

# Top 6 Ways to Become a Competitive Medical or Dental Candidate

## 1. Strong GPA

- 3.8 and above
- Completion of upper level, difficult science coursework
- Take multiple challenging classes in the same semester

## 2. High MCAT/DAT score

### **MCAT**

- Good score: 29-30; Great score: 31-32; Excellent score: 33+
- Section average: 10+

### **DAT**

- Good score: 19; Great score: 20-21; Excellent: 22-23+

## 3. Shadowing Experience/ Patient Contact

- Good: 75-100 hours; Great: 100-150 hours; Excellent: 150+ hours
- At least 2 physicians in different specialties and practices (dentists: start with 100hrs of general dentistry)
- 1 for an extended amount of time, 1 for the ability to articulate differences between fields
- Shadow specialties of interests
- High level of patient contact – taking vitals, patient histories, dental assisting or dental x-ray and building rapport with patients

## 4. Volunteer Experience

- Good: 50-75 hours; Great: 75-100 hours; Excellent: 100+
- Should have some significant experiences with volunteering, not just multiple small projects through Greek life or student organizations
- Well-rounded volunteer experience, can be both related and unrelated to medicine/dentistry

## 5. Leadership/Extracurricular Activities

- Significant leadership role, demonstrating interpersonal skills
- Well-rounded extra-curricular activities or work experiences, both related and unrelated to medicine/dentistry

## 6. Research

- Hard science oriented research
- Great: 6 months in length; Excellent: 6+ months
- Publications are great

### **Key points for Medical Students:**

- Decide what type of program is best for you: MD; DO; ND; MD/MBA; MD/MPH; MD/PhD
- Every school has a different formula for selecting the best student – review schools of interest to determine your best strategy for admittance
- Determine what is important to you in a medical school – review questions to think about before selecting your top schools:

[https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/109762/35\\_questions.html](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/109762/35_questions.html)

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## Core Competencies for Entering Students

1. **Service Orientation:** Demonstrates desire to help others and to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society; locally, nationally, and globally.
2. **Social Skills:** Demonstrates awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.
3. **Cultural Competence:** Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
4. **Teamwork:** Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.
5. **Oral Communication:** Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.
6. **Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others:** Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways.
7. **Reliability and Dependability:** Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.
8. **Resilience and Adaptability:** Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.
9. **Capacity for Improvement:** Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.
10. **Critical Thinking:** Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
11. **Quantitative Reasoning:** Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.
12. **Scientific Inquiry:** Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.
13. **Written Communication:** Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences.
14. **Living Systems:** Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.
15. **Human Behavior:** Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.