

What to Expect in Your Application Year



Presenters:

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Topics

- ❖ Oddities/Tips for common applications
- ❖ School list
- ❖ Secondary applications
- ❖ Interviews
- ❖ Online resources
- ❖ Be prepared for a long wait!
- ❖ Rejections/acceptances
- ❖ Thank you letters, update letters, letters of intent
- ❖ What if I have to reapply?
- ❖ Financial tips
- ❖ Closing thoughts

Oddities/Tips for Common Applications

Check your Pre-Application Spreadsheet to review the recommended timing for each step in the application process:

- Transcripts
- If applicable: Fee Assistance
- Submit common application
- Finalize school list - only need one school listed to submit your application
- LORs submitted
- MCAT/DAT/OAT/GRE
- When to take Casper and/or Preview
- Secondary applications

Oddities/Tips for Common Applications

Ask someone else to review your finalized app before submission to catch wayward errors

- Use print preview to give them a PDF for a final proofread

Score reports for standardized tests:

- AMCAS and AADSAS: Scores are automatically populated in your application
- All others: You need to order official score report from standardized test and have it sent to the app service or the school (as listed on each school's website)

Admissions deposits

- AMCAS: Refundable until April 30
- All others: Typically **non**-refundable, and may be requested within a couple of weeks of when you receive the offer of acceptance.
 - You can ask for a payment plan

Oddities/Tips for Common Applications

Interfolio and LORs:

- Letters can be sent from Interfolio to AACOMAS, AMCAS, AADSAS, and TMDSAS.
 - When you pay for Interfolio, they quality-check your letter formatting
 - The delivery service is a one-year subscription, so you may want to pay for it in advance of when you need it so that you can have them do the quality check in advance
- For all others, the letter author must upload directly to the common application.

AADSAS oddity this year:

- If a letter author uploads their letter directly to AADSAS, they will be prompted to fill out a Likert Scale rating page for attributes such as professional demeanor, motivation to pursue dentistry, reaction to criticism, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and maturity
- If you're using Interfolio, then your letters will be transmitted to AADSAS *without* the Likert scale being filled out. AADSAS is assuring everyone that that's okay.

Oddities/Tips for Common Applications

“How did you pay for your post-secondary education?”

- Enter the percentages that were accurate for your **original** undergraduate education.
- For most people, the percentages are quite different for their post-baccalaureate coursework, but the question is intended to understand how you paid for your bachelor's degree.

How have you paid or did you pay for your post-secondary education? For each of the applicable options below, indicate the average percentage contribution towards your post-secondary education. The percentages entered should equal 100%:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Academic Scholarship | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Financial Need-Based Scholarship | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Student Loan | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Other Loan | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Family Contribution | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Applicant Contribution | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Other | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |
| Total | <input type="text" value="0"/> | % |

Oddities/Tips for Common Applications

TMDSAS: It's different

- You will spend just as much time explaining The Match as you do applying to medical schools.
- If you haven't submitted yet, get it done asap! You're still fine, but the sooner the better!
- A few days after you interview with a school, you will see it added to your rank list. You must rank all your schools by a date in mid-February
- **YOU MUST RANK ALL YOUR SCHOOLS EVEN IF YOU ONLY INTERVIEW AT ONE.**
- October 15th: Schools will start offering "pre-matches"
 - Don't worry if you don't get one. Seriously, they don't really matter.
- In early March, your match results are announced! Yay!
- Lots of waitlist movement after that date!

Fine-Tuning School List

- Prerequisites:
 - Do you really want to add that school that requires 1 or 2 extra prerequisites?
 - List Planned Courses in application
 - If any of the courses you took to fulfill prerequisites aren't an obvious match, you may need to provide a link to the course description or send syllabus to explain equivalencies
 - Example: A writing-intensive course that isn't explicitly listed as a "Writing" course
 - Some secondary portals provide a place to do this
 - If you are unsure if a class fulfills a pre-req, contact that school's admissions office
- Secondary apps:
 - Each additional school requires a financial and time investment

