

Preparing to Apply!

The AMCAS Application & Strategies to Prepare



Together in teaching, innovation and compassion

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Overview & Objectives

- Introduction of each medical school
- Share the abundant AMCAS resources available to you
- Review strategies for: Personal Statement, Experiences & LORs
- Open Questions & Answers!

Your Hosts

“Listen” to the stories being told...



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

USD Sanford School of Medicine

National Award-winning Community-based medical school with multiple campuses and clinical training sites across the state.



2017 Recipient of the AAMC Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Service



2013 Recipient of the AAMC Shining Star of Educational Innovation Award
SSOM Yankton Ambulatory Program



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

USD Sanford School of Medicine:

Mission Statement

The **mission** of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine is to provide the opportunity for South Dakota residents to receive a quality, broad-based medical education with an **emphasis on family medicine**. The curriculum is to be established to encourage graduates to **serve people living in the medically underserved areas** of South Dakota and is to require excellence in the basic sciences and in all clinical disciplines

And yes, we do select for mission fit!

- **100th %** for graduates **practicing in a rural area**. (AAMC 2023)
- **98th %** for graduates **training in Family Medicine**. (AAMC 2023)
- **99th %** for **experience in Health Disparities**. (AAMC 2023)
- **100th %** for **experience in Cultural Awareness/Competence**. (AAMC 2023)

The Journey of a Medical Student

Frontier And Rural Medicine (FARM), a rural track medical student program, is a unique opportunity for a select group of Pillar 2 students to receive nine months of their clinical training in one of eight rural communities.

Medical students have the opportunity to participate in the **Scholarship Pathways Program**, a 3½ year elective developed to enrich the student experience by developing a project proposal with a focus on medical education, bench/translational research, service or social science. Scholarship Pathways awards students with tuition reduction and funding for

White Coat Ceremony

Medical school begins

July - year 1

Medical Foundations 1

Medical Foundations 2

Break

Skin/
Musculoskeletal

Nervous System

GI/
Hepatobiliary

Blood/Heme/
Lymph

Break

Pillar 1 Integrated Basic Sciences/ Clinical Foundations

Students are introduced to clinical medicine during Pillar 1, learning Basic Biomedical Sciences along with preparing for the Step 1 Exam.

Pillar 2 Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship

Move to clinical campuses in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Yankton or FARM sites.

February - year 2

Family
Medicine

USLME Step 1 Licensing Exam

Break

Endocrinology

We are looking for applicants who can successfully navigate this journey!

exposure to different cultures and customs that exist within their own communities and state. Students are encouraged to approach each community with humility and are given opportunities to reflect on how they can be better advocates for the communities they will one day practice in.

and practicing physicians.

exciting times of medical school, as students find out where they will spend the next several years learning their specialty.

Pillar 3 Specialty Training/Electives

Continued clinical training that is centered on student's interests and strengths, preparing them to not only choose residency options but also excel in their future training and practice.

USLME Step 2 Licensing Exam

February - year 3

Neurology

Cultural
Immersion

Psychiatry

Pediatrics

Ob/Gyn

Surgery

Immunology
Cardiology
Pneumatology
Anesthesiology

Sub-
internship

Rural Family
Medicine

Surgery
Sub-specialties

Emergency
Medicine

Professional
Development

Endocrinology
Gastroenterology
Genetics
Nephrology
Pediatrics

Residency applications and interviews

Pathology
Pulmonology
Geriatrics
Hepatology
Urology

Oncology
Radiology
Dermatology
Infectious Disease
Plastic Surgery

Ob/Gyn
Ophthalmology
Nephrology
Orthopedics
Neurosurgery

Match Day March - year 4

Transition to
Residency
course

Upon completion of medical school, graduates move on to medical residencies, the period of training received after medical school. A three- to seven-year residency is required to practice medicine. Applications and interviews determine where students spend the next three to seven years and their destinations are revealed at Match Day, held in the spring at medical schools nationwide. The SSOM offers nine residency programs.

