

Choosing a Strategic List of Schools



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Before We Begin . . .

Be sure to download the following documents:

1. PowerPoint Slides (for taking notes)
2. Worksheet
3. *Quick Facts* document for your field of interest
4. *Questions I Wish I Had Asked* document



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The 5 Components of a Successful Application

1. **Well-qualified applicant**
 - Self-Assessment document: academics, experiences
2. **Thoughtful, well-written application materials**
3. **Strategic list of schools**
4. **Appropriate timing for each step of the application process**
 - Common app, supplemental apps, test score, letters, Casper/Preview
5. **Proper preparation for interviews**



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Part 1: Identifying schools that are a good fit

Part 2: Strategies for success



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Part 1: Identifying schools that are a good fit

- *Minimum application requirements*
- *Among all applicants who meet the minimum requirements, what is each school looking for?*
- *What are you looking for?*



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Minimum Application Requirements

- Minimum GPAs, test scores
- Prerequisites
- Required assortment of letters
- Minimum experience hours
- Casper/Preview

*Refer to **Quick Facts** handout for name of school selection resource guide for your field.*



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Minimum GPAs, test scores

Minimum GPAs:

- 3.0 minimum is common, 2.75 at some schools
- Cumulative undergraduate GPA (all institutions combined)
- "Science" GPA

Tips:

- Look online for the Course Classification Guide for your application service: determine which types of courses are considered "science" courses
- Do your own GPA calculations now to see where you stand
- Focus on your post-bacc term GPA trend: While taking 9+ credit hours of science courses per term for at least three terms in a row, you should be earning term GPAs at or above median cumulative GPA for accepted students at each of your schools of interest.



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Minimum GPAs, test scores

Test scores:

- Some schools have strict minimums (typically, minimum is several points lower than a competitive score for that program)



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Prerequisites

Double-check details such as:

- AP/IB/community college/online prerequisites
- Extra required biology coursework
- Certain types of math courses
- Certain types of humanities/social science courses
- Writing/English Literature



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Required assortment of letters

- Refer to *Quick Facts* to see common assortment for your field
- But ... as you narrow down school list, check each school's website for specific LOR requirements
 - Include LOR details on your spreadsheet of schools



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Minimum Experience Hours

Example 1: CU Anschutz School of Dental Medicine

Dental Shadowing Requirements

Applicants should demonstrate a confirmed interest in dentistry by participating in dental-related activities, including direct shadowing of a dentist in a patient-care setting. Shadowing hours should be reported directly on the AADSAS application. No further documentation is required.

50 hours of dental shadowing is required and must be completed at the time of application submission. Applicants without this minimum number of hours will not be reviewed or considered for interview.

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Minimum Experience Hours

Example 2: Mayo Clinic PA Program

At least 500 hours of direct patient care experience. The minimum of 500 hours of direct patient care experience may be met by such roles as a phlebotomist, certified nursing assistant (CNA), emergency medical technician (EMT), nursing, physical therapy (PT) aid, other patient care careers, or volunteer roles, among others.

At least two half-days of PA shadowing. PA shadowing sufficient to distinguish characteristics common to PAs compared to other health professionals is represented by two or more half-day experiences, depending on the quality of the experiences and the goals of the applicant. You are advised to complete the PA shadowing requirement prior to submitting your application for admission, as that experience will better inform you in your decisions related to your career and education.

Example 3: Red Rocks PA Program

Acquisition of 2,000 hours of paid healthcare-relevant experience within 5 years prior to the current application cycle.

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Example 4:
University of Utah MD program

Clinical Experience
Demonstrated understanding of the typical day of a physician, interface with different specialties, medical environment, and patients with meaningful experience in a clinical setting.

Clinical Experience is valued by Admissions when it displays depth and breadth in your preparation and a mature understanding and motivation for medicine. Also valued is taking the initiative to pursue patient contact/interaction and/or activities that enhance your exposure to the science of medicine as it relates to the practice of medicine as an MD.

Your investment in preparation for medical school is equal to the investment that the medical school will put into you. The more you are prepared for this life-long journey into medicine, understanding the ups and downs, good, the bad, the joy and the sorrow the more successful we will be.