Fine-Tuning School List

- Letters of recommendation:
 - Will you fulfill all assortment requirements? **Clinician letter** ?
 - AMCAS and PTCAS: You can determine which letters go to which schools
 - All other application services: Your entire set of letters goes to all schools
 - Ensure that your set of letters covers the assortment requirements for all of your schools
 - AMCAS detail: Don't list a letter author until they have confirmed that they'll write a letter for you. Once you've submitted a letter request, you can't delete it from the application. You can mark it as no longer being expected, but it will show that you originally requested it.
 - Interfolio
 - Joint LORs

Fine-Tuning School List

- Shadowing:
 - Some have required shadowing hours
 - Pre-meds: Some DO schools require that you shadow a DO specifically
 - PT programs: Require verified PT observation hours

Secondary Application Process: AMCAS

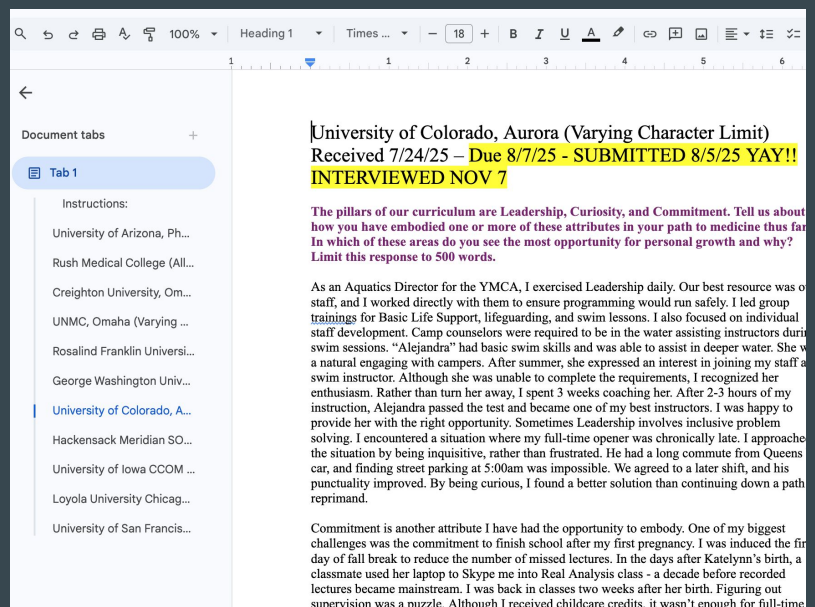
- Goal is a 2- to 3-week turnaround time (unless the school requires LORs first)
 - “Front-loaded”—work is ‘from scratch’ toward beginning, repeat questions as others come in
- Pre-Application spreadsheet has secondary app tracker to manage dates, login info, cost, etc. for each school

| School | Date Received | Target Date of Submission | Actual Date of Submission | Application Marked as Complete |
|--------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 7/23 | 8/6-8/13 | 8/23 | Yes |
| | 7/24 | 8/7-8/14 | 8/1 | Yes |
| | 7/24 | 8/7-8/14 | 8/17 | Yes |
| | 7/24 | 8/7-8/14 | 8/3 | Yes |

- Writing tips:
 - Schools value self-reflection, authenticity, and alignment with their mission
 - Reuse stories that demonstrate your values/accomplishments (that weren’t in common app)
 - Always come back to ask, “Did I answer the question?” especially if reusing a story
 - Have an outside person read each essay before you press submit
- It’s hard to do well in a B Term course while writing so many essays at the same time
- Consider avoiding travel in late July/August

