MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANT MANUAL

FALL 2021 MATRICULATION

Penn
CAREER
SERVICES

CONTENTS

HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HPAB)

....individualized HPAB Committee Letter that highlights an applicant's academic achievement, intellectual strength....

Many undergraduate institutions offer a letter from a pre-health committee in support of medical school applicants. At Penn, this committee is called the Health Professions Advisory Board (HPAB). It is comprised of the Pre-Health Advising Team as well as University faculty and staff, who aim to provide a holistic overview of each eligible candidate. Medical schools value the personalized insights these letters provide.

Penn has a large number of applicants to medical and dental school every year, so we have developed a systematic process that enables us to write a comprehensive Committee Letter for those who meet our deadlines.

After meeting with each applicant, the Pre-Health Advising Team writes a thorough, detailed, and individualized HPAB Committee Letter that highlights an applicant's academic achievement, intellectual strength, non-academic accomplishments, communication skills, maturity, fit for health care professions, service orientation, leadership and community engagement.

MEDICAL SCHOOL
APPLICATION TIMELINE
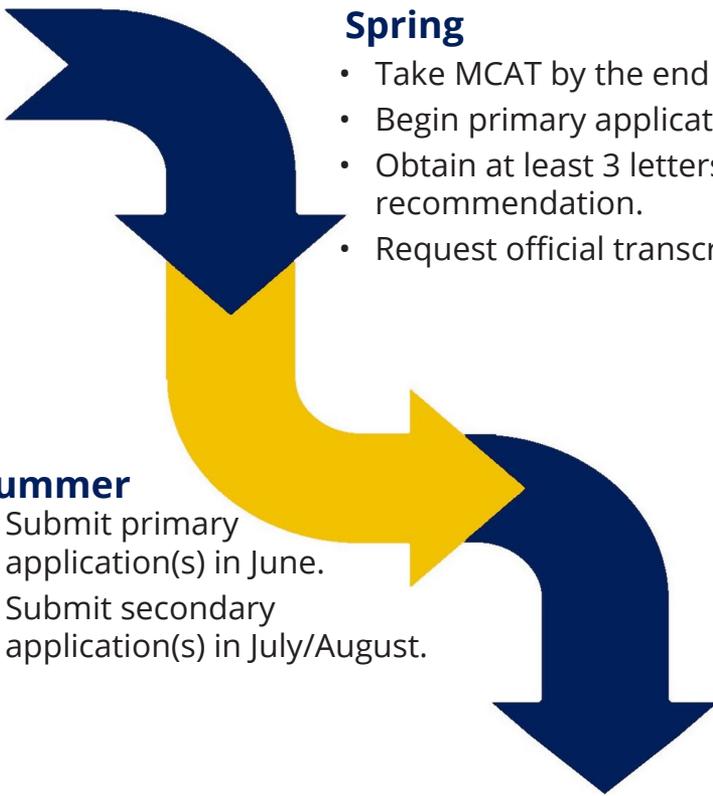
Spring
- Take MCAT by the end of May.
- Begin primary application(s).
- Obtain at least 3 letters of recommendation.
- Request official transcript.

Summer
- Submit primary application(s) in June.
- Submit secondary application(s) in July/August.

Fall & Winter
Attend medical school interviews!

IMPORTANT HPAB DEADLINES

- ✔ Attend a Medical School Applicant Orientation.

- ✔ Open a Credentials File.

- ✔ Complete your Advisor Interview by **April 10**.

- ✔ Secure at least 3 appropriate letters of recommendation in your Credentials File by **May 15**.

- ✔ Submit LOR Form by **May 22**.

- ✔ Upload Completed Application to AMS.

**CREDENTIALS REQUEST DATE
JULY 17 AT 12PM EST**

APPLICATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (AMS)

The Health Professions Application Management System (AMS) is an online system designed specifically for Penn's HPAB Process.

AMS can be accessed in the *Apply to Health Professions School* page of the Career Services Website (PennKey Required)
https://uapps.vpul.upenn.edu/CSFileRegistration

After logging into AMS, you will notice that there are three sections of the portal:

Online Credentials File

HPAB Documents Checklist

Credentials Request (page 24)

ONLINE CREDENTIALS FILE

Your Credentials File, housed in Career Services, serves as a permanent repository for your letters of recommendation for medical school. You can open a credentials file in person at the Career Services Office, or by visiting https://uapps.vpul.upenn.edu/CSFileRegistration

*Letters kept in your Credentials File can only be used for the purpose of applying to medical school.

