

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

HPAC Group Orientation

Spring 2020

Dr. Greg Spillers

Director | Pre-Health Advising Center

About the Pre-Health Advising Center

- **Mission:** To assist UH students interested in healthcare careers.
 - This includes medicine, dentistry, optometry, nursing, or allied-health.
- We offer guidance on:
 - Various healthcare career paths
 - Admission requirements
 - Application process and timelines, including HPAC process
- Website is under construction—email questions to prehealth@uh.edu!

About the Pre-Health Advising Center

- We are located in **215 CBB (across from Writing Center)**
 - **Email:** prehealth@uh.edu
 - **Phone:** 713-743-2681

- We hope to hire **additional advisors** very soon!
 - Additional appointments in Navigate will open once advisors are hired.

- Please sign up for our **Pre-Health Student Listserv:**
<https://listserv.uh.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=UHPREHEALTH&A=1>

Health Professions Fair 2020

**HAVE A
HAND
IN YOUR
FUTURE**

**HEALTH
PROFESSIONS FAIR**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2020
10AM – 2PM**

Houston Room • Student Center South
Free Admission • Open to all students

Meet with recruiters from over 60 programs across the nation, representing medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, physician assistants and allied-health.

For more information:

Pre-Health Advising Center at CBB 215
713-743-2681 • prehealth@uh.edu
uh.edu/ussc/pre-health-advising

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Personal Statement Workshops

Presentations:

Discuss important characteristics of successful personal statements and successfully identifying the best content to include.

Upcoming Presentations:

- **Monday, February 10th, 3:30-5:00**
- **Tuesday, February 11th, 3:30-5:00**
- **Thursday, February 13th, 1:00-2:15**
- **Monday, February 17th, 3:30-5:00**
- **Thursday, February 20th, 6:00-7:30**

Workshops (must attend Presentation first):

Bring a rough draft of their personal statement that is substantial enough to receive feedback (1/2-page, single-spaced minimum),.

Upcoming Workshops:

- **Tuesday, February 25th, 4:00-5:00**
- **Wednesday, February 26th, 4:00-5:00**
- **Thursday, February 27th, 6:00-7:00**
- **Monday, March 2nd, 4:00-5:00**
- **Tuesday, March 3rd, 4:00-5:00**
- **Thursday, March 5th, 1:00-2:00**

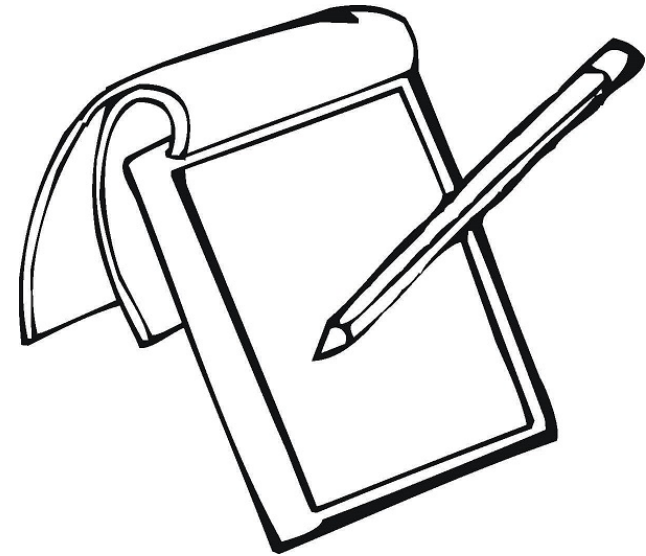
Orientation Outline

■ Part 1: HPAC Overview

- HPAC Application and Review Process
- Components of HPAC Application

■ Part 2: Application Overview

- Application Timelines
- Academics for Medical & Dental School
- Where should I apply?
- MCAT & DAT
- CASPer
- Should I take a Gap-Year?
- What if I am not Competitive?



Part I

HPAC Overview

What is HPAC?