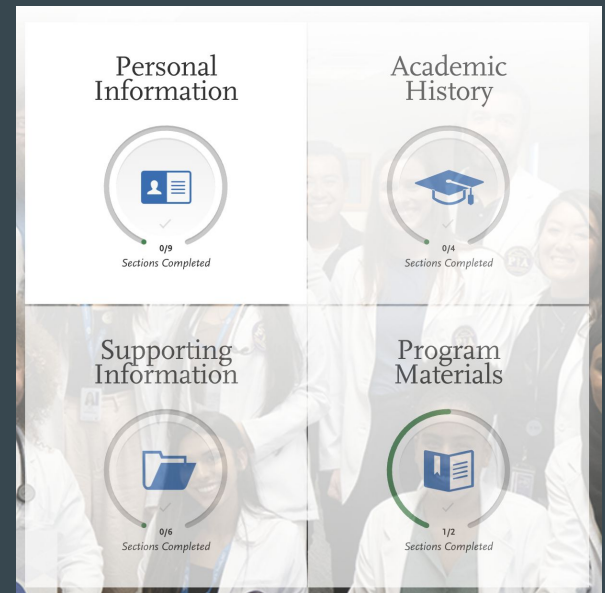
Secondary Application Process: AMCAS

- Secondary application questions can be pulled from online sources if you want to pre-write.
- Consider crowdsourcing editorial help from family and friends.
- A second set of eyes can identify confusing passages (you always know what you meant to say)

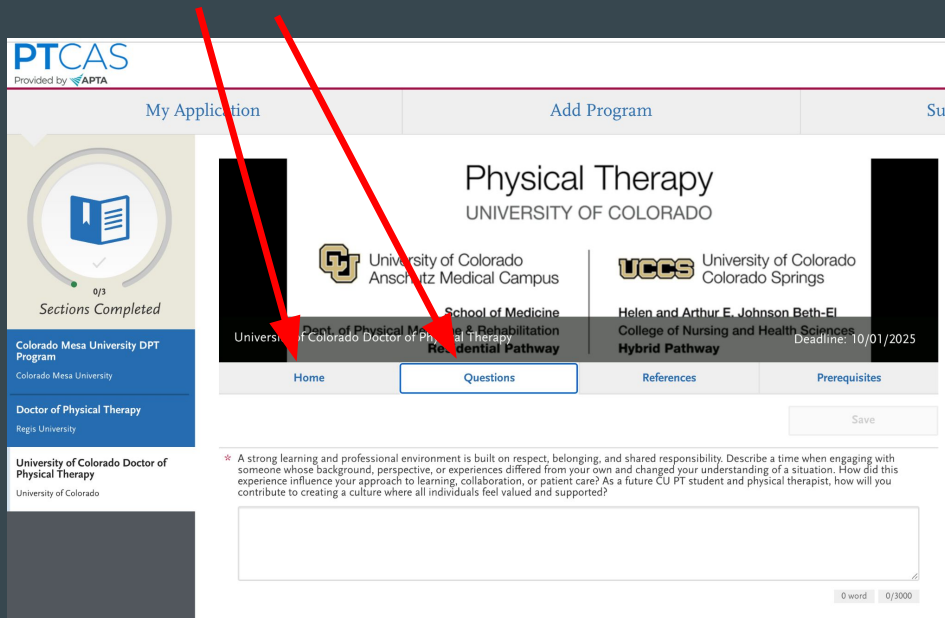


Secondary Application Process: AACOMAS, AADSAS, CASAA, CASPA, OptomCAS, PTCAS, and VMCAS:

- To begin the transcript verification process (i.e. enter the queue), you must submit **at least one application** .
- For some, the secondary application will be in the “Program Materials” section of the common application. If so, you must complete everything in the Program Materials section for that school before you can submit your application to program.
- Other schools send out separate secondary applications later, after completing an initial screening of your common application.
- Recommendation: Create tracker for each school



Secondary Application Process: AACOMAS, AADSAS, CASAA, CASPA, OptomCAS, PTCAS, and VMCAS:



Interview Season General Prep

- Schedule a practice interview early - turnaround times between invites and actual interviews can be fast
- If a school has rolling admissions, select earliest date you can be prepared for
- Ensure you have a quiet, distraction-free place with strong internet for each interview
- Prep some general questions for interviewers
 - Google your interviewers so that you know what their backgrounds are, in case that ends up being pertinent to the interview conversation.
 - You may not receive their names until the morning of the interview.