HPAB DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

The HPAB Documents page allows you to upload each of the required HPAB documents (page 7). Detailed instructions on how to upload documents can be found at the bottom of the checklist. *ALL checkboxes must be checked before you will be able to request your HPAB packet.*

Health Professions Application Management System

Welcome REBECCA   Credentials Request   Requests Status   Check Recommendations   HPAB Documents   Sign Out

HPAB Documents Checklist
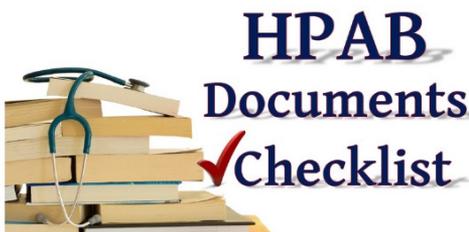
- ☑ Open a Credentials File (Registration Form)
- ☑ Attend an HPAB Orientation
- ☑ Upload Photo
- ☑ Upload Expanded Resume
- ☑ Complete HPAB Essays
- ☑ Upload BCPM GPA
- ☑ Provide at least 3 Letters of Recommendations by **May 15**
- ☑ Provide a List of Recommenders Form by **May 22**
- ☑ Upload a copy of your submitted Application

HPAB Documents Checklist	›
Photo	›
Expanded Resume	›
HPAB Essays	›
BCPM GPA	›
Application	›
List of Recommenders Form	›

ADVISOR INTERVIEW

After attending the orientation, contact Becky Tamayo at 215-898-1789 to schedule a 45-minute Advisor Interview.

DECEMBER WORKSHOP ATTENDEES
must contact between January 6-January 8

SPRING WORKSHOP ATTENDEES
must contact within 2 business days of attending workshop

Please upload your HPAB Documents (Photo, Expanded Resume, BCPM GPA, & HPAB Essays) prior to your Advisor Interview.

*Due to the high volume of applicants,
you will not be able to reschedule the Advisor Interview.*

HPAB DOCUMENTS

*Only the Pre-Health Advising Team will have access to these documents. **They will not be sent to any medical schools.***

PHOTO
You should be recognizable and prominent in the photo.

EXPANDED RÉSUMÉ
A sample can be found in AMS.

BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, & MATH (BCPM) GPA
List the courses and grades that comprise your BCPM GPA, in addition to the GPA calculation. Follow the format provided in AMS. You can calculate your BCPM GPA by using the GPA calculator found in your Worksheet on PennInTouch.

Include the grades earned in any BCPM course, as well as other courses with content that falls primarily in these four areas. Please review the Course Classification Guides in the Useful Links (page 28).

HPAB ESSAYS
This is an opportunity for reflection that will help your pre-health advisor know you better and prepare you for medical school applications and interviews.

AMCAS/AACOMAS APPLICATION
You must upload your submitted AMCAS or AACOMAS application before you will be able to request your HPAB Packet (page 24).

HPAB ESSAYS

1. How has your personal background shaped your life, influenced your thinking, or informed your priorities?

2. How have you changed since beginning your undergraduate education?

3. What is your greatest interpersonal strength and how have you demonstrated it?

4. In what ways have you worked with people from different backgrounds—members of the larger community, in addition to people at Penn—during your undergraduate career? What have you learned from these interactions?

5. What ethical or practical problems in patient care have you witnessed or faced during the course of your clinical experiences?

6. Do you believe your grades accurately reflect the strength of your candidacy for medical school? If not, please explain. You must answer this question if your BCPM GPA falls below a 3.1.

7. Were you ever the recipient of any institutional action by any college or university for unacceptable academic performance or conduct violations? If "yes," please explain in detail and plan to discuss the matter fully with your pre-health advisor.

PRIMARY APPLICATION

ALLOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOLS
If you are applying to allopathic medical schools (MD), use the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS). The AMCAS application contains the following:

- *Demographic Information*
- *Academic Record*
- *Work/Experiences*
- *Personal Statement*
- *Letters of Evaluation*

Initiate the AMCAS application by registering online. The earliest you can begin filling out the application will be in early May 2020. Submissions begin in late May/early June and we suggest submitting by the end of June.

