RESOURCES FOR HEALTH SCIENCES PROFESSIONS
(M.D., M.P.H., N.P., R.N., M.D./Ph.D.,
D.V.M., D.D.S., etc.)

CDC CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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MACALESTER
Self-Assessment & Preparation

If you’re a current student considering a career in the health sciences, you’ll benefit from having a Health Professions Advisor. The Macalester Health Professions Advising website provides information about joining the group’s mailing list, selecting an advisor, and common paths for students interested in medicine, nursing, public health, and other fields. Likewise, you should join the Macalester Health Professions Student Community (HPSC). To get involved, contact hpsc@macalester.edu. Visit their OrgSync and Facebook pages for more information.

Before applying to graduate programs in the health sciences, ask yourself the following questions. If this feels difficult, make an appointment with the Career Development Center to assist you in exploring your reasons.

Self-Knowledge Questions

• What are your strongest abilities? Why do you consider these strong?
• What do you value? What is important to you in a job?
• Have you ever used any career resources to explore your interests or extracurricular activities? Which? What did you gain?

Occupational Information Questions

• What information have you collected so far about health sciences? About specific professions?
• Where did you find the information and with whom have you discussed it?

Decision-Making Questions

• How do you usually make decisions?
• How do you differentiate between a good decision and a bad one?
• How do you integrate your values into your decision-making?

Understanding Your Career Questions

• What draws you to a career in (dentistry, nursing, medicine)?
• Why not another allied health field?

Extracurricular and Research Questions

• What activities have you pursued that have given you experience with allied health?
• What have you learned from what you have done?

Once you can answer these questions you will have a stronger sense of confidence in moving forward to your next steps.

When you’ve determined that pursuing a degree in the health professions will be your next step, plan out a timeline with a career counselor and your advisor. By carefully examining the answers to the following questions, you can determine what steps to take to strengthen your application and best prepare for admission. Ideally, you should devote at least a year to the application process.
Choosing Schools & Programs

Comparing and ultimately choosing schools is a complex process.

Which Degree?

During your self-reflection process, strongly consider what specific areas of health sciences interest you and why. Not every health sciences professional must obtain an M.D. Consider the following list of potential degrees and careers outlined on the Macalester HPA website.

- Allopathic Medicine
- Chiropractic Medicine
- Dentistry
- Genetic Counseling
- Nursing
- Optometry
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician's Assistant
- Public Health
- Veterinary Medicine

If you’re unsure about which degree you’d like to pursue, work to clarify your interests and discuss career possibilities with a career counselor and your health professions advisor.

Which Program?

When considering any graduate program, consider the following five elements:

- Program goals, reputation, experiences available, and number of admitted students/graduates
- Occupational prospects upon graduation
- Faculty number, ratio to students, reputation, and diversity
- Financial assistance and tuition reimbursement programs
- Student diversity, attrition, and admissions
- Career paths and experiences of graduates

There are a variety of ways to gather information about programs and schools. Online resources can be helpful for beginning your search, but it’s also a good idea to visit schools and conduct informational interviews with individuals that work in the field and attended schools that interest you.
Online Resources

Association of American Medical Colleges,
The official source for information about American medical colleges.
www.aamc.org/about/medicalschools/.

Boston College, “Post-Baccalaureate Information”
An overview about comparing and applying for post-baccalaureate programs.
http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/premed/preparation/postbac.html.

AMSA, “PreMed Rx”
A number of articles related to medical school applications, recommendations, coursework, and alternate plans.
http://www.amsa.org/AMSA/Homepage/MemberCenter/Premeds/PremedRx.aspx.

AMSA, “MD/MPH – DO/MPH Guide”
Answers questions regarding the benefits and challenges of combined programs.

Boston College, “AHANA/Diversity Programs”
A general overview of diversity programs for medical students.
http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/premed/ahana.html.

American Dental Education Association
Information about dental education, how to become a dentist.
http://www.adea.org/

Health Resources and Services Administration: Nursing
Provides information on the nursing profession, as well as resources for other health professions.
http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews can be the best way to understand the many paths an individual can choose to transition from a student to a medical professional. Don’t hesitate to reach out to individuals in your personal network about their experiences with medical school. Likewise, get in touch with Macalester alumni in health professions by submitting an Alumni Information Request to the Macalester CDC. For more information on how to conduct a successful informational interview, consult the Macalester CDC’s Guide to Informational Interviewing.

For International Students Considering Medical School
Given the nature of U.S. medical programs, the application process for international students is competitive. Financial support from institutions for international students is often rare and very competitive. We recommend that international students speak with a career counselor and their health professions advisor to outline a strategy for reaching their goals.
Financing Medical School

Affording graduate education is a daunting task. If financing is an issue for you, it can be helpful to identify funding options early in the decision process. First, all prospective students should contact the financial aid office of the institutions to which they’re applying. Ask the financial aid officer:

- What scholarships, assistantships, or other options are available?
- What are the requirements for these programs?
- How do students usually fund graduate school at this institution?