Graduation May - year 4

University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix



Curriculum Highlights

Personalized Medical Education

MS1 and MS2 years

- Dual Block Directors (MD and a PhD)
- Organ-Based Curriculum
- Doctoring
- Capstones & Community Clinical Experiences
- Personalized Active Learning (PAL) Block
- Scholarly Project (all 4 years)

MS3 and MS4 years

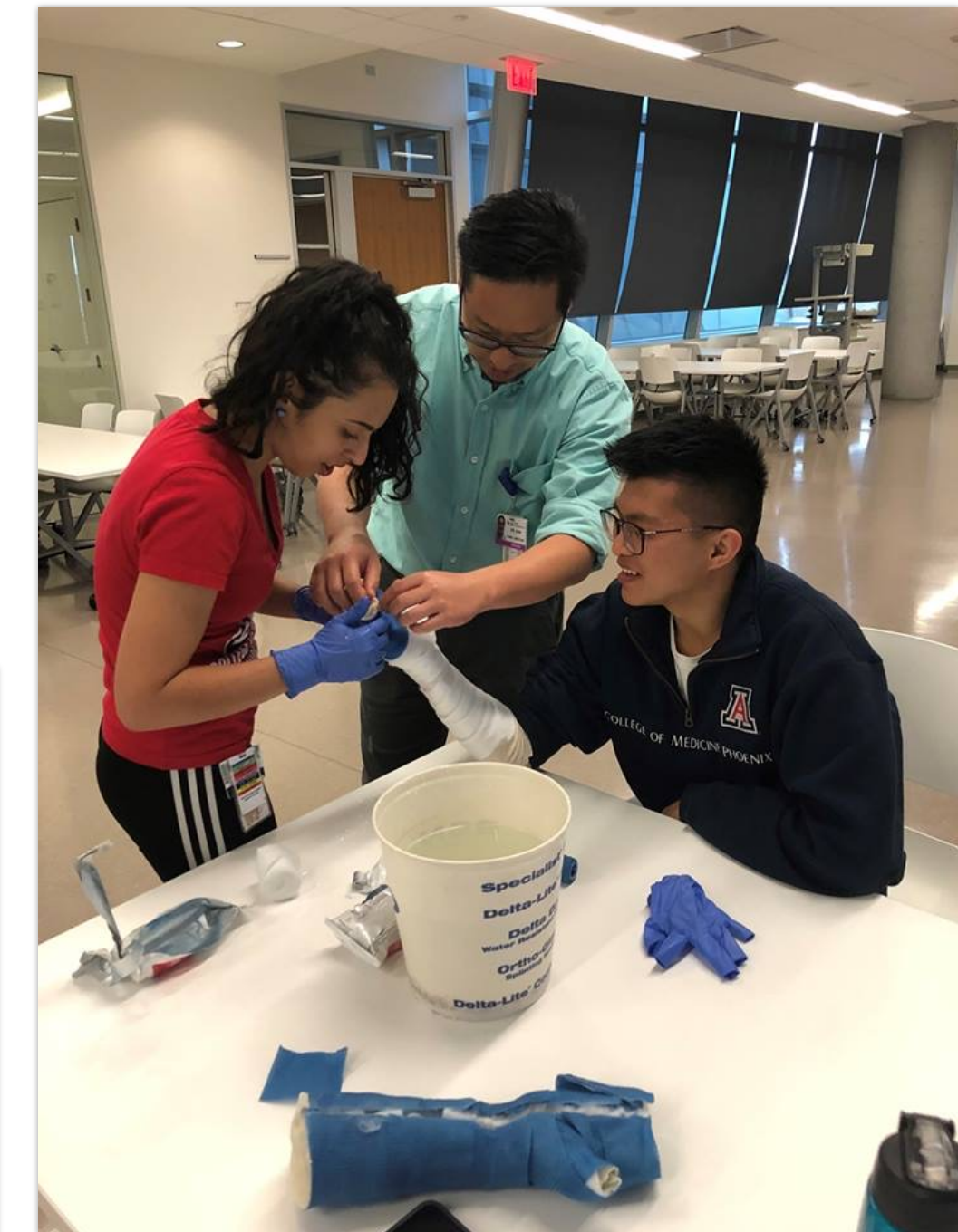
- Early Clinical Training
- Longitudinal Patient Care
- Scholarly Project (all 4 years)

Certificates of Distinction (CODs):