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOLS
If you are applying to osteopathic medical schools (DO), use the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS). This application is very similar to AMCAS, and is available online.

TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOLS
Public Texas medical schools belong to a separate state application service called Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS). *Please notify your advisor if you are applying to any medical school in Texas via TMDSAS.*

PRIMARY APPLICATION

ACADEMIC RECORD

List all of your courses following the instructions provided by AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS. If in doubt, consult the Course Classification Guides provided on each platform.

TRANSCRIPTS

Only the Office of the University Registrar (at Penn or any other university where you have completed coursework) can send your official transcript(s).

1. Request an official Penn transcript online via PennInTouch. The addressee must be the application service(s) you will be using.

2. After completing the AMCAS "Schools Attended" and AACOMAS and TMDSAS "Colleges Attended" application sections, download the "Transcript Request Form." *You must email the Transcript Request Form to the Registrar's Office on the same day of the PennInTouch request: **transcripts@upenn.edu**.*

3. The Registrar's Office will attach the form to your official transcript before sending it directly to AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS.

We recommend that you wait to request your transcript until your spring grades are added (with the exception of study abroad grades).

Make sure to review your unofficial transcript for errors before you place your request.

PRIMARY APPLICATION

SEMESTER HOURS CONVERSION

Applicants using **AMCAS** _do not_ convert their Penn course units. Enter them **exactly as they appear** on the official transcript.

Applicants using **AACOMAS & TMDSAS** must convert Penn course units to semester hours for their applications.

For applicants using AACOMAS & TMDSAS,
1 credit unit = 4 semester hours

For example:
0.5 c.u. = 2 credit hours
1 c.u. = 4 credit hours
1.5 c.u. = 6 credit hours

If you have questions about converting your courses to credit hours, please contact the Office of the University Registrar:
_215-898-6636_

PRIMARY APPLICATION

WORK / EXPERIENCE SECTION
List and describe up to 15 of your most important extracurricular and co-curricular activities and awards.

You will be asked to write more extensively on up to 3 activities you choose as your "most meaningful."

Do not include high school activities without consulting your pre-health advisor.

TIPS FOR WRITING DESCRIPTIONS
- List the most appropriate (non-student) contact person.

- Explain your role, accomplishments, responsibilities and contributions.

- Provide what you learned and why it's meaningful.

- Review the tone and content of the Expanded Resume sample provided on AMS to assist you in writing your own descriptions.

PRIMARY APPLICATION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

You will write an essay that details one or two adult (not childhood) experiences, in which you were an active participant.

The Personal Statement illustrates qualities that make you a strong candidate.

- ✔ **Strive for a unifying theme.**

- ✔ **Provide detailed and concrete examples.**

- ✔ **Convey your maturity and capacity for self-reflection.**

- ✔ **Convey your commitment to medicine and your "fit" for the profession.**

In order to have your personal statement reviewed by your advisor, you must first upload the document to your Handshake account and then request a "*Pre-Health Personal Statement Review*" appointment via BlueJeans video conference.

> **Final day to request your Personal Statement review**
> ## May 22

AMCAS APPLICATION

RELEASING YOUR INFORMATION
AMCAS poses this question in the "Schools Attended" section of the application:

Do you authorize AMCAS to release your application information to the school-designated advisor(s) at this institution? *

○ Yes

○ No

Please indicate "**YES**." The aggregate information will help us assemble Penn-specific statistics for future applicants, just as past information was helpful to you.

AMCAS LETTERS OF EVALUATION
Penn applicants must indicate that they will be submitting a "**Committee Letter**" (*not* a "Letter Packet" or "Individual Letter") in the "Letters of Evaluation" section.

- List your **pre-health advisor** as the Contact/Author.