Follow up by searching for fellowships and scholarships relevant to your interests and experiences. The following links are a great place to start; for more resources, consult the Macalester CDC’s Guide to Financing Graduate School.

- AAMC Residency Fellowship and Repayment Resources https://www.aamc.org/services/first/241028/resourcesforresidents.html.
- UC-Berkeley Scholarship Database http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/.
- Fellowships for Medical Students http://fellowships.buffalo.edu/pdfs/medFellowships.pdf.
- Medical School Funding http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/medical.phtml.

There are also programs available that can completely fund your medical education:

- Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP)
- National Health Service/Indian Health Service Corps Scholarships (NHSC, IHS)
- Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

Application Requirements For Medical School

Coursework

The Macalester HPA website provides excellent suggestions about planning your coursework for all health science professions. Specifically for medical school, please be aware that prerequisites can vary widely by degree and program.
If you have questions about whether courses meet the requirements, contact the admissions departments at schools that interest you. Be prepared to provide admissions counselors with syllabi for your coursework.

**Entrance Exams**

Early in your exploration, identify which entrance exam is required for the programs that interest you. Regardless of which exam is necessary, allow yourself ample time to prepare for and take exams. In general, students should try to take these exams early enough to allow the possibility of retaking them before the submission deadline. Consult the Macalester CDC’s **Graduate School Application Guide** for information about these tests.

**American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS)**

Many medical schools allow you to submit your application through the AMCAS, a centralized, electronic submission service. This service is only available to first-year entering classes at participating U.S. medical schools; advanced-standing and transfer applicants should speak with the admissions department for more information. For more information, visit [https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/).

**Transcripts**

It will be expected that you submit your most current transcripts for your application. Secure your transcripts from the Registrar’s Office in person or by fax. There will be a $5.00 service fee, payable in cash or check.

**Letters of Recommendation/Evaluation**

Each professor or recommender has unique expectations for students seeking letters of recommendation. Medical schools often refer to letters of recommendation as “letters of

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<tr>
<td>• General Chemistry, one year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Organic Chemistry and Lab, one year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Physics and Lab, one year</td>
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<td>• Demonstrated interest and experience in health care</td>
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<th>Over Half of Medical Schools Require...</th>
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<tr>
<td>• English, commonly two semesters</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Math, through Calculus I</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Biology, commonly two semesters</td>
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<td>• HPA recommends three, including Cell Biology and Genetics</td>
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<th>Many Medical Schools Require...</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Specific, upper-level science courses, such as Biochemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Specific courses in the Humanities and/or Social Sciences, such as Developmental Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unspecified coursework in the Humanities and/or Social Sciences</td>
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evaluation”. Be sure to ask what materials they would like you to provide. Many departments and some professors have sections of their website dedicated to proper procedures for recommendations; check before making your request. The Macalester CDC’s Graduate School Application Guide includes a list of best practices for requesting recommendations.

Also, make sure to clearly and fully understand how recommendations should be prepared. Some programs will ask for letters, whereas others will ask recommenders to rate your skills on several scales.

If you’re applying to medical school, AMCAS collects Letters of Evaluation for many schools. Recommenders submit letters to AMCAS electronically; the recommendations will then be accessible by admissions departments at all participating schools. This process does not allow applicants to see recommendations.

Your Story
Schools look favorably on students who have experience—paid or unpaid—in the sciences. Consult your advisors, career counselor, and MAX Center tutor to be sure that you’re painting a vivid picture of your story and goals. Common requirements within the admissions process include:

Resume & Curriculum Vitae (CV)
A resume is typically one page that provides a short synopsis of experiences you have had related to the job or program for which you are applying. Meanwhile, a Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a longer document that demonstrates the breadth of your professional experiences. This includes research, presentations, publications, and organization affiliations. Use the Macalester CDC’s Resume Guidelines to draft your resume and/or CV, then have it revised by a counselor during an appointment or drop-in hours.

Personal Statement
The personal statement gives the selection committee a comprehensive understanding of your background, commitment to the field, related experiences, alignment with the medical school’s mission and programmatic goals, and passion for medicine. Depending on the program, there can also be several additional essays. Prepare to write at least three. For more information, consult the Career Development Center’s Guide to Personal Statements. After you’ve prepared a draft, have a MAX Center writing tutor and a Career Development Center counselor make suggestions for revisions.

The Interview
Some schools will require an admissions interview. Consult the Macalester CDC’s Interviewing Guidelines for general best practices with interviewing. According to a study conducted by the AAMC, medical school interviews are most often utilized to judge an applicant’s personal characteristics. The following characteristics were sought out by 80 percent or more of interviewers; be sure to emphasize them in your interview practice:
Motivation for a medical career
Compassion and empathy
Personal maturity
Oral communication

Professional orientation
Professionalism
Integrity
Leadership


**Professional & Community Experience**

Your application for graduate school will be strengthened if you pursue extracurricular activities that demonstrate your dedication to your chosen field. At Macalester, contact the [Internship Program](http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/taylor/) and [Civic Engagement Center](http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/mann-hill/) for more information about potential opportunities in the Twin Cities.

