS will be reported to the medical schools you designate on your AMCAS application. All 2003 and later MCAT scores are automatically released to AMCAS.
If you need to release scores from an MCAT exam taken prior to 2003, you can do so through the [MCAT THx System](#).