The University of Chicago
UChicago Careers in Health Professions

Application Seminar I:
The 2016 Application Process
Who We Are, Why We’re Here

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Our Role: What We Do

- Bring transparency to the application process
  - Clarify external expectations
  - Add gray to the black and white of numbers and statistics
- Empower, prepare, and help pace you to meet expectations that lie ahead
- Support you throughout this very long process!
If You Remember Only 1 Thing:

APPLY EARLY

- Supply/Demand
- Committee Member Fatigue
- Time for mishaps
- Best financial aid options
The strength of your application lies not in the passion of your claims (“I want to help people”), but in the actions you have taken (“This is how I have helped people”):
- the quality of the evidence you present in support of your claims
- your ability to articulate (both in writing and orally) your own narrative—linkages between and among your experiences

Evidence of a range of competencies
- Evidence: facts, history, data, etc., which demonstrate the truth of a claim
- Competency: a combination of knowledge and skills which indicate ability in a particular domain

Competencies are both academic (e.g., ability to do science) and personal (e.g., integrity, dependability, adaptability)
What Admissions Committees Want: Evidence of...

- Competency and passion for science
  - Science GPA (BCPM: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math/Statistics)
  - Standardized exam scores
  - Significant role in research project, broadly defined

- Commitment to lifelong learning
  - Breadth and depth of courses demonstrating intellectual curiosity and range
  - Intellectual engagement outside the classroom
What Admissions Committees Want: Evidence of...

- Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses
  - Self-reflectiveness
  - Ability to enlist the support of others (faculty, mentors, advisers, etc.)
  - Using resources to address weaknesses
    - You will likely stumble—how do you cope??
  - Growth and resilience in the face of change, challenge, or uncertainty
What Admissions Committees Want: Evidence of...

- Significant career exploration
  - Understanding of the roles of various health professionals
    - Exposure to healthcare environments
    - Realistic vision of what healthcare providers actually do
  - Ability to articulate “goodness of fit”
    - Authenticity of career choice
    - Not just “why this?”—also “why not something else?”
- Sophisticated understanding of the field
  - Passionate about issues shaping the profession
  - Awareness of current events
Desire and record of helping others (health professions are *helping* professions)
- Civic engagement and service
- Cocrurricular activities and leadership
What Admissions Committees Want: Personal Competencies

- **Integrity and ethics**
  - Do you act honestly? Do you follow rules and procedures?

- **Reliability and dependability**
  - Do you fulfill your obligations? Are you punctual? Do you take responsibility for your actions?

- **Service orientation**
  - Are you sensitive to the needs and feelings of others?

- **Social, interpersonal, and teamwork skills**
  - Can you collaborate effectively? Can you adjust your behavior in response to social cues?

- **Desire to learn**
  - Do you strive for self-improvement? Can you assess your own strengths and weaknesses, and learn accordingly?

- **Resilience and adaptability**
  - Are you tolerant of stressful or changing environments? How do you recover from setbacks?
What Stands Out

- PASSION for something
- Engaging fully and completely with your application
National numbers for medical school matriculants in 2014:

47,810 people applied. **19,768** matriculated (41%).

Mean Overall GPA: **3.69**
UChicago Overall GPA: **3.64**

Mean BCPM GPA: **3.63**
UChicago Overall GPA: **3.60**

Mean MCAT: **29.6**
(9.4 VR, 9.9 PS, 10.3 BS)
UChicago Mean MCAT: **31.9**
(10.2 VR, 10.5 PS, 11.2 BS)

UCIHP acceptance rates avg around 75-84% each year
Our Successful Applicants: Beyond the Numbers

- Confident, yet humble and self-aware—mindful of weaknesses and strengths
- Driven and forward thinking, yet focused on making the most of substantive experiences in the moment
- Resilient—have overcome adversity (distance traveled)
- Dispositions that tolerate uncertainty in the name of life-long self-development and learning
Our Successful Applicants: Beyond the Numbers

- Use resources wisely, as supplemental sources of support when making decisions
- Have a strong passion for something, and can articulate that passion clearly
- Do a few things well; substantive involvement in fewer things
- Curious, intellectually and socially; seek connections among different fields of learning and ways of being
- Recognize that there are several paths to a goal
Our Successful Applicants: Beyond the Numbers

- Oriented towards others—seek opportunities to build and serve communities; good at collaborating
- Are nuanced, layered, interesting
- Do not quit easily, but know when to seek assistance and be realistic when faced with difficulty
Timing Your Application: Thinking Strategically

- Is this the right time to apply?
  - Why?
    - Thorough preparation
    - Thoughtful, reasoned approach to applying
  - Why not?
    - Additional time for experiences and growth
    - Focus on coursework, research, activities, etc.
    - Time to try something you’ve always wanted to do
Timing Your Application: Thinking Strategically

- Do I have the qualifications and resources to do this **well**, now and over the next 15+ months?
- Application costs are more than financial. Take a personal inventory:
  - List of commitments, responsibilities, distractions
  - Quantify time, energy, and money required
  - Assess your resources—be honest with yourself
- Should I decide to proceed, what am I choosing to forgo?
Strategic Timing: Taking Another Year?