Global Health	Rural Health
Primary Care	Service Learning
Health Humanities	

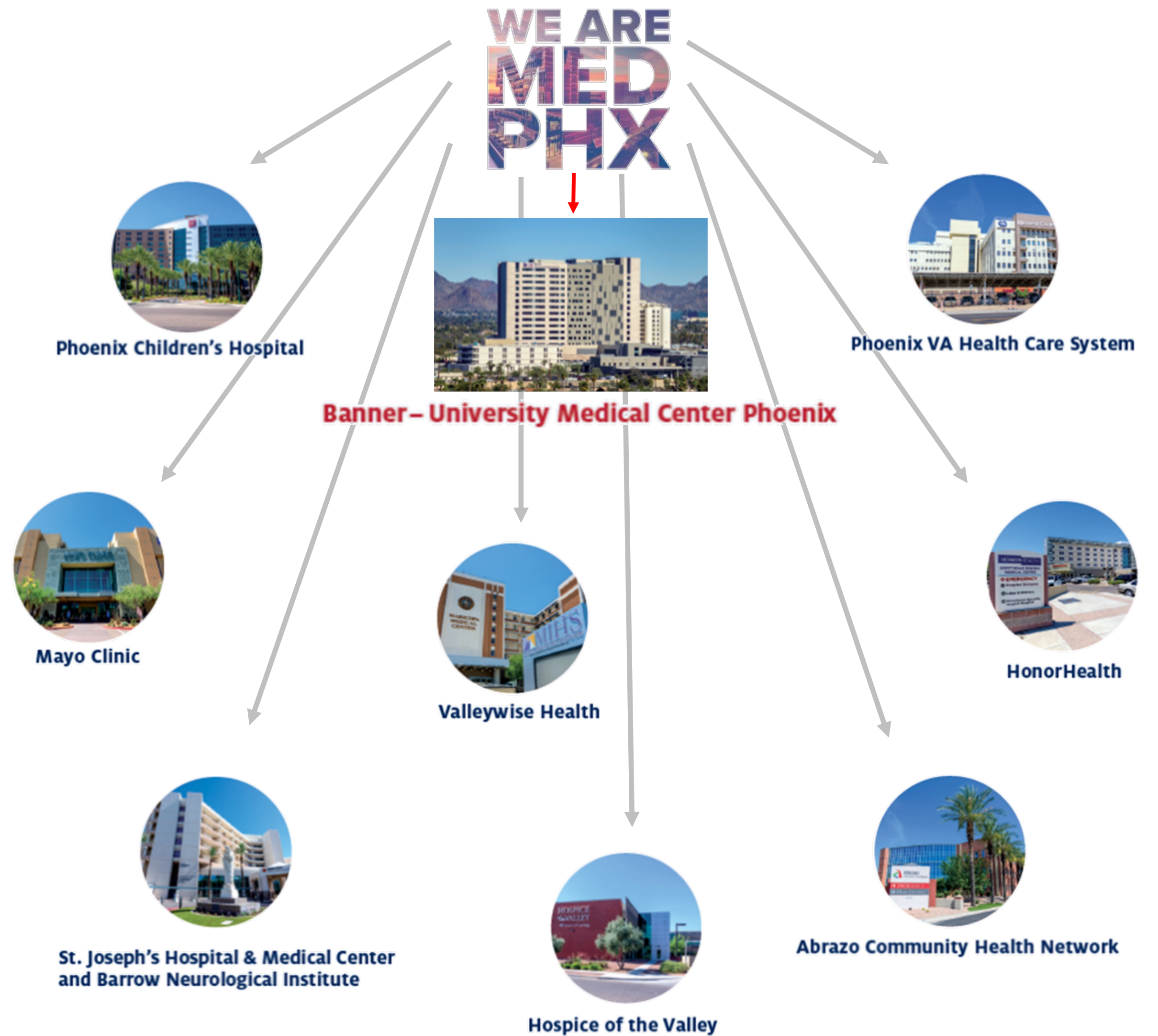
Dual Degrees:

MD/MPH MD/PhD MD/MBA



Distinction in Clinical Education

Clinical Partner	Bed Count	Specialty Course Offerings
Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix	746	50
ValleyWise Health	739	40
Phoenix Children’s Hospital	433	26
Mayo Clinic	268	18
Phoenix VA Health Care	173	17
St. Joseph’s Hospital/Barrow Neurological	595	16
HonorHealth	204	8
Abrazo Community Health	177	2
Hospice of the Valley		1



The AMCAS Application & Process

Resources Abound

The AMCAS Process

Guide, Workbook & Resources

1. 2024 AMCAS Applicant Guide

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/11616/download>
- b. Outline of the current AMCAS application process, policies, and procedures.