Give the admissions committee a reason to believe you are dedicated to the long, rigorous path of medicine.

Activity Criteria

- Clinical experience may be paid or unpaid.
- Clinical experience may vary depending on resources and skills.
- Activities should have occurred since high school graduation and are strongly recommended to have occurred within the last 5 years.
- You are encouraged to pursue domestic patient care experiences, however international patient care is considered.
- You are encouraged to have experience with living human patients.
- Pursue experiences that you are interested in and allow you the opportunity to become comfortable with patients and recognize that the path to an MD is one you are willing to dedicate yourself to.

Direct patient contact experience could include:

- Shadowing or working with physicians, MD or DO, Primary Care Provider, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics Preferred. You should take the opportunity to ask questions about an MD career, lifestyle, and the future of medicine from an MD.
- Shadowing or working with Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, nurses, EMT's, Veterinarians, Optometrists, Dentists, and paramedics is acceptable but may not allow for an understanding of the rigors of being a medical doctor.
- Work as a Medical Scribe, and/or Clinical research (direct interaction with patients).
- Work as a Licensed EMT, MA, CNA, Phlebotomist, Medical Interpreter, Psych Tech (addressing programs and repeat) Hospital Orderly, Hospice RN, LPN, Medical History Taker.
- Volunteer positions in an Emergency / Urgent Care facility, Hospitals, Rehabilitation Centers, Nursing Homes, Group Homes, medical centered humanitarian projects working with patients.

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Part 1: Identifying schools that are a good fit

- Minimum application requirements
- Among all applicants who meet the minimum requirements, what is each school looking for?
- What are YOU looking for?

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What is each school looking for?

- Competitive metrics (GPA, standardized test score)
- In-state vs. out-of-state
- Age ranges of accepted students
- Students who are a "good fit"

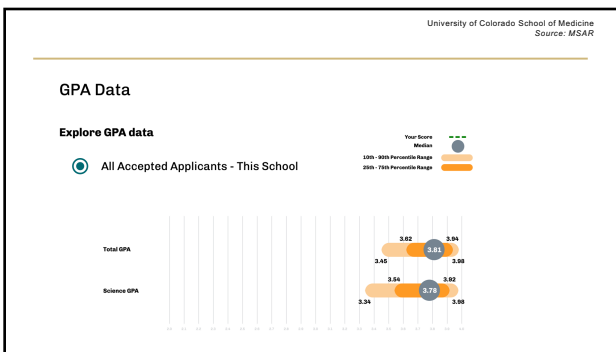
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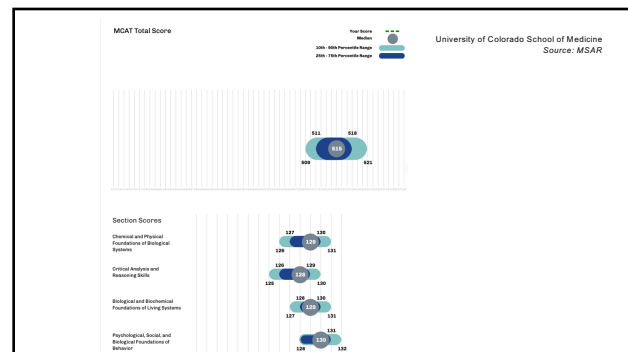
Competitive Metrics

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In-State vs. Out-of-State

- Only a factor at public institutions

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In-State vs. Out-of-State

Matriculation Data for First Year Class

Categories	In-state	Out-of-state	International	Total
Verified Applications	687	9825	574	10886
Interviewed	174	534	15	723
Deferred	1	5	1	7
Early Assurance Program	0	0	0	0
Early Decision Program	0	0	0	0
Baccalaureate/MD	0	0	0	0
MD/PhD	1	9	0	10
Matriculated	94	82	4	180

University of Colorado
School of Medicine
Source: MSAR

	In-State Applicants	Out-of-State Applicants
Interviewed	25%	5.5%
Matriculated	13.5% (54% of interviewees)	5.5% (15% of interviewees)

