

*** Look out for updates, forms and deadlines at lowell.harvard.edu/pre-med ***

*** Sign up for the pre-med list-serve (instructions on above webpage) ***

*** For all email communication, please use a non-Harvard email (@college will expire) ***

THE LOWELL PREMED COMMITTEE

Get to know your premedical committee! We provide advice, edit essays and offer mock interviews. The Dean's Letter is written by us. Each applicant is assigned one go-to person but we're all available to you throughout the process.

Lowell Q1 Premedical Questionnaire: April 4th, 2021. Start early! Be specific and be thorough! It helps us learn about you and prepares you for AMCAS and secondaries. Available on Lowell Premed website.

Virtual Committee Discussions: Late April. Non-evaluative opportunity for candid feedback about your application. Sign-up after submitting Questionnaire on the Lowell Premed website. *Required of all Lowell applicants who desire a Dean's Letter.*

Dean's Letter

- Application cover letter authored by the Lowell Premedical Committee, signed by the Resident Dean (Dr. Caitlin Casey). It is based on your letters of recommendation, your transcript and our knowledge of the Harvard system, and your thoughtful responses to the Premedical Questionnaire. Like other letters of recommendation, it is confidential.
- Lowell House Office uploads the Dean's Letter and designated letters of recommendation to VirtualEvals on **August 15** for all applicants who meet all deadlines.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1 year <u>Biology</u> (w/ lab both semesters)
1 year <u>General Chemistry</u> (with lab)
1 year <u>Organic Chemistry</u> (with lab)
1 year <u>Physics</u> (with lab)
1 year <u>English</u> (Expos/GenEds)
1 year <u>Math/Statistics</u>

FAQs (especially about math!) answered in the "Premedical Information for Harvard Students" booklet @ the **OCS Health Careers website**

<http://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/premedical-health-careers-advising>

All Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics, and Statistics courses count toward your "Science GPA"

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Clinical experience is a required component of successful medical school application. Shadowing is a good place to start. From there, aim to find a personal, in-depth, longitudinal opportunity.

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Collect as many letters as you wish, all of which may be used to draft your Dean's Letter.

Designate 5 to be submitted to medical schools. Consider the following sources of letters:

- Science professors / TFs from upper-level science courses. More if science GPA is lower.
- Thesis advisor (required to have this letter if did a thesis)
- Non-science professor/TF, regardless of your concentration.
- Faculty in your concentration (tutorial adviser, concentration adviser, etc.) if not already fulfilled by the above
- MDs who know you from a clinical context
- An employer or extracurricular activity

TF letters should be co-signed by faculty.

How to ask

- Make an appointment to meet with your potential recommender in person.
- Ask, "Would you feel comfortable writing a strong letter of recommendation for my application to medical school?"
- Generate a cover letter consisting of a few paragraphs about why you are asking the recommender to write on your behalf, detail a few meaningful experiences/concepts you have acquired through your interactions with him/her, and comment on how these have molded your views or shaped your future ambitions.
- Set a mutually agreeable deadline. Follow-up with a reminder ~10 days before the deadline. Faculty truly appreciate having a reminder.

Letters submitted to the Lowell House Office must be accompanied by a signed Recommendation Request and Waiver Form (available at lowell.harvard.edu/pre-med). Letters must be on letterhead with signature. It is your responsibility to confirm receipt of all letters by the deadline (April 15, 2021). Save the confirmation receipt emails you receive from the House Assistant as letters arrive.

Spring letter exception: Letters from experiences / classes that you are currently in may be received to the house office by June 1. You must still have at least 3 letters in by April 15.

MD-PhD applicants: You may (and should) send more than 5 letters. You are required to send a letter from every research experience you've had since college.

Quote-only letters: You have the option to have letters be excerpted from in your Dean's Letter, rather than sent in its entirety. Situations where this applies are: 6+ strong letters and need to choose one to quote-only; a letter from a novice letter writer; a letter from a short experience and you request the letter writer to write ~2 paragraphs.

Letter selection: Due to confidentiality we are not allowed to advise you which letters to send based on their content. You must tell us which letters to send or not send by **June 15**.

MCAT

Take the exam before June (at the latest) to apply this cycle, although it is possible to apply with a June exam if your application is otherwise stellar. **Register more than 20 weeks prior to the desired test date.** Discounts/fee waivers and preparation materials will be provided to students who qualify for the AAMC Fee Assistance Program

Recommended Resources from AAMC:

- The MCAT® Essentials: Free guide to MCAT. (on AAMC website)
- Khan academy videos (free): More than 1,100 free videos and 3,000 review questions
- Psychology and Sociology Textbook Roadmap (free from AAMC): Find with Google search
- 4 Full-length official MCATs (\$35 each, from AAMC)
- Official AAMC Section Question Bank (\$45 from AAMC): 300 questions. Biochemistry, psychology, sociology
- Official AAMC Practice Question Bank (\$72 from AAMC): 720 questions (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Critical Reasoning and Analysis)

Study Tips:

- **Be an active studier! Do thousands of practice problems and as many practice tests as you can get your hands on.**
- Some students take Kaplan or Princeton Review courses, which offer comprehensive review of test material and practice exams and generate an organized study schedule. However, these courses are expensive and are **not necessary** for success. Many students successfully study on their own with review books and practice questions/exams.
- Expect to spend 2 months of intense study. Anticipate this time. Don't simultaneously overload yourself with excessively demanding coursework or extracurriculars.
- Take multiple full-length practice exams under timed conditions in the weeks beforehand (see above).
- Plan to take the MCAT only once. The AAMC releases all MCAT scores; there's no score choice.

WHAT DO MED SCHOOLS CONSIDER IN AN APPLICANT?

Clinical Experience - how informed is your choice of medicine as a career?

Academic record - GPA, MCAT scores

Character - personal statement, recommendations, interview

Extracurricular activities, community service

Potential for service to underserved communities

U.S. and state residency status

AMCAS: THE 'PRIMARY' APPLICATION

Centralized online application run by the AAMC. Submit your grades, scores, extracurricular activities and personal statement to AMCAS for distribution to the schools you designate. It's used to screen applicants for secondaries, and it's sometimes your only writing opportunity. The 2020 AMCAS application will open around May 1; submission opens around June 5.

Plan to submit AMCAS in early June, and no later than July 1, 2021.

Fee Assistance Program (Citizens and Permanent Residents, receive fee assistance for MCAT, AMCAS application, and secondary fees. Apply now!). **Apply through AAMC**

Personal Statement (5300 characters on why you want to be a physician):

This is your chance to write a compelling narrative about your desire to become a physician. Include specific details about key life experiences that informed your decision. Make every sentence as specific as you can so that it applies almost exclusively to you! Organize it chronologically. Be prepared to write multiple drafts and get feedback from several people, especially your pre-med tutor. Have friends / family proofread before submitting.

Timing: Aim to have a complete draft of your personal statement by **May 1**.