2. 2024 AMCAS Application Workbook

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/14376/download>
- b. This is the resource that I mentioned that lists all the questions, response options, and help text in the application, so applicants can have a full example of what to expect in the actual application.

3. 2024 Work/Activities Guide

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/13376/download?attachment>
- b. This resource demonstrates how to enter “Completed” and “Anticipated” hours in the Work/Activities section

4. Background on New Other Impactful Experiences Question (Previously Self-Reported Disadvantaged Status)

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/14261/download>
- b. In addition to sharing the background on this question, this document provides the full text of the question and help text, along with some FAQs and guidance on responding to the question, intended usage, etc.

5. Social Justice/Advocacy New Experience Type

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/14256/download>
- b. This document provides information on the development of this new experience type and what types of experiences might be classified under this category

The AMCAS Process

Guide, Workbook & Resources

6. 2024 AMCAS Updates and FAQs

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/2024-amcas-updates-and-faqs>
- b. This page shares an overview of all the changes for the 2024 application cycle (this information is also captured in the Applicant Guide and the Application Workbook)

7. AMCAS Course Classification Guide

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/amcas-course-classification-guide>
- b. This guide provides examples of how courses are often categorized

8. AMCAS Applicant Website

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/applying-medical-school-amcas>
- b. This is the primary AMCAS website for applicants

9. AAMC Fee Assistance Program

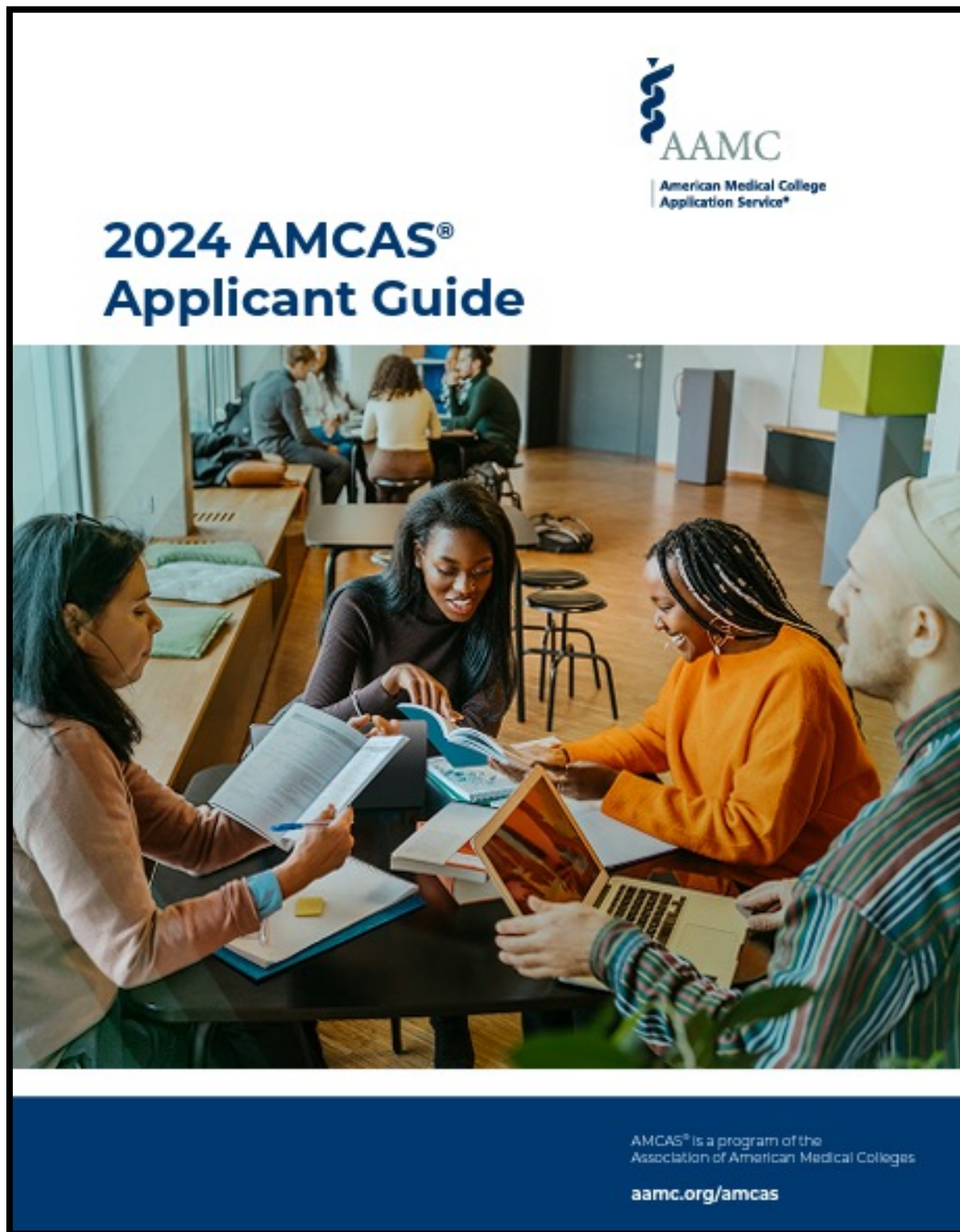
- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/fee-assistance-program/fee-assistance-program-fap>
- b. Information on the AAMC Fee Assistance Program (FAP), which assists those who, without financial assistance, would be unable to take the Medical College Admission Test[®] (MCAT[®]), apply to medical schools that use the American Medical College Application Service[®] (AMCAS[®]), and more