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In-State vs. Out-of-State

Matriculation Data for First Year Class

Categories	In-state	Out-of-state	International	Total
Verified Applications	834	804	5	1443
Interviewed	264	20	0	304
Deferred	3	0	0	3
Early Assurance Program	0	0	0	0
Early Decision Program	0	0	0	0
Baccalaureate/MD	0	0	0	0
MD/PhD	0	0	0	0
Matriculated	73	7	0	80

Washington State University
Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine
Source: MSAR

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In-State vs. Out-of-State

Out-of-state applicants *less* likely to be considered at public schools:

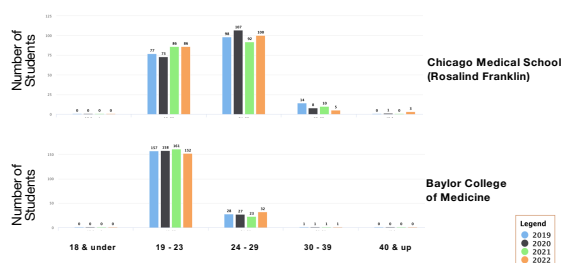
- Non-resident with qualifications that are average among accepted students

Out-of-state applicants *more* likely to be considered at public schools:

- Outstanding GPA, test scores, and experiences, plus outstanding LORs
- Experience in specific areas the school is seeking
 - Examples: underserved populations, long hist of volunteer service, bilingual, research
- Member of a group not well-represented among resident applicants
- Strong family ties to state and a well-articulated desire to establish your future practice in that state
 - Address this on your secondary app

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Age ranges of accepted students



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Students who are a "good fit"

- Students who will help them fulfill their mission statement
 - They will draw conclusions from:
 - Your stated motivations
 - But especially: *your long-term activity history*
- Students who want to get involved in the activities and special offerings that are highlights of that school's program
- Students whose learning style is a good match for their curricular approach

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Johns Hopkins
School of Medicine

Program	General	Military	Shadowing	Clinical
Camp Service/Med	88%	86%	93%	95%
Military Service	2%	0%	0%	0%
Shadowing	92%	90%	94%	91%
Clinical Substitution	92%	91%	90%	92%
Paid Clinical Work	36%	32%	38%	48%
Research	98%	99%	100%	98%

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Profession	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Comm. Services/Rel.	89%	81%	92%	90%	90%	90%
Military Service	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Shadowing	87%	82%	87%	81%	81%	81%
Clinical Substantiating	94%	92%	92%	90%	87%	87%
Paid Clinical Work	63%	74%	84%	86%	86%	86%
Research	92%	92%	92%	92%	90%	90%

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University of Colorado Physician Assistant program

The University of Colorado PA Program had 1854 applicants for the class starting summer 2023. Of those, 44 were admitted for the incoming class.

Cognitive Statistics	
Cumulative GPA	average 3.76, range 3.26-4.00
Science GPA	average 3.69, range 3.11-4.00
Median Experience Hours	
Shadowing	56
Health Related	360
Volunteer	254
Patient	1914

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Additional (very helpful) resources for MD applicants:

- ## Part 1: Identifying schools that are a good fit

- Minimum application requirements
- Among all applicants who meet the minimum requirements, what is each school looking for?
- What are YOU looking for?

[illegible]

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What are YOU looking for?

Worksheet activity



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What are YOU looking for?

- Licensing exam pass rates
- If applicable: Residency placements
- Approach to curriculum/grading scheme
- Approach to clinical training
- Support services
- Student culture
- Reputation
- Location
- Tuition (but note that some schools can offer large scholarships)



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Licensing Exam Pass Rates

University of Colorado PA Program: PANCE Pass Rates.