- *Do not list the individual letters of recommendation in the packet on your AMCAS or AACOMAS application.*

- AMCAS suggests the Letter Request Form be sent to your committee letter author. *We do not need this Letter Request Form. Please do not send this to our office.*

APPLYING TO MULTIPLE PROGRAM TYPES

If you decide to apply to more than one program type, you will need to add a Letter of Evaluation for each program type in order to receive distinct Letter IDs:

LETTER OF EVALUATION/RECOMMENDATION

Primary Author or Contact	Institution	Letter Status	Letter ID
Dr. Carol Hagan, UPenn HPAB Packet MD	University of Pennsylvania	Not Received	7328171
Dr. Carol Hagan, UPenn HPAB Packet MD/PhD	University of Pennsylvania	Not Received	7328319

Under the AMCAS "Medical Schools" section, you will select the programs to which you are applying. You will then assign the appropriate Committee Letter to each individual program:

Letters of Evaluation

☐ Select All

☐ Carol Hagan, UPenn HPAB Packet MD (7328171)
☑ Carol Hagan, UPenn HPAB Packet MD/PhD (7328319)

MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST (MCAT)

Take the MCAT no later than the end of May in the year you intend to apply.

PREPARATION
- You can discuss your preparation plan with your pre-health advisor. Applicants have had success with a variety of approaches.

- The AAMC provides guidance and resources for MCAT preparation online (See Useful Links page 28).

FEE REDUCTION
Apply for Fee Assistance through the AAMC: http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap
Please inform us if you receive the Fee Waiver so we are able to waive your HPAB fee.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Apply well in advance of registration: https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/accommodations/

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS
Applicants to some joint degree programs might be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), in addition to the MCAT. For information about the GRE, visit www.gre.org

MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS (MSAR)

The MSAR is an online resource available through the AAMC that provides a comprehensive list of allopathic medical schools and information about them, including:

- **Statistics on the range of GPAs and MCAT scores for admitted students.**

- **Admission ratios and tuition for in-state vs. out-of-state applicants.**

- **Detailed information on school curricula.**

Penn-specific admissions statistics are available on the *Apply to Health Professions School* page the Career Services website and in the Career Service Library.

You can discuss your tentative list of schools with your pre-health advisor.

SECONDARY APPLICATIONS

After your primary application has been verified, you will start receiving secondary applications ("secondaries") from most medical schools.

STANDARD COMPONENTS OF SECONDARIES

- Write additional essays.
- List the courses you have taken which satisfy the school's requirements.
- Pay an additional fee.
- Submit Letters of Evaluation.

  In your case, this will be the HPAB Packet, which consists of the HPAB Committee Letter and your 3-6 letters of recommendation.

Be as diligent and timely as possible in completing and returning thoughtful secondary applications

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

In addition to your HPAB Committee Letter, medical schools require that you submit letters of recommendation as a part of your application. *The HPAB Committee requires that you send a minimum of 3 letters and you may send a maximum of 6.*

ASKING FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

- ✔ Give your recommenders at least 4 - 6 weeks' time to write and submit your letter.

- ✔ Letters of recommendation from famous and/or well-known people are not advised. Character references from friends or family members are also not advised.

- ✔ One, or *better two*, letters of recommendation should be from a *science professor or TA*.

- ✔ If possible, at least *one* letter of recommendation from a non-science professor or TA demonstrates a well-rounded background.

- ✔ One letter must be from a member of the *standing faculty at Penn*.

HOW TO SUBMIT
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

✔ **Complete and sign a Confidentiality Agreement for each letter requested** *(available in Career Services and on our website).*

✔ Mark your letter CONFIDENTIAL or NON-CONFIDENTIAL, sign, and date your form. *Note: medical schools value confidential letters.*

✔ Give the Confidentiality Agreement to your recommender. The recommender should return the form to our office along with their letter of recommendation.

✔ Instructions as to how to submit the letter are in the bottom-right corner of the Confidentiality Agreement for your recommender.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Letters of Recommendation
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

No letter of recommendation will be processed without a completed and signed agreement!

Note: Not intended for use by students enrolled in an LPS Post-Baccalaureate program. If you are an LPS student please discuss your credentials file options with your advisor.