School-Specific Interview Prep

- Keeping school-specific, mission-oriented answers to:
 - Why this school?
 - What will you contribute to this school?
 - Highlight how your activities, personality, and aspirations complement their mission
- Ensure your anecdote bank does not overlap with secondary essays
- Be aware of interview format: open vs. closed, etc
 - School websites, SDN
 - Additional info for pre-meds: MSAR and Admit
- Set yourself up for success - read every word of anything that school has ever sent you

In-Person Interviews

- If interviewing in person: consider travel budget
 - This is an additional quiet cost of applying to professional school: suit, planes, transport, hotel, etc.
 - Cut cost by staying with students the night before - contact admissions about it
- Be aware of your vacation time
 - If possible, let your employer (or professors) know you are applying to schools
 - Can be a pretty sudden turn around - and might not be convenient (ie. Tuesday - Thursdays)

Hindsight 20/20: Interview Preparation

Special interview considerations:

1. Location: Have a back-up plan!
2. Technology issues happen
 - The school will tell you what to do if you (or they) have technical difficulties – write that down!
3. Keep in mind your #1 school could be your first interview!
4. MMI specific interviewing: keep the momentum going; the interview can feel impersonal or like you aren't able to “bond” with those in your room - remember that one room does not affect the others!



Logistical Considerations for Zoom Interviews:

- Put a visual indicator near camera (post-it note, pic of your dog, etc)
- Turn off Zoom reactions
- Headphones should be wired. Avoid: Bluetooth headphones; big, over-the-ear headphones
- Be prepared:
 - plan your bathroom breaks and food
 - Address potential distractions: pets, roommates, partners, doorbell, etc
- Notes: interviewers can see that you're using them
 - Also removes authenticity from your answers

Interview Itself - Some Random Tips

1. Collective Zoom room at beginning – you will speak to admissions people and current students
 - If comfortable, can be helpful to have questions for current students, this is your time to learn stuff about the school that's not on the website!
 - No one is tracking who is asking what questions, so any questions you asked will not be used in decisions
2. Be humble in your opinions
3. Prepare for small talk – be friendly and encouraging to the other interviewees. They may become your classmates!
4. Ignore the flexers

Student Doctor Network

- This link has useful interview information for each school:
<https://www.studentdoctor.net/interview-feedback/>
 - Each school will have a page where students write about interviews, acceptances, rejections, etc.
- The forum side to SDN is known to be fairly toxic site
 - Be intentional about avoiding it if you are prone to worry or comparison
 - Take what is useful, leave the rest

School Interview Feedback

- Medical Schools (MD, DO)
- Dental Schools (DMD, DDS)
- Pharmacy Schools (PharmD)
- Optometry Schools (OD)
- Podiatry Schools (DPM)
- Psychology Schools (PsyD, PhD)
- Audiology Schools (AuD)
- Occupational Therapy Schools (OTD)
- Physical Therapy Schools (DPT)
- Veterinary Schools (DVM)

What is one of the specific questions they asked you (question 1)?

"If I was talking to your best friends, how would they describe you?"
More from this Member | Report Response | I was asked this question too

"Tell me about a difficult time with a patient. // Tell me about a difficult time academically and personally and how you came back from it. // Tell me about when you worked with diverse communities and what you learned from it."
More from this Member | Report Response | I was asked this question too

[SHOW MORE RESPONSES](#)

What is one of the specific questions they asked you (question 2)?

"Why do you want to become a doctor?"
More from this Member | Report Response | I was asked this question too

"Why SSOM? Why be a physician? // What do you do for fun? // What experience specifically prepared you well for medicine?"
More from this Member | Report Response | I was asked this question too

[SHOW MORE RESPONSES](#)

For medical school applicants: Cycle Track/Admit

2024 - 2025 Cycle Status



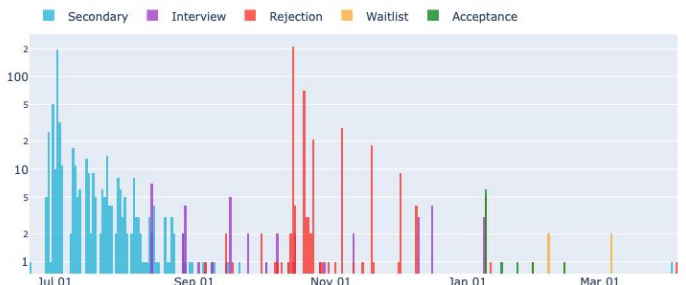
2025-2026 2024-2025

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Applications | 631 |
| Interviews | 72 (11%) |
| Accepted | 21 (3%) |
| Rejected | 517 (82%) |