10. AMCAS Application Protocols and Policies

- a. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/amcas-application-policies>

AMCAS Applicant Guide

94 pages of information!



**2024 AMCAS®
Applicant Guide**

AAMC
American Medical College
Application Service®

AMCAS® is a program of the
Association of American Medical Colleges
aamc.org/amcas

How Does the AMCAS Program Work?

Application Submitted

- Online application completed and submitted to the AMCAS program.
- Fees paid (or Fee Assistance Program award used).

Application Processed

- All required official transcripts have arrived at the AMCAS program.
- Coursework has been verified.
- GPAs calculated by the AMCAS program.

Application Delivered

- Verified application sent to designated medical schools.
- Letters of evaluation sent as they are received by the AMCAS program.
- MCAT® scores automatically sent as they become available.

Getting Help With Your Application

Online | aamc.org/amcas

Answers to most questions are available on our website: aamc.org/amcas. You will find helpful tools such as FAQs, guides, and video tutorials there, too.

Social Media | Twitter and YouTube

Follow the AMCAS program on Twitter and YouTube at @AMCASinfo. We post updates and announcements on Twitter and provide video tutorials on YouTube to help you fill out your application.

Phone | 202-828-0600

AAMC Services Contact Center (SCC) representatives are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. Please have your AAMC ID number available when you call.

Submit an Inquiry | [Complete the Form](#)

To ensure a quick response, please include all the required information.

AMCAS Application Workbook

Get a head start on building your application!

2024 AMCAS® Application Workbook

This document is intended to serve as a resource for prospective AMCAS applicants. The questions contained in the 2024 AMCAS application are listed below and, where possible, selection choices are also provided. Unless otherwise noted, all questions require a response. *Items in blue are explanatory notes.*

Beginning May 2, 2023, you may initiate your 2024 AMCAS application at www.aamc.org/amcas.

This resource is designed to help you prepare your materials for the 2024 AMCAS application but does not replace the online application.

- Identifying Information
- Schools Attended
- Biographic Information
- Coursework
- Work/Activities
- Letters of Evaluation
- Medical Schools
 - Where you wish to apply
- Essay
 - 5,300 characters to explain ***why you want to go to medical school.***
- Standardized Tests
 - MCAT
 - PREview
- Certification Statements

AMCAS Application Workbook - Examples

Biographic Information

Preferred Mailing Address

This information can be updated after submission until the close of the application cycle.

Country:		
State/Province:	County:	City:
Street Address:		
Zip/Postal Code:		
Daytime Phone:	Evening Phone:	Fax:
E-mail:		

Permanent Mailing Address

Country:		
State/Province:	County:	City:
Street Address:		
Zip/Postal Code:		
Daytime Phone:	Evening Phone:	Fax:
E-mail:		

Other Impactful Experiences

This question is designed to help promote holistic review by providing admissions officers with a snapshot of applicants' lived experiences. In addition, the question is designed to give applicants the opportunity to provide additional context about the challenges they may have experienced during their lives. It is intended for applicants who have had impactful life experiences and faced or overcome challenges in various areas such as family background, financial background, community setting, education, religion, or other life experiences. [Learn more about the background of this question.](#)

To provide some additional context around each individual's application, admissions committees are interested in learning more about the challenges applicants may have overcome in life. The following question is designed to give you the opportunity to provide additional information about yourself that is not easily captured in the rest of the application.