- Health Professions Advisory Committee
 - 15-18 UH faculty from various colleges across campus
 - Meet to review and discuss applicants to Medical and Dental School
 - Provides committee recommendation letter to accompany application
- Am I required to complete an HPAC review?
 - Only if you are applying to medical and dental school from UH
- When do I begin the HPAC application?
 - During the Fall semester before you plan to apply to medical/dental school

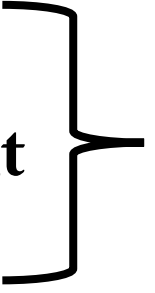
Why do the HPAC Review?

- TMDSAS participating schools prefer HPAC Letter Packet
 - Currently, most Texas Medical and Dental schools prefer a committee letter if your university offers a committee.
- Helps you begin organizing application materials earlier
 - Applications open in May, but important to begin organizing materials earlier!
- Provides feedback on your application
 - HPAC committee will provide notes on your resume and personal statement.

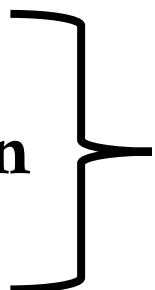
Am I eligible for an HPAC Review?

- Must have completed required coursework:
 - Completion of freshman year science-major biology, chemistry and physics
 - Completion of Organic Chemistry I and at least current enrollment in Organic Chemistry II
 - Completion of at least 3 hours of biology coursework above the freshman level
- Must have a minimum overall and BCPM GPA of 3.0.
 - Students below this GPA threshold will not be reviewed by the committee.
- Must submit all required HPAC documents before March 16th deadline.
 - This means HPAC application, personal statement, resume, and 3 letters of evaluation.

What are the components to my HPAC file?

1. HPAC Application
 2. Personal statement
 3. Resume
- 
- Submitted by you!*

- All three documents must be submitted to prehealth@uh.edu at the same time.

4. Letters of Evaluation
- 
- Submitted by your Letter Writers!*

- Letters should be submitted to prehealth@uh.edu with LOR Evaluation Form.

HPAC Application

- Includes:
 - Biographical Information
 - Coursework (be sure all transfer credit has been submitted to UH)
 - GPA (Overall and BCPM)
 - MCAT or DATs (if you have them—otherwise scheduled test date)
- Read instructions carefully!
- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu by March 16th.

A. Applicant Information

Full Name: _____ PSID#: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

_____ TX _____
City State ZIP Code

Cell Phone: _____ UH Email: _____

Preferred Email: _____

Application to: choose one... Cumulative GPA: _____ BCPM GPA: _____

Major: _____ Are you a post-Baccalaurate? No Yes insert color photo below (<150 kb)

Are you using Fresh Start? No Yes

MCAT Score
Scaled % Date Taken: _____
0%
0%

DAT Score
AA % Date Taken: _____
0%
0%



Disclaimer and Signature

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Personal Statement

- Your personal statement should respond to the following prompt:
 - Explain your motivation to seek a career in medicine/dentistry.
 - Be sure to include the value of your experiences that prepare you to be a physician/dentist.
- Your personal statement is limited to 5000 characters, including spaces.
- Participate in Writing Center Personal Statement Workshops.
- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu with HPAC application and resume by March 16th!

Resume

- Your resume highlights:
 - Educational Achievements
 - Employment History
 - Volunteer and research experiences
 - Additional extracurricular experiences
- A resume will not be loaded into TMDSAS.
- Use the template included in HPAC application.
 - No need to include sections if they do not apply to you.
- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu with HPAC application and personal statement by March 16th!

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STUDENT NAME
Address
Contact information

OBJECTIVE
Brief Statement of Objective or Purpose

EDUCATION

- Degree conferred, name of University or College, location, dates attended, major, honors received for each post-secondary institution attended

EMPLOYMENT

- Employment: Name of Company or Organization, location, dates employed, position title, number of hours worked per week, position description including duties & responsibilities

TRAINING

- Research, lab experience, professional training courses or internships that were supervised, location, dates attended, certificates received.

VOLUNTEER WORK

- All volunteer work with active and consistent participation

HONORS/AWARDS

- Awards, scholarships, and recognition received while in college

AFFILIATIONS

- Community or professional organization membership with active participation. (List only organizations or activities at the collegiate level, i.e. post-secondary school.)