Current Applicants

| Name | Admit Score | Secondary Submitted | Interview Received | Decision Date | Decision | Last Updated |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| oldperson | (809) | 07/26/2024 | 09/23/2024 | 01/15/2025 | Accepted | 9 months ago |
| wittymanatee325 | (801) | 07/24/2024 | 09/05/2024 | 01/31/2025 | Waitlisted | 10 months ago |
| MetaphysicalKe... | (733) | 09/03/2024 | — | 10/28/2024 | Rejected | 10 months ago |
| antsycough541 | (443) | 07/04/2024 | 08/20/2024 | 01/31/2025 | Waitlisted | a year ago |

2025-26 Cycle



Our graphs are interactive! Click and drag your mouse across the graph to zoom in. Double click to zoom out. Click on a status in the legend to hide it, or double-click to highlight only that status.

[Current Cycle Data](#) [Previous Cycle Data](#) [Explore All Data](#)

Be prepared for a long wait

- Don't let your first rejection set the precedent for the whole process
- Interview offers can come in many months apart - every school has their own timeline
- You may hear back from some schools
- Post-interview decisions could take weeks and weeks SUPER late or surprised by others!
- Waitlisted schools: Really can hear back at any time, up to the day before Orientation



Rejections Happen - You Prepped for This!

Know Your Self-Worth:

Everyone will get (**many**) rejection letters.

Know Your Mission:

Remind yourself why you are doing this, and how far you have come.

Know Your Team:

If you haven't gotten accepted by early Feb, reapplication might be needed. Stay in touch with Dr. Cripps and Jess and **listen** to their advice.

More on this later...



Know The Map:

A thru-hike is too complex to predict every beat. Prepare yourself, but take it day by day.

Acceptances

- Healthy mindset: All you need is one acceptance!
 - Some people will get early interviews/acceptances and others will get late interviews/acceptances – it's a very wide range. It's not over until it's over!
 - Once accepted, you can politely withdraw from all other schools that you know you wouldn't attend, no matter what (even if they gave you a full-ride scholarship):
 - Allows admissions team focus on people who are truly interested
 - Can give interview slots to people who may actually end up attending

Deciding Among Multiple Acceptances

What if you end up in the happy situation of getting more than one acceptance?

- How do you go about the process of choosing your top school when there are competing priorities?
 - Professional considerations... specialty strengths of school, residency
 - Family considerations, support, geography
- Choose a school, keeping these things in mind:
 - Future goals vs. school's focus
 - Cost of attendance
 - Student culture and satisfaction -- can ask admissions to connect you with a current student
 - Don't assess the quality of the program by the admissions people, but by faculty/students
 - Attend a second look day at your top choices
 - Take your time in making a decision and talk through it with others

What if I don't get an early acceptance?

- Thank you letters, update letters, letters of interest, letters of intent
- When to start making a reapplication plan
- Most common reasons why people aren't accepted on first try

Thank You Letters, Update Letters, Letters of Intent

Policies are school-specific. Some appreciate them, some say NOT to send them.

1) Post-Interview Thank You Letters

- If they accept them, we recommend sending it: think of this as your “letter of interest”
- Send via email within 1-2 days of the interview

Topics:

- Not a sales pitch!
- Express gratitude for the opportunity to interview
- Express enthusiasm for specific elements of their academic/clinical program and student culture that seem like a great fit
- Include specific details or noteworthy conversation topics from your interview day.
This approach helps the recipients remember their interactions with you.

Thank You Letters, Update Letters, Letters of Intent

2) Update Letters

- May be applicable if there has been a meaningful new development in your preparation since submitting your secondary app that has strengthened your candidacy
 - Can ask Elisa and Jess if you aren't sure if your activities fall into this category
- In nearly all cases, send only one update per school

When to send:

- In hopes of getting an interview: typically 2-3 months after submitting secondary
- If placed on waitlist: only send if enough time has passed since your interview that something has meaningfully changed

Thank You Letters, Update Letters, Letters of Intent

3) Letters of Intent

- Intention is to tell the school that you will **DEFINITELY** attend if accepted
- Only send to your top-choice school under one of these scenarios:
 - If sending a thank you letter after an interview
 - If you end up on their waitlist
 - If sending an update letter near the end of interview season, in hopes of getting an interview
 - Pre-meds: this means late January or later
- Never appropriate to send to more than one school

Almost never wanted:

- Letters of Interest (without an update)

When to Start Making a Reapplication Plan...