Class	Class Graduation Year	Group	Number of Candidates Who Took PANCE	Number of Exam Attempts	Number of Exams Passed	Program Exam Pass Rate	National Exam Pass Rate for the Class Graduation Year	% of Candidates Who Ultimately Passed PANCE
May 2017	2017	All Takers	44	45	44	98%	95%	100%
		First Time Takers	44	44	43	98%	97%	100%
May 2018	2018	All Takers	44	44	44	100%	97%	100%
		First Time Takers	44	44	44	100%	98%	100%
May 2019	2019	All Takers	44	48	44	92%	91%	100%
		First Time Takers	44	44	40	91%	93%	100%
May 2020	2020	All Takers	41	43	40	93%	93%	98%
		First Time Takers	41	41	39	95%	95%	98%
May 2021	2021	All Takers	44	48	44	96%	91%	100%
		First Time Takers	44	44	42	95%	93%	100%



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Residency Match Outcomes

Specialty	Percentage	Specialty	Percentage
Yale MD		Dartmouth MD	
Anesthesiology	2%	Anesthesiology	8%
Dermatology	8%	Dermatology	0%
Emergency Medicine	8%	Emergency Medicine	8%
Family Medicine	0%	Family Medicine	7%
Neurology	2%	Neurology	2%
Internal Medicine	28%	Internal Medicine	10%
Obstetrics/Gynecology	6%	Obstetrics/Gynecology	4%
Orthopedic Surgery	3%	Orthopedic Surgery	8%
Otolaryngology	2%	Otolaryngology	2%
Pathology	0%	Pathology	1%
Pediatrics	4%	Pediatrics	8%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	0%	Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	1%
Plastic Surgery	2%	Plastic Surgery	8%
Psychiatry	11%	Psychiatry	11%
Radiology Diagnostic	5%	Radiology Diagnostic	1%
Surgery General	8%	Surgery General	13%

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Residency Match Outcomes

ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine Colorado Class of 2023 Residency Specialties and Locations

RESIDENCY LOCATIONS (2023-2024)

Internal Medicine (IM) - University of Colorado, Denver, CO

Internal Medicine (IM) - University of Colorado, Denver, CO

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Internal Medicine (IM) - University of Colorado, Denver, CO



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Approach to curriculum/grading system

- Traditional vs. systems-based
- Lecture vs. flipped classrooms vs. problem-based-learning
- Special tracks
- Grading scheme: Letter grades, P/F, Honors/Pass/Fail
- Required attendance vs. lectures online
- Is research required?



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Approach to clinical training

- When do students start working with patients?
- Characteristics of patient population
- Locations of standard clinical rotations
 - Are they all arranged for you or will you need to take ownership of setting up some rotations?
 - Pros/cons
- Opportunities for external rotations?
 - Community clinics
 - Federally-qualified health centers
 - Rural
 - International
 - etc.



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Support services

- Mentoring programs
- Test prep for licensing exams
- Career center, assistance with job placement



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Student culture

- Collaborative vs. competitive
- Opportunities to engage within the campus community (student groups, service, etc.)
- Are students happy there?
 - ... Do your best to assess this element on interview day

Tip: Refer to "Questions I Wish I Had Asked" document, written by a former advisee



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Reputation

- Ranking lists: **Use with caution**
 - The criteria used to create the ranking may not match the criteria important to you
 - *Particularly for non-med*: Use rankings lists as a way to identify top 50%, not to make fine-scale distinctions

Professional school is what you make of it!

- School choice matters less than the effort you put into your schooling and your willingness to make use of the support and opportunities available
- Your future competitiveness for residencies/jobs will be determined by your grades, licensing exam scores, and LORs from academic and clinical faculty



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Location

- Support system
 - Family and friends – pros and cons
 - Access to hobbies
- Practical realities
 - Reasonably priced place to live
 - Transportation – car vs. public transportation
 - Urban, suburban, rural
 - Diversity of patients in clinical rotations
- Non-med: Relationship between geography and competitiveness of admissions process
 - Schools in Western US tend to have more competitive admissions processes



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... And a note about the total # of apps a school receives

Applying to schools that receive an extraordinarily high volume of applications = greater element of chance



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Part 1: Identifying schools that are a good fit