OTHER

- List any other personal activity or achievement of special interest

Letters of Evaluation

- 3 letters required for HPAC (5 maximum allowed)
 - 2 Science Faculty (BCPM)
 - 1 non-science Faculty or 1 physician (MD or DO)
 - Additional letter from someone who knows you well enough to speak positively on the your behalf.
- Letter writers must email prehealth@uh.edu with:
 - Copy of Letter of Evaluation
 - Letter of Evaluation Guidelines Form
- At least 3 letters should be received by March 16th

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OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC)
Letter of Evaluation Guidelines Form

(Student's Last name) _____ (Student first name) _____ (PSID#) _____

Applying to: Medical School Dental School

I hereby waive and relinquish any right of access to this confidential letter of evaluation.

(Student's signature) _____ (Date) _____

To the Evaluator:

You have been asked to evaluate the qualities and attributes for the student named above for their application to medical or dental school. Your letter of recommendation will be sent to the University of Houston's Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC), which will use your letter along with other academic and biographical materials to evaluate the student's preparedness for professional school. After its review, HPAC will issue a consensus recommendation on behalf of the student. Your letter of recommendation will be submitted as part of a packet to the professional schools of this student's choosing.

Instructions for the Evaluator:

1. Your letter must be typed and presented on departmental or company letterhead.
2. Your letter should be addressed to the Admissions Committee. Do not address your letters to HPAC or the Pre-Health Advising Center.
3. Briefly describe relationship with the student (advisor, faculty, supervisor, physician-mentor).
4. Only discuss numbers (GPA, MCAT score, grades) in context, such as in comparison to other students or to note trends in performance.
5. Comparisons between the student and his/her peers (in same class or major) are encouraged.
6. Be specific about student organizations, opportunities, and honors that may be unique to UH.
7. Assess the student's suitability for their chosen program (will he/she succeed in medical/dental school?).
8. Focus on behavior of student (maturity level, leadership ability, interpersonal skills, reliability).
9. It is recommended that your letter be limited to one page and certainly not more than 2 pages.
10. Please double check that you have used the student's correct name throughout the letter's body as well as the appropriate pronouns.
11. Your letter must be dated and signed. Your academic/professional credentials should be placed below your signature.
12. Your letter should be converted to a PDF document before submission to the Pre-Health Advising Center.

Please email this document along with your Letter of Evaluation to the Pre-Health Advising Center: prehealth@uh.edu

I have finished the HPAC Application, what do I do now?

- Email prehealth@uh.edu with the following documents by **March 16th** :
 - HPAC Application
 - Resume
 - Personal Statement
- Have Letter Writers submit their letters to prehealth@uh.edu by **March 16th**.
- Be patient!
 - The HPAC committee meets every Friday to discuss applications
 - Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis—first come, first serve.
 - You will be contacted once your recommendation has been provided.
- Research list of schools you wish to apply to using the MSAR or ADEA Guide.

What is the overall HPAC Recommendation Breakdown?

- *Highest recommendation*: ~5% of students
 - 3.9 GPA+, strong coursework, substantial amount of extracurricular activity
- *High recommendation*: ~20% of students
 - 3.7 GPA+, strong coursework, decent to substantial amount of extracurricular activity
- *Recommendation*: ~60% of students
 - 3.4 GPA+, good - strong coursework, decent amount of extracurricular activity
- *Recommendation with Reservation*: ~10% of students
 - Undergraduate Example: high GPA/weak test or vice versa, strong coursework but up and down performance, little extracurricular activity, generally a weaker candidate
 - Post-bacc Example: Low undergrad GPA (sub-2.5) but strong PB GPA (3.5+), strong coursework, lots of extracurricular activity, usually a weaker candidate that needs a second look (an upgrade from a 1)
- *Do not Recommend*: ~5% of students
 - Poor GPA/coursework, incomplete coursework. Generally, should not apply because applicant lacks competitiveness

Major HPAC Takeaways!

- Your HPAC Application, Resume, and Personal Statement are due by **March 16th**
 - All three documents should be emailed at the same time to prehealth@uh.edu.
- You should begin asking for Letters of Evaluation now—**3 are due March 16th**
 - At least 3 are required to be received for HPAC review.
 - Letters should be emailed to prehealth@uh.edu and include the LOR Evaluation Form.
- You do not have to include your HPAC Recommendation or Committee Letter.
 - But, please notify me before submitting your medical/dental school application.