- Further career exploration
- Another year of grades
- More time to build relationships with faculty, mentors, etc.
- Time to address deficiencies in application

“I don’t know what I’d do during a gap year” ≠ good reason to apply this year
A “re-applicant” is someone who completed the external application process in a prior year (i.e. AMCAS, VMCAS, etc.). NOT someone who started the UCIHP process but didn’t complete.

If you are a re-applicant, you ARE REQUIRED to meet with Joni to discuss your overall application and determine how we can best support you.

This meeting must occur before the end of Winter Quarter.
The Primary Application

- Biographical information
- Personal statement
- LOR
- Activities & Experiences
- Standardized Exam Scores
- Transcripts
- School Selection
Our Goal: Prepare you for 1 Successful Application

- Most applicants apply to 15-18 schools
- Hopefully gain 4-6 interviews
- Earn 2-3 acceptances
- Then the choice is YOURS!

- We advise accordingly
- Remember: advice is specific to YOU. Let the grapevine go...
UCIHP’s Support: Our Process

- Application seminars = more time to tailor individual advising meetings to each unique applicant
  - Seminar II: Crafting the Personal Statement: Nov. 18
  - Seminar III: School Selection, Interviewing, and Financing: February 9

- All seminars begin at 5:30 p.m.
UCIHP’s Support: AdviseStream

- Be sure to fill out your profile completely—the better we know you, the better we can advise you!
- Start filling in your courses and activities!
- Schedule counseling appointments here! Click on “calendar” then “advisor availability.” Choose your advisor using key below.
UCIHP’s Support: Applicant Guidelines 2016 (AG-16)

- Comprehensive, detailed handbook covering
  - External applications (What admissions committees want)
  - The application process
  - UCIHP’s requirements and deadlines
  - Primary and secondary applications
  - School Selection
  - Interviewing
  - Finances

- Statement of Understanding and Applicant Agreement
  - Affirms that you have read and understood the guidelines, requirements, and deadlines
  - Must be signed and submitted through AdviseStream by Dec 1, 5:00 pm
UCIHP’s Support

- Personal Statement
  - Application Seminar II: Crafting the Personal Statement
  - Individual Personal Statement Advising
- LOR
  - AAMC Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation
  - Individual Advising (e.g., selecting writers strategically)
Activities & Experiences

- Individual Advising (e.g., how to frame experiences)
- Optional UCIHP Application help
  - Come to Without Borders for quick questions

Interviewing

- HMC Letter Interview
- Mock Interviews with Pritzker
- Mock Interviews with Career Advancement
UCIHP’s Support

- **Standardized Exams**
  - UCIHP Library—MCAT review books
  - MCAT Prep Course
  - Individual Advising (e.g., timing, test-taking strategies, anxiety reduction)

- **School Selection and Financing**
  - Application Seminar III: School Selection, Interviewing, and Financing
  - Individual Advising
Faculty and senior staff who possess a breadth of knowledge and expertise across several disciplines in health and medicine

The Committee composes institutional letters of endorsement for applicants who meet all requirements and deadlines
HMC Letter ("The Committee Letter")

- Holistic, comprehensive presentation of your application to an admissions committee
- Provides interpretation of your academic record, cocurricular activities, special circumstances, etc.
- Evaluates your personal preparation and the strength of your decision to pursue this career
- Aims to provide evidence of the academic and personal competencies you have cultivated during your time in the College
Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

- Science faculty/instructor with whom you’ve completed a course (2 required)
- Non-science faculty/instructor (1 required)
- A person with whom you have worked outside the classroom (1 required)
  - E.g., PI, volunteer coordinator, etc.
- **Alumni:** all above, plus a person with whom you have worked since graduating (1 required)
- **Maximum LOR**
  - Current students: 5
  - Alumni: 6
- **Strategy**
  - Focus on quality, not quantity
  - Identify a set of writers who can paint an holistic portrait of you
Letters of Recommendation (LOR)—Strategy and Etiquette

- Be proactive—*start now*
- Ask (in person is best) if a recommender is comfortable writing on your behalf—don’t make assumptions
  - Allow the writer to decline if necessary
- Provide the writer with an holistic overview of yourself
  - **Cover sheet**: name, address, phone, email, photo
  - **Recommender waiver**