Part 2: Strategies for success



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Strategies for Success

- Tip #1: Apply to a strategic number and assortment of schools
- Tip #2: Apply only to schools that are a good fit
- Tip #3: Only apply where you would happily attend if it is your only acceptance
- Tip #4: Timing considerations for choosing schools
- Tip #5: Make a great spreadsheet
- Tip #6: Avoid common mistakes



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Tip #1: Strategic number and assortment of schools

- *Quick Facts* guide provides nationwide average # of schools to apply to
- Enough to hedge your bets, but not too many
 - ~20%: Reach (this category includes most out-of-state public schools)
 - ~50%: Good fit
 - ~20%: Interested and ready-and-willing to go if this is the only school you get into
- Why not more?
 - Time: Secondary applications
 - Give yourself 2-3 weeks max to complete and submit secondary applications. Many essays to write, and they may all come all at once!
 - Cost
 - Additional price-per-school: Common app AND secondary apps
 - Cost of travel for in-person interviews
 - School deposits if accepted before hearing back from top-choice school



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Tip #2: Apply only to schools that are a good fit

- Does your activity history show that you have the values and interests that match their mission statement?



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Tip #2: Apply only to schools that are a good fit

- Does your activity history show that you have the values and interests that match their mission statement?
- Are certain types of activities, such as community service, research, etc., *required* while in professional school?
 - If so, that school will be looking for people with a strong history of experience in that area.



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Tip #3: Only apply where you would happily attend

- For each school you consider, ask yourself:

"If this ends up being the *only* school where I am accepted, would I happily attend next year?"

... Or would I be more inclined to go through the entire application process again to try to get into another school?"

- Do your best to think broadly so that your school list is neither too short nor too focused on schools with highly competitive admissions processes.



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Tip #4: Timing considerations for choosing schools

- When you submit your common app, list your “definite” schools
 - Depending on the timing of your standardized test, you may be in a position to submit your common application with only a short list of definite schools, with a plan to add others later once you see your test score ... but, for rolling admissions processes, adhere to optimal application timing. (Refer to *Quick Facts* guide.)
- When can you expect secondary applications?
 - Some send as soon as they are notified that you listed them on common app
 - Some conduct initial review of primary app before sending secondary to selected applicants (several weeks after submission or longer)
 - May or may not wait for standardized test score, Casper/Preview, LORs
 - Assessment based on minimum standards vs strength of candidacy



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Tip #5: Make a great spreadsheet!

- Median Cumulative & Sci GPAs
- Median test scores
- Median age of accepted students
- % accepted out of state
- Out-of-state gaining residency?
- Class size
- Tuition
- Length of program
- Tracks available
- Special patient populations?
- Residency placements upon graduation (lots of specialists vs. lots of primary care, locations of residencies)
- LOR assortment
- For non-rolling admissions: app deadline (and is it for submitted or verified app?)
- Licensing exam pass rates
- P/F or letter grades
- Type of curriculum
- Clinical experience in pre-clinical years
- Mentorship programs?
- Interprofessional interaction?
- Graduate statistics for your intended field/specialty
- Other interesting information



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Tip #6: Avoid common mistakes

- Too many schools
- Too many public schools
- Too many schools with uber-competitive admissions processes
- Late secondaries
- Missed deadlines
- Missed correspondence (check Junk folder!)
- Typos/poor writing
- Failure to meet minimum application requirements (missing prereqs/LORs)
- Not a great fit (experiences do not match mission)
- Unprofessional social media presence



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The 5 Components of a Successful Application

1. **Well-qualified applicant**
 - Use the Self-Assessment provided with the Pre-Application Workshop
 - Academics, experiences
2. **Thoughtful, well-written application materials**
3. **Strategic list of schools**
4. **Appropriate timing for each step of the application process**
 - Common app, supplemental apps, test score, letters
5. **Proper preparation for interviews**



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Schools used as examples on worksheet

MISSION:

- A. Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (A.T. Still University)
- B. Stanford MD program
- C. Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine
- D. Loyola MD program
- E. PA program at Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California
- F. PT program at University of Colorado Anschutz

CURRICULUM

1. Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of University of Southern California
2. Rush Medical College
3. UMKC Anesthesiologist Assistant program
4. Cornell DVM program



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