Information and Timeline for Pre-Med Applicants

Applying to medical school is a time-consuming process. It follows a rigid schedule as well. You need to be aware of the time constraints early on in your academic career so that you can plan accordingly. This summary of information and attached timeline is provided to help you with the process.

Let’s use as an example someone who intends to apply to medical school for Fall 2010 admission.

1. When should first contact be made with the Pre-Medical Advisory Committee?
   We recommend that a pre-med student contact a member of the Pre-Medical Advisory Committee during the student’s first year at UMR. In fact, the earlier the better! The sooner we are aware of a student’s intent to pursue medicine as a career, the better we can advise that student.

2. When would the admission process begin for Fall 2010?
   AMCAS (American Medical Colleges Admission Service) begins accepting applications mid June 2009 for Fall 2010.
   [Yes, over a year in advance!]

3. When is the admission deadline for most medical schools for Fall 2010?
   Early admission processes have deadlines as early as Aug. 1. The standard application deadline for regular admissions is Nov. 1; some may be earlier, so check websites for each medical school OR www.aamc.org for exact dates.

4. What is needed for the admissions process? [courses finished, tests taken]
   The critical element in the admissions process is the MCAT exam. This exam is now given several times a year from January to September but it is computer based and spaces are limited so plan early for when you want to take the test. To apply for Fall 2010 admission, a student MUST take the MCAT on or before September 2009. However, be aware that MCAT scores will be released 30 days following the exam so the September score will not be available until October. This may be too late for schools with early application deadlines. Many students take the MCAT exam more than once.

5. What courses should be completed before taking the MCAT exam?
   It is assumed that the minimum course requirements for admission to medical school will have been taken before attempting the exam. The exam is designed to test your knowledge of these subjects as well as your aptitude for medicine. The minimum requirements generally consist of a year of biology, two years of chemistry (one year of inorganic, one year of organic), a year of physics, and additional course work to polish written and oral communication skills. SO...in the example of fall 2010 admission, all the required classes should be finished by late spring 2009. Students who have taken the MCAT in the past have recommended having completed courses in General Genetics, Cell Biology and Human Physiology as good preparation for the MCAT exam.

6. Should a student review this course work before taking the MCAT?
   MCAT preparation is strongly recommended. Successful methods include test preparation booklets, formal prep courses (Kaplan or Princeton Reviews), and organized study groups (using other pre-med colleagues at UMR). Some highly motivated students find that self-study regimens work well. The UMR Pre-Med advisor, Dr. Dave Westenberg has some study materials and copies of old MCAT exams that are available for you to check-out.
7. How does one register for the MCAT exam?  
   Registration must be done on-line at [www.aamc.org/students/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat).  Current cost is $210 with a $50 late fee.  Regular registration closes about 5 weeks before the test date; late registration ends 3 weeks before.  Computer based testing sites are limited so register as early as possible to get the desired test date.

8. Anything else that should be completed before applying to medical school?  
   Medical schools are also interested in students who have some clinical experience—they know what it is to be a physician today.  This can come for example from volunteering in a hospital or nursing home; working as an orderly in a hospital; obtaining an EMT license and riding with the ambulance; or just shadowing a physician for a few weeks.  In recent years, this “requirement” has become more important.

9. When should a student schedule an interview with the committee?  
   The interview and resulting reference letter should be accomplished during the actual application process (usually early fall of the student’s last year at UMR).  For our example of fall 2010 admission, the student should meet with the committee in early fall of 2009.

10. How can a pre-med student stay “plugged in” to pre-med activities?  
    There is a UMR website for pre-med news: [http://biosci.umr.edu/pre-med.html](http://biosci.umr.edu/pre-med.html).  In addition, check the Scrubs (UMR’s Pre-Med student organization) website [http://web.umr.edu/~scrubs/](http://web.umr.edu/~scrubs/) for news about pre-med activities such as speakers and visits to medical schools.

11. Who is on UMR’s Pre-Medical Advisory Committee?  
    Please check the attached list.  Surface mail and e-mail addresses are included.
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