Thank you!

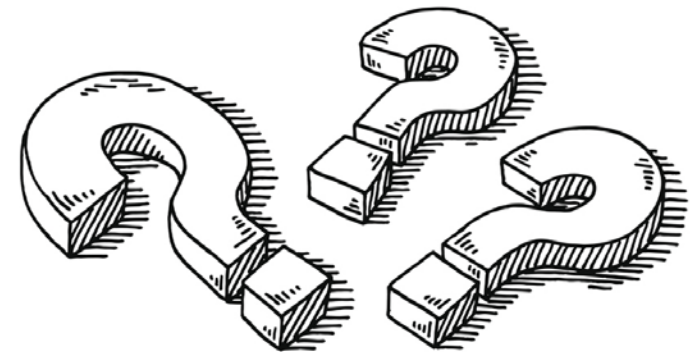
Questions?

Pre-Health Advising Center

Location: 215 CBB

Email: prehealth@uh.edu

Phone: 713-743-2681



Part 2

Application Overview

Medical & Dental Schools in Texas

Allopathic Medical Schools:

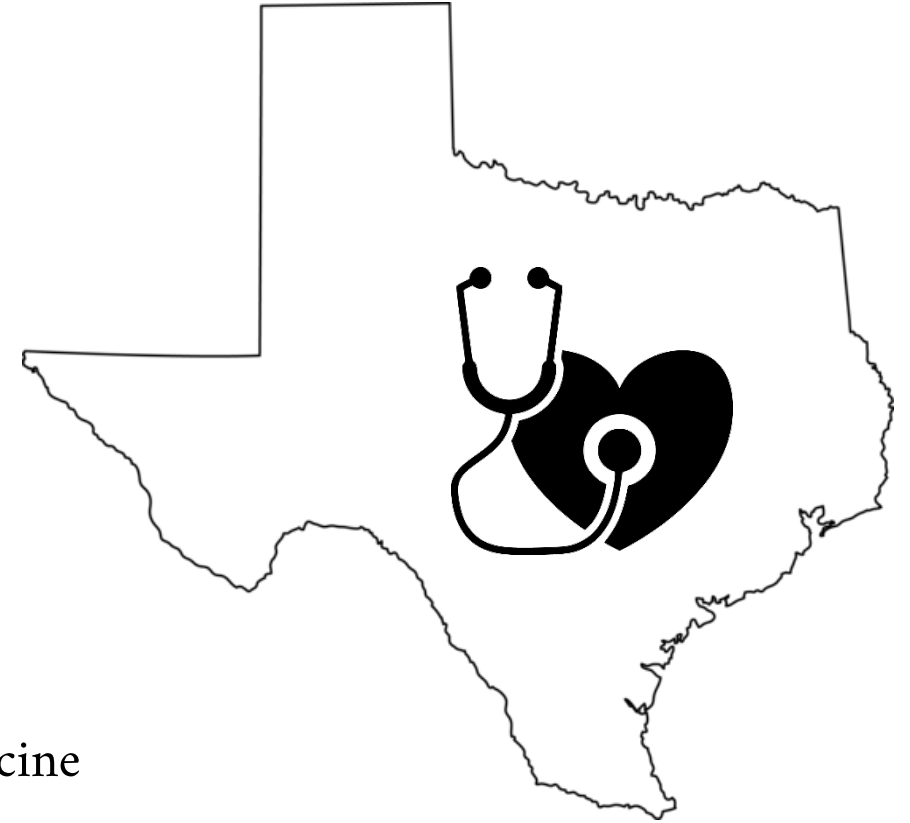
- 10 use TMDSAS
- 2 use AMCAS
 - Baylor College of Medicine
 - TCU and UNTHSC - School of Medicine

Osteopathic Medical Schools:

- 2 use TMDSAS
 - UNT - Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
 - Sam Houston State University - College of Osteopathic Medicine
- 1 uses AACOMAS
 - University of the Incarnate Word - School of Osteopathic Medicine

Dental Schools:

- All 3 use TMDSAS



Primary Applications

- **Centralized Application Services**

- TMDSAS (for Texas medical and dental schools)
- AMCAS (for allopathic medical school)
- AACOMAS (for osteopathic medical school)
- AADSAS (for dental school)

- Each application has an instruction manual—download it now!