The Health Professions Advising website also outlines two unique undergraduate fellowship opportunities for Macalester students:

- **The Mann-Hill Fellowship.** Funds student research or work in the areas of medicine, health care, public health, global health or community health [http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/mann-hill/](http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/mann-hill/).

Even if you've graduated, don't hesitate to use Macalester’s resources to find a great job, internship, or fellowship.

- **Science and Research Office.** Provides a comprehensive list of local, national, and international opportunities.
- **Career Development Center.**
  - Utilize [MC2](http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/taylor/) to search for opportunities.
  - Join the [Macalester Career Connection (MC2)](http://www.macalester.edu/hpa/resources/mann-hill/) on LinkedIn to chat with other graduates about health professions.
  - Attend a networking event to share your experiences with students and meet alumni working in health professions.
- **Internship Program.** Request a list of organizations where students interested in health professions have interned in the past; they may offer opportunities for graduates as well.
- **Civic Engagement Center.** Supplies lists of volunteer opportunities for individuals listed in public health and medicine.
- **Online Resources**

Boston College
“Health Care Experience”
[http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/premed/preparation/additional.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/premed/preparation/additional.html).
Alternate Plans

There are times in which even our best laid plans do not manifest the way that we wish. If you are not accepted, you can choose to reapply or re-examine your goals. If you’re unsure about next steps, don’t hesitate to make an appointment with a career counselor to discuss your application and goals.

Re-examine

Rejection from a graduate program can provide a challenging and unique opportunity for students to re-examine their goals. You may use your “gap year” to pursue a job or fellowship related to health; alternatively, you may take this time to explore other areas of interest. The Career Development Center can help you explore your interests through the following services:

Counseling Appointments

Schedule an appointment with a career counselor to discuss your unique interests, challenges, and goals. Counselors also revise resumes, CVs, and personal statements.

Self-Assessments

Taking a self-assessment—a “test” that helps clarify your interests and/or personal strengths—useful when re-examining your career direction. The Career Development Center offers two principal assessments:

• Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI analyzes your preferences and attitudes to assign you a personality type. A counselor will then help you examine careers that work well with your type.
• Strong Interest Inventory. This assessment asks direct questions about your academic and professional interests to identify potentially fulfilling careers.

Alumni Connections

• Alumni Information Request Form. Request a list of individuals that work in a wide range of medical professions or who have attended graduate institutions that interest you. Speak with people who have jobs that interest you, regardless of whether the job is in your field of expertise.
• Macalester Career Connection (MC2). Pose a question about gap years, medical professions, or graduate school to a responsive group of alumni.
• Students/Alumni Connect. Attend one of our yearly networking events to share your experiences with current students and meet other alumni in medicine.
Reapply

If possible, make an appointment with a school representative and request constructive feedback on your application. Often, students need to make adjustments in one of the following areas:

Application

Review your application materials—especially your personal statement and other essays—with a career counselor or MAX Center tutor. Read through the Macalester CDC’s Guide to Personal Statements. Ask yourself:

- How does my application match with their institution and candidate profile?
- Do your goals and experiences align with those of the graduate school?
- Are your essays sincere, professional, and free of errors?
- Does your application demonstrate motivation and dedication?
- Could you personalize/tailor your application to that program?

Test Scores

Utilize online resources such as the Princeton Review to compare required scores at different schools; if your score isn’t what you’d like it to be, re-take the exam. Likewise, consider ordering new work books, attending prep courses, or hiring a private tutor.

Professional & Community Experience

In general, all applications can be strengthened with experience in the medical field. At the same time, gaining further experience is an excellent way to determine if the career you’ve envisioned truly fits your interests and skills. Use the resources listed in the “Professional & Community Experience” section to guide your choices.

Professional Perspectives

Consulting individuals who work in your field of interest can be an excellent way to strengthen your application. The Career Development Center encourages you to use our Alumni Information Request Form to connect with alumni that work in your field.

Online resources can also provide helpful advice. Check out “The Do's and Don'ts of Reapplying for Medical School”, written by Dr. Quinn Capers IV, Dean of Admissions at OSU, for helpful advice on reapplying to allopathic medical programs.
Notes:

Next Steps:

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<td>Career Counseling Appointments for:</td>
<td>- Resume &amp; C.V. Guide</td>
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<td>- Clarify strengths &amp; interests</td>
<td>- Talking about your Skills Workbook</td>
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<td>- Plan job search strategies</td>
<td>- Financing Graduate School</td>
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<td>- Interview prep</td>
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Networking & Personal Branding:
- Tools to Access Mac Alumni
- Social Media Inventory
- LinkedIn Profile Review

Complimentary CDC Guides
- Resume & C.V. Guide
- Talking about your Skills Workbook
- Interviewing
- Writing Personal Statements
- Financing Graduate School

All guides are available for download on the CDC Web site.

Need help? Questions?
- Scheduled 30- or 60-min. appointments
- Drop-in Appts: M-F: 2-4pm
- Appointments in person, phone & Skype.

Connect with CDC

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CDC/Marketing&Brochures/FinalGuides