APPLICANT INFORMATION *ALL FIELDS TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT*

PENN ID: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

LAST NAME: _____   FIRST NAME: _____   MI: _____

GRAD YEAR: _____   EMAIL: _____

INTENDED USE OF LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:

☐ ALLOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOL (MD)   ☐ MD / PHD PROGRAM
☐ OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOL (DO)   ☐ DENTAL SCHOOL

RECOMMENDER INFORMATION *ALL FIELDS TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT*

LAST NAME: _____   FIRST NAME: _____

TITLE: _____   EMAIL: _____

INSTITUTION: _____

As per the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* (FERPA), I understand that I may view this evaluation unless I explicitly **waive** my right to do so below:

☐ **CONFIDENTIAL:** I waive my right to view this evaluation
☐ **NON-CONFIDENTIAL:** I do not waive my right to view this evaluation

_____   _____
Applicant Signature   Date

WE CANNOT ACCEPT TYPED SIGNATURES OR ADOBE SIGNATURES

ATTENTION RECOMMENDERS:

Please ensure the letter is *signed, dated,* and on *official letterhead.* Unless explicitly asked by the student, address all letters to the attention of a general medical school admissions board.

For more information:
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/faculty/premed.php

PLEASE ATTACH FORM TO LETTER AND SUBMIT VIA EMAIL (PREFERRED):
vpul-letters@pobox.upenn.edu

OR MAIL TO:
Career Services Attn: Letters
University of Pennsylvania
3718 Locust Walk
McNeil Building, Suite 20
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6209

YOUR LIST OF RECOMMENDERS FORM (LOR)

Your List of Recommenders Form (LOR) designates the 3-6 letters to be included in your HPAB Packet.

✔ Submit your LOR Form (via AMS) by **May 22**
Include all letters you intend to send in your HPAB packet, even if they have not yet been received by our office.

✔ Submit a *separate LOR Form for each program* to which you are applying: MD, MD/PhD, or DO.

✔ Submit a new LOR form for each cycle, even if you plan to use the same recommendation letters.

- *Prior to requesting your HPAB packet, make sure your LOR form is updated and includes only letters that are on file on AMS.*
- *We will use the most recently submitted LOR Form.*
- *We will cancel your request if you request before all of your letters of recommendation are on file.*

LIST OF RECOMMENDERS
Health Professions Advisory Board

Name:_____

Graduation Year:_____   Penn ID #:_____

Program to which you are applying (i.e. MD, MD/PhD, DO, Dental):_____

Please list those recommenders whose letters you would like to have included in your HPAB Packet for health professions schools. You must choose a minimum of three letters and may include no more than six. This form must be submitted to the Career Services Office no later than **May 22nd, 2020**.

Please enter all letters you would like to include in your HPAB packet, even if they have not yet been received by our office. Prior to requesting your HPAB packet, you must ensure your LOR form is updated and includes only letters that are on file on AMS.

Recommender	Relationship to you	Institution/Organization
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

(please print)

I hereby authorize the Health Professions Advisory Board to release letters of recommendation from the individuals listed above to health professions schools.

Signature:_____   Date:_____

Submit this form (hard copy or fax) to:

Career Services Office (Credentials Service)
University of Pennsylvania
Suite 20, McNeil Building, 3718 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6209
Fax: 215-898-2687

REQUESTING YOUR HPAB PACKET

HPAB PACKET
- The packet includes your Committee Letter and up to six letters of recommendation.
- The author is your Pre-Health Advisor.
- The HPAB Packet has its own, unique, Letter ID (AMCAS Only).

APPLICATION ID
- The AMCAS ID has 8 digits and the AMCAS Letter ID has 7 digits.
- The AACOMAS ID has 10 digits.
- The TMDSAS ID has 5 digits.

SUPPLEMENTAL LETTERS
- There is an additional fee of $5 for sending out a supplemental letter of recommendation.
- When requesting a supplemental letter in AMCAS, make sure to specify the *author of the letter*, not our office. Our office can still submit the letter on the author's behalf.
- AMCAS will then create a unique Letter ID for the supplemental letter of recommendation, which is different from that of the HPAB Packet.

REQUESTING YOUR HPAB PACKET

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLACING YOUR REQUEST

✔ *Requests, placed through AMS, begin at:* ***12pm EST on July 17.***

✔ Flat fee of ***$95 per cycle.***

✔ You must complete the ***HPAB Document Checklist*** (page 5) before you will be able to place your request.