- Submit your primary application early as possible—but double-check for errors.

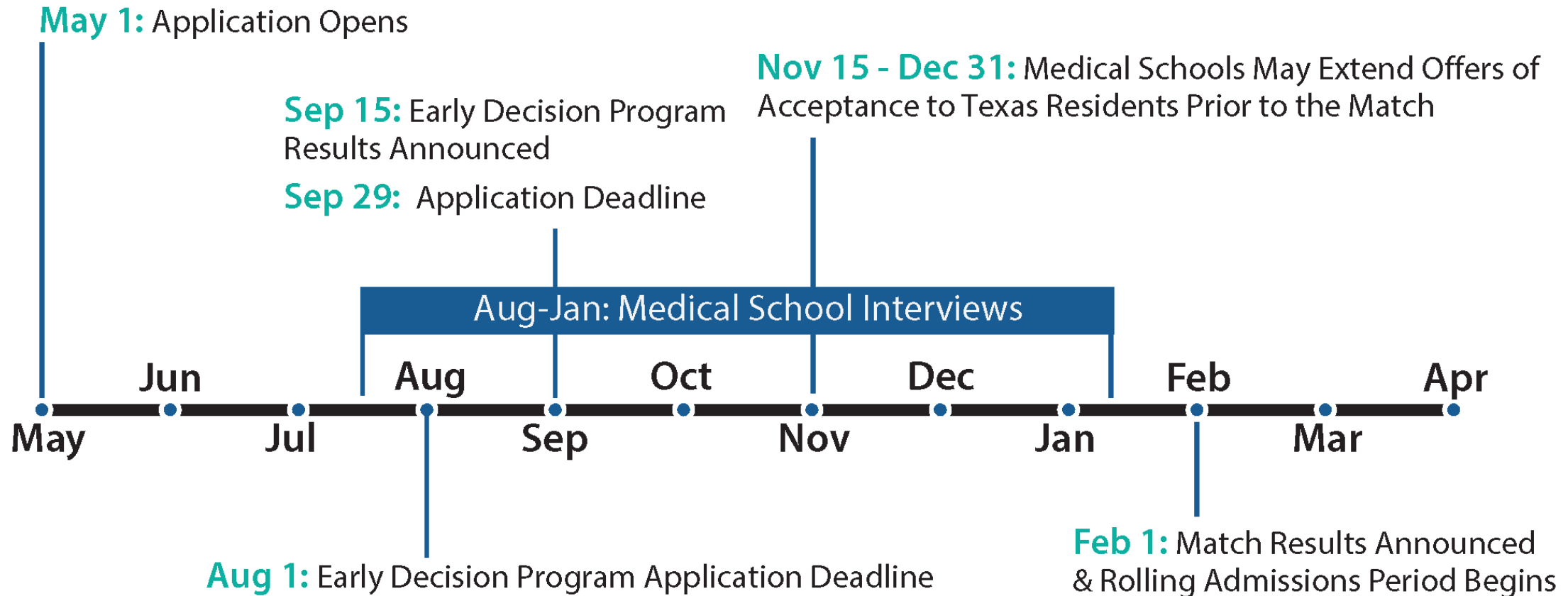
- You may submit without MCAT/DAT score, transcripts, or letters—they can be added later

- Takes approximately 4-6 weeks to be verified (peaks in July/August)

Important Application Dates & Deadlines

- **TMDSAS** (Texas Medical and Dental Schools only)
 - May 1: Application opens, and submissions begin
(no need to submit right away—I recommend early June)
- **AMCAS** (Allopathic Medical Schools)
 - May 2: Application opens
 - June 1: Submission begins
 - June 30: Schools begin receiving verified applications
- **AACOMAS** (Osteopathic Medical Schools)
 - May 4: Application opens, and submissions begin
 - June 15: Schools begin receiving applications
- **AADSAS** (Dental Schools)
 - June 1: Application Opens

TMDsAS Application Timeline



■ Key Points:

- Have your application completed and submitted by mid-June (earlier is ok, but don't rush!)
- Do not plan to leave the country or expect flexibility with dates

Secondary Applications

- Each school you apply to will send you a *secondary application*.
 - Additional essays and questions specific to that school.
 - Some schools screen applicants first (minimum GPA/MCAT/DAT)
- Google secondary prompts from previous year and work on those while your primary application is being verified.
- Submit secondary applications within 2 weeks of receipt!
- Avoid repeating content from primary application essay in your secondary essays.
 - Focus on mission of each medical/dental school—how would you contribute?

