

Getting into Medical School

An Admissions Office perspective

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A Career as a Physician

- ◆ The goal is not just to get into medical school, but to start a career as a physician.
- ◆ 4 years of medical school
- ◆ At least 3 years (and as many as 7 years) of internship/residency (paid, though not as well)
- ◆ The 80-hour work week
- ◆ Licensure and practice
- ◆ \$\$\$\$

Admissions to Medical School

- ◆ In most basic terms, medical schools are looking for evidence that you will become a good doctor
 - Excellent academic qualifications (GPA/MCAT)*
 - Support of your faculty (Letters)
 - Extracurricular, creative, and scholarly activities
 - Meaningful exposure to medical profession (research, clinical volunteering, clinical “shadowing”)
 - Evidence of a commitment to service (broad definition)
 - Other (leadership, artistic endeavors, athletics, teaching)

***MEASUREABLE METRIC**

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Admissions to Medical School

- ◆ Each school has its own approach, but many aspects are quite similar
- ◆ For UCSD (Last App Cycle)
 - **Primary Applications:** 10,880
 - **Secondary applications:** 7,600
 - **Interviews:** 990
 - **Class of 140**

2025 INCOMING CLASS BY THE NUMBERS

10,400

Applications



1,002

Interviews



140

Students Matriculated

3.83

Average GPA

3.78

Average Science GPA

514.4

Average MCAT

21-41

Age Range

16

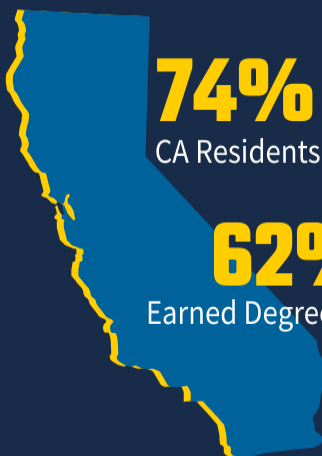


UC San Diego Alumni



43

Languages spoken



16%

First-Generation College Graduates

41%

First-Generation Graduate Students

Unique Majors

Spanish Literature and Culture • International Development Studies • International Relations
History of Science • Medicine • Public Health

Top Majors

Biology • Neuroscience
Molecular & Cell Biology

Unique Jobs

Competitive Jump Roper • Fire Team Leader
USMC Ground Radio Repairman • Backcountry
Ski Hut Repair • Vipassana Meditation Server

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The admissions process is compliant with Proposition 209 and does not consider race or ethnicity as criteria for selection.

Admissions Myths

◆ “UCSD SOM doesn’t admit students from my school!”

- FACT: It’s difficult everywhere. Applicants from **UCSD** in recent years have received offers at a rate comparable to undergraduate campuses in California
 - ❖ UCLA, **UCSD**, UC Berkeley, Stanford usually have the highest percentage of successful applicants, but even then these numbers are low. Usually around 4 - 5% of applicants from these schools are offered acceptance. This is higher than the overall success rate of ~3%
 - ❖ But, this does not mean there is a bias toward **UCSD**. You have to put in the work. The available resources and large pre-med community can be a huge help
 - ❖ There is definitely not a bias against **UCSD**

Recommended Courses for SOM

Admission Consideration

- ◆ One academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) of Biology
- ◆ One academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) of General Chemistry
- ◆ One term (1 semester or 1 quarter) of Biochemistry
- ◆ One academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) of Organic Chemistry.
- ◆ One academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) of Physics.
- ◆ One academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) of Calculus or Statistics
- ◆ Lab coursework for all courses that offer corresponding labs.
 - ✓ ALL College-Level
 - ✓ Can be covered by AP Exam Credit
 - ✓ Can be taken at a Community College
 - ✓ Can be taken from an ACCREDITED Online extension program
 - ✓ Applicants that are missing any of these courses will still be considered

Admissions Myths

- ◆ There is a “checklist” for a successful applicant, with regards to extracurricular activities
 - FACT: The admissions committee has hundreds of years of combined experience...they have seen a lot of applications! They are adept at distinguishing trivial volunteer experiences from those conducted in depth.
 - They are looking for applicants that have explored a career in medicine. We don't want students to discover in 3rd year of medical school that they don't want this career.
 - In-depth experiences are generally preferred, as opposed to dozens of smaller experiences
 - ◆ More clearly defined as an applicant
 - ◆ More likely to achieve leadership positions
 - ◆ More likely to get stronger letters of recommendation

Admissions Myths

- ◆ There is a “checklist” for a successful applicant, with regards to extracurricular activities
 - We do not outline for applicants why they did or did not get to a certain step in our process because we want to maintain a system of evaluation in which an applicant’s accomplishments are self-generated and inherent to them, as opposed to being reactive to the process of applying to medical school itself.
 - The bottom line: Do what you like to do, not what you think you HAVE TO do (but yes, do SOMETHING).

Admissions Myths

◆ “If my grades are weak, I can compensate with my MCAT scores”

- Typically not at **UCSD**...and probably not anywhere
- GPA and MCAT Work in TANDEM
- A career in medicine is all about continuing education, hard work, diligence, responsibility
- Caveat: sometimes other factors have prevented good academic performance
- Caveat: an “upward trend” in GPA is something that is noticed by the admissions committee (i.e. Master’s/Post-Bacc GPAs)

Primary Application (AMCAS)

- ◆ Pay attention to deadlines!
- ◆ Ensure accurate contact information. Email up-to-date (school queries)
- ◆ MCAT tests? Is it needed at all?

YES

- ◆ Wait for scores in August/ September/October or submit without?
- ◆ Secondary applications are automatic for students with competitive grades/MCAT scores. ALL remaining applications are reviewed and some additional are granted secondary apps after careful review

Secondary Application

- ◆ Details vary by school, but **UCSD**'s has
 - Autobiographical sketch
 - Reformatted extracurricular activities
 - Family background information
 - Letters of recommendation
 - ◆ A minimum of three letters are required from individuals who can provide a well considered evaluation of your qualifications for the medical profession.
 - ◆ No requirements such as “Two science, one non-science” and in fact a letter that says little more than how well you did in professor's class is not new info to us
 - ◆ *It is helpful if the letter writers know you well* (personal touch more important than a “big name”)

Secondary Review aka “The Waiting Game”

- ◆ Conducted by a subgroup of our admissions committee
- ◆ Very time-consuming – at peak time, can be a 4+ month wait for review.
- ◆ Review of LORs, activities, autobiographical sketch
- ◆ This determines whether you receive an interview
- ◆ Detail provided helps us give you credit for what you have done. Don't be humble!
- ◆ NO Application Updates after SUBMISSION
- ◆ This is a SNAPSHOT in your current journey towards Medical School

Interview Day

- ◆ Multiple Mini Interview Format
- ◆ All Virtual (no in-person)
- ◆ 8 “scenarios” for applicants to address
- ◆ STAY ON TOPIC!!
- ◆ Chance to connect with current students!!
- ◆ Do you get nervous? Prepare! Practice!
Search for sample questions!

QUESTIONS?



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