1. Check AMS to confirm your LOR form reflects the letters on file. *If not, your LOR form **must** be updated.*

2. Choose the appropriate program type and enter the Application ID and Letter ID.

3. Choose Recipient (Electronically):
   MD – AMCAS LOE
   Texas MD – TMDSAS
   DO – AACOMAS

   Choose Recipient (Manually): Non-AMCAS / Caribbean Schools – enter the email or mailing address of school.

4. Choose "HPAB Packet" or "Supplemental Letter."

5. Proceed and pay with Debit/Credit Card.

6. Allow 7-10 business days for your packet or letter to be uploaded. You will receive a confirmation email.

Please email Becky Tamayo with questions:
rtamayo@upenn.edu.

INTERVIEWS & DECISIONS

Interviews begin at the *end of August and can run through the beginning of March.*

Acceptances might be offered as early as October or as late as the following June (off the "wait list").

Each school has its own system and timeline, so there is no standard timeline for interviews and acceptances.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- ✔ Visit the interviewing section of our website.

- ✔ **Pre-Health Interview Workshops** are open to all and offer helpful tips.

- ✔ A **mock interview** in the traditional format can be scheduled *after you have accepted an interview invitation* from a medical school. To schedule please check for availability on Handshake. If you are unable to find an appointment slot, please email Becky Tamayo at rtamayo@upenn.edu.

- ✔ **Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) Workshops** are offered to applicants *who have already scheduled an MMI with a school*. Please email Becky Tamayo at rtamayo@upenn.edu with your MMI date and location to sign-up for a workshop.

INTERVIEWS & DECISIONS

DECIDING ON A SCHOOL

You can hold multiple acceptances before April 30. *Accepting an early offer does not mean you are committed to that school*. You can release the acceptance later.

According to the AAMC Traffic Rules for Admissions, *you are permitted to hold **only one** acceptance after April 30.* (You may remain on the waitlist of other schools, however).

Once you have made your decision, please contact the other medical schools to release your other acceptances.

Remember to contact the schools' admissions and financial aid offices to fully understand the cost of attending each program.

For further information, please make sure to review the AAMC Application and Acceptance Protocols: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/application-and-acceptance-protocols-applicants/

USEFUL LINKS

Requesting Transcripts: https://srfs.upenn.edu/student-records/transcripts
Interview Practice: https://careerservices.upenn.edu/preparing-for-medical-school-interviews/

MCAT
MCAT Registration: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam/
MCAT Fee Assistance Program: http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap
MCAT Special Accommodations: https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/accommodations/

AMCAS
Contact: amcas@aamc.org or (202) 828-0600
AMCAS General: www.aamc.org
AMCAS Application: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/
MSAR: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/medical-school-admission-requirements/
AMCAS Course Classification: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/course-classification-guide/
AMCAS Transcript Entry: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/section-4-course-work/
AMCAS Application Protocols: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/application-and-acceptance-protocols-applicants/

USEFUL LINKS

Letter Writing Guidelines: https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf
Financial Aid: https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/

AACOMAS

Contact: aacomasinfo@liaisoncas.com or (617) 612-2889
AACOMAS General: www.aacom.org
AACOMAS Application: https://aacomas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login
AACOMAS Course Classification: https://help.liaisonedu.com/AACOMAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Filling_Out_Your_AACOMAS_Application/Academic_History/5_AACOMAS_Course_Subjects
AACOMAS Transcript Entry: https://help.liaisonedu.com/AACOMAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Filling_Out_Your_AACOMAS_Application/Academic_History/3_Transcript_Entry

TMDSAS

Contact: info@tmdsas.com or (512) 499-4785
TMDSAS General: www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas
TMDSAS Application: https://www.tmdsas.com/applytmdsas/
TMDSAS Application Handbook: https://www.tmdsas.com/Forms/ApplicationHandbook.pdf
TMDSAS Course Classification: https://www.tmdsas.com/CompletingTheApplication/PrescribedCoursework.html
TMDSAS Transcript Entry: https://www.tmdsas.com/Post-Submission/Transcripts.html#Info
TMDSAS Deadlines: https://www.tmdsas.com/deadlines.html

CONTACT

📞 215-898-1789

📍 3718 Locust Walk
McNeil Building, Suite 20

🌐 https://careerservices.upenn.edu/channels/
apply-to-health-professions-school/

📅 https://upenn.joinhandshake.com/

Penn
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SERVICES