ACADEMICS

- Submit transcripts from every institution that you have attended
 - Include all dual-enrollment, summer courses, study-abroad, etc.
 - Military transcripts added as “Military Service”—but not used in GPA calculation
 - International coursework and transcripts are required—but not used in GPA calculation.
- Pay attention to academic trends
 - Did you challenge yourself ?
 - Did you improve over time?
 - Did you take your science courses at UH?
 - Do you have only 1-2 withdrawals?
- AP/IB credit is not always accepted—especially for pre-requisites

ACADEMICS

- TMDSAS GPA is calculated in 8 ways:
 - Overall (Undergraduate + Graduate, BCPM)
 - Undergraduate (overall, BCPM, non-BCPM)
 - Graduate (overall, BCPM, non-BCPM)
- Science GPA = BCPM
 - Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Math
- “Other science” coursework is excluded
 - Some non-BCPM can still count, if they include >50% Biology content (e.g., some Engineering, Kinesiology, Psychology, Pharmacy, etc.)
 - If you received an A and are unsure, include it as BCPM.

TMDSAS

Science GPA:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math
- TMDSAS does not use +/-
- 2019 Median GPA: ~3.8

AMCAS

Science GPA:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math
- AMCAS does use +/-
- 2019 Median GPA : ~3.7

AADSAS

Science GPA:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- AADSAS does use +/-
- 2019 Median GPA: ~3.5

Activities & Experiences (for TMDSAS)

- TMDSAS allows you to create a personal Chronology of Activities
 - Must account for all time between high school graduation and August of application year
 - 300-character limit for each activity description
- Place activities into 9 specific categories:
 - Academic Recognition, Non-Academic Recognition, Leadership, Employment, Research Activities, Healthcare Activities, Community Service, Extracurricular and Leisure Activities, and Planned Activities
 - You may place an activity in only one category—so choose wisely!
 - No changes are allowed after you submit the application
- You can mark up to three activities as the “Most Meaningful”
 - You are granted 500 characters to describe these experiences—focus on transformative nature of experiences
- Anything you on your application is fair game for an interview!
 - Include activities in which you were actively engaged
 - Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.)
 - Try to avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).

Activities & Experiences (for AMCAS)

- AMCAS allows you to include up to 15 “Work & Activities”
 - You do not have to list 15 total, but ideally you should have at least 10
 - You will only have 700 characters to describe the activity
 - Do not fill this area with fluff
 - Can include hobbies (but try to stick to only 1 or 2 that you’re very passionate about)
- You can mark up to three experiences as the “Most Meaningful”
 - You are granted an additional 1325 characters to describe these experiences
 - You should focus on the transformative nature of these experience
- Anything you on your application is fair game for an interview!
 - Include activities in which you were actively engaged
 - Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.)
 - Avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).

Activities & Experiences (for AADSAS)

- Applicants use the Experiences section to provide detailed information about:
 - **Academic Enrichment:** Programs sponsored by colleges, universities or other not-for-profit organizations
 - **Dental Shadowing:** Time spent officially observing a health care professional at work, preferably a dentist.
 - **Employment:** Paid work done outside of the health care field (e.g., a retail or restaurant job)
 - **Extracurricular Activities:** Any sports teams and other activities through a college or university.
 - **Research:** Research projects; research should NOT appear as credit on a school transcript.
 - **Volunteer:** Volunteer work done outside of the health care field (e.g. tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser or blood drive, etc.)
- You can mark up to six experiences as the “Most Meaningful.”
 - You can list as many experiences as you would like, but ideally you should have at least 10.
 - You will only have 600 characters to describe the activity.
 - Do not fill this area with fluff.
- Anything you add is fair game for an interview!
 - Include activities in which you were actively engaged.
 - Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.).
 - Try to avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).