Please consider whether this question applies to you. Medical schools do not expect all applicants to answer "yes" to this question. This question is intended for applicants who have overcome major challenges or obstacles. Some applicants may not have experiences that are relevant to this question. Other applicants may not feel comfortable sharing personal information in their application.

Have you overcome challenges or obstacles in your life that you would like to describe in more detail? This could include lived experiences related to your family background, financial background, community setting, educational experiences, and/or other life circumstances. [How do I know if I should answer "yes" to this question?](#) [This link in the application will direct to the help text – see below for details.]

Yes

No

Please use the space below to describe why you selected "yes." This text and the textbox only appear if "yes" is selected for this question.

--

1325 characters

This pop-up help text will appear if "How do I know if I should answer "yes" to this question?" is selected.

Other Impactful Experiences Description

The following examples can help you decide whether you should respond "yes" to the question, and if so, what kinds of experiences you could share. Please keep in mind that this is not a fully inclusive list and any experiences you choose to write about should be ones that directly impacted your life opportunities.

Example Experiences

- **Family background:** serving as a caretaker of a family member (e.g., siblings, parent/guardian), first generation to college
- **Community setting:** rural area, food scarcity, high poverty or crime rate, lack of access to regular health care (e.g., primarily used urgent care clinics or emergency room, no primary care physician)
- **Financial background:** low-income family, worked to support family growing up, work-study to pay for college, federal or state financial support
- **Educational experience:** limited educational opportunities, limited access to advisors or counselors who were knowledgeable/supportive of higher education requirements
- **Other general life circumstances** that were beyond your control and impacted your life and/or presented barriers (e.g., religion)

The Personal Statement

Connecting with the reader...

Start Building Today!

Personal Statement

- What is your motive for applying to medical school?
- What intrigues you about life, about medicine?
- A personal statement will help guide you far beyond applying to medical school—ask yourself, “What truly motivates me? Is this really who I am? Can I do this all my life?”
- Think of this as the behind the scenes look at who you are as a person, not as a pre-med student.

Key Themes

- Pick one or two themes to carry throughout your personal statement (resilience, humility, etc.).
- Ideally, the personal statement should be written from your perspective as an adult, not in childhood.
- Pick one significant moment or experience and crystallize it for your readers. Tie it back into the themes you selected.

Do's and Don'ts of the Personal Statement

Do

Include these elements

Write in present tense

Resolve all hanging stories

Remember that many will read this statement—is it approachable?

Don't

Leave these out

Rewrite your Experiences section—this isn't a resume

Share your entire life story

Forget to ask for feedback!

The Experiences Section

Let's be well-rounded...

Start Documenting Your Experiences!

AMCAS has 19 Work & Activity Categories

- Artistic Endeavors
- Community Service/Volunteer – Medical/Clinical
- Community Service/Volunteer – Not Medical/Clinical
- Conferences Attended
- Extracurricular Activities
- Hobbies
- Honors/Awards/Recognitions
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Leadership – Not Listed Elsewhere
- Military Service
- Other
- Paid Employment – Medical/Clinical
- Paid Employment – Not Medical/Clinical
- Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation
- Presentations/Posters
- Publications
- Research/Lab
- Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant
- Advocacy/Social Justice

Five Core Competencies

- **Clinical** – Paid or Unpaid, Shadowing, Volunteer (hospice, medical center, ER, etc.), Scribe, Certified Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomist, EMT, Pharm Tech, etc.
- **Research/Lab** – Science and non-science projects, Lab-based or not (show structure, investment in time and effort, ability to analyze data, think critically, and communicate results)
- **Leadership** – start a club or non-profit or program, role in org or student council, TA or tutoring, church, athletics, or in other core competencies
- **Community Service/Volunteer** – Medical/Clinical or Not Medical/Clinical count
- **Extracurricular Activities/Hobbies** – only need one!

Letters of Recommendation

Find those that know the real you...

Supporting Who You Are!

- Build a solid “working” relationship with potential letter writers (Variety is good: Academic, Work/Volunteer, Clinical. Mission fit).
- Timely LoR request and ensure it will be a strong one.
- Provide relevant supporting materials especially if a reapplicant: Resume/CV, other updates.
- Pay attention to specific medical school criteria

Q&A