Reapplying

If you are not accepted to a professional school by **early February**, meet with Elisa and Jess to debrief and strategize.

Tip for success: After submitting your application this summer, do not coast through the rest of the year. Take a break, but then engage in activities that improve your candidacy (helps with this year's interviews & with potential reapplication)

Remember: There are plenty of incredible clinicians who applied more than once!

Most common reasons why people aren't accepted on first try:

- Applied a year too early
 - Long-term grade trend
 - Duration and quality of relevant activities
- Inappropriate school list
 - Schools that aren't a good mission fit
(not only what you say you want, but also if your past experiences back that up)
 - Schools that are looking for people from a certain region (that you aren't from)
 - Too many schools with highly competitive app processes
- Applied late
 - Any component: common app, secondary app turnaround time, LORs, test scores
- Application materials written at the last minute
- Weak interview prep

Financial Considerations

Not-so-obvious costs:

- The cost of applying: Common app + additional cost for each secondary
- Travel costs to attend Second Look/Preview Day for accepted students
 - Might be more worthwhile if comparing schools or considering a location you've never visited
- Deposits for schools where you received an early acceptance (if it's not a top-choice school)



Additional Financial Considerations

- Surprising factors that can significantly impact need-based financial aid:
 - Commonly included: salary, liquid investments, non-primary house value, parents' income/assets
 - Commonly not included: retirement funds, value of primary house
 - If you have significant assets, consider seeing a financial professional or doing a deep dive on where to store your assets BEFORE submitting FAFSA or CSS
- Resources for comparing schools' financial outcomes
 - School websites' posted Cost of Attendance (often more accurate than MSAR)
 - Pre-meds: MSAR provides average debt of graduates

Financing Your Education

Loans

- Federal Loans (US Department of Education)
 - Stafford loans (Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans)
 - Interest rates adjusted yearly, but currently at **7.94%** for medical students (fixed for life of the loan)
 - Start accruing interest immediately after taking them out
 - Repayment begins 6 months after graduation or immediately if dropping below half-time enrollment
 - Capped at \$50,000/year for professional school students, with a max of \$200,000 (not enough to cover total budget, even for in-state public school students)
 - Government's current definition of "professional school": MD, DO, dental, veterinary, optometry, pharmacy, podiatry
 - GradPLUS Loans - No longer available beginning this year due to BBB.

Financing Your Education

Loans continued

- Private Loans
 - Private lenders now pivoting to cover gap left by GradPLUS Loans
 - Could be undeferred and will likely need a co-signer depending on your financial situation or just to help you secure a lower interest rate.

*Don't forget to pay attention to when interest is capitalized for your loans

Financing Your Education

- Scholarships
 - Institutional scholarships (may be need- or merit-based)
 - Each school's application process is different
 - Service-based scholarships/loan repayment programs
 - Service to underserved (urban or rural):
 - National Health Service Corps Scholarships: year-for-year service commitment
 - Public Service Loan Forgiveness program: may require 10 year commitment
 - Military: Health Professions Scholarship Program
- State-specific "Learning Contracts"
 - Institutional aid you won't have to pay back if you fulfill a contract, for example practicing primary care in your state for a certain amount of time, etc.

*Pay attention to the financial aid presentations on interview day and take notes.

What you will need to apply for aid:

- Application and forms
 - Different for each school, pay attention on interview day and take notes about the process, requirements, deadlines, and aid types offered.
- FAFSA
 - Put this in your calendar now: Opens Oct 1
 - Complete this ASAP (while in app process) – some schools say they use the submission date as a guideline for determining need!
 - Some schools require parental info, and some will not
- CSS Profile
 - Often required for need based aid
 - Contains financial information about you and your parents
- 2025 tax returns and W2s from you AND maybe also your parents
 - Often schools specify that they want SIGNED copies of these.

A quick anecdote