MCAT

- Take the MCAT no later than Spring/early Summer of the year you plan to apply
 - Offered in January and March-September each year.
 - Registration opens in October for Jan-June dates and in February for July-September dates.
- Courses you need before the exam:
 - Biology I and II
 - General Chemistry I and II
 - Organic Chemistry I
 - Biochemistry
 - Physics I and II
 - Recommended: Statistics, Psychology, Genetics, Organic Chemistry II, Physiology, and Cell Biology
- MCAT scores range 472-528
 - Try to score at least 510 (85th percentile)
- You can study for the MCAT on your own or take a MCAT prep-course
 - Key is to make a study plan and take at least 5-6 full-length practice tests!

DAT

- Take the DAT no later than early Summer of the year you plan to apply.
 - Offered nearly year-round.
 - Must wait 90 days before you can retake.
- Courses you need before exam:
 - Biology I and II
 - General Chemistry I and II
 - Organic Chemistry I and II
 - Recommended: Biochemistry, Genetics, Physiology, Anatomy, Art/Design courses, and English
- DAT scores range 1-30.
 - You'll receive two scores, one for the first 3 sections (Academic Average) and one for Perceptual Ability.
 - Texas competitive applicants score around: AA - 21 / PA - 20
- You can study for the DAT on your own or take a DAT prep-course
 - Key is to make a study plan and take at least 5-6 full-length practice tests!

CASPer Test

- CASPer is an online test which assesses for non-cognitive skills and interpersonal characteristics.
- CASPer is currently required for:
 - Texas A&M University College of Medicine
 - Texas Tech University HSC School of Medicine
 - Texas Tech University HSC, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine
 - The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
 - Long School of Medicine, UT Health San Antonio
- The CASPer test is comprised of 12 sections of video and written scenarios.
- CASPer test results are valid for one admissions cycle.
 - Re-Applicants who have previously taken the test will be expected to re-take it.

Where should I apply to Medical School?

- Recommend applying to 15-20 schools.
 - Admissions committees can be fickle. Many variables affect likelihood of interview.
 - There are no true “back-up” medical schools
 - Always consider osteopathic schools as well
- Apply to every school in Texas
- Apply to private out-of-state schools
 - State institutions are very particular about residency, private schools are not.
- Use the Medical School Admissions Requirement (MSAR) handbook
 - Overview and admissions data

Where should I apply to Dental School?

- Recommend applying to ~10 schools.
 - Admissions are very fickle—many variables affect likelihood of interview.
- Apply to all programs in Texas
- Be careful applying to public, state institutions—consider private.
 - State institutions are very particular about residency, private schools are not.
- Use the *ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools*
 - Overview and admissions data for every accredited dental school in US
 - Digital and paper versions

Gap Year

- Why take a Gap Year?
 - I didn't get in.
 - I am not ready to apply.
 - I need a break from school.
- Work on weak spots in your application.
 - Complete post-bac or Master's program
 - Retake MCAT or DAT
 - Increase clinical involvement and experience
- Key to Gap Year is planning.
 - Try to stay busy and do things that allow you to grow and cultivate new skills

What if I am not that competitive?

- It's *okay* not to get in the first time! Plenty of people have to reapply.
- Take a Gap Year to work on becoming more competitive.
 - Take additional courses or complete a graduate degree
 - Re-take the MCAT or DAT
 - Seek out more volunteering and shadowing opportunities
- Apply to Osteopathic School (DO)
 - Very similar to MD program, but apply through AACOMAS
 - Three DO programs in TX
- Consider another career in healthcare:
 - Nursing, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapist, Genetic Counseling, etc.

Major Takeaways!

- Plan out each step in advance!
- Submit your application as early as you can (but don't rush it)!
- Be positive about your chances of acceptance but have a plan for reapplying!
 - Make sure you have a gap year plan.
 - Make sure you keep up with your academic and extracurricular responsibilities after you hit submit.
- Utilize the Pre-Health Advising Office!
 - Join the Pre-Health listserv
 - Meet with Pre-Health Advisor
 - Review our website

Thank you!

Questions?

Pre-Health Advising Center

Location: 215 CBB

Email: prehealth@uh.edu

Phone: 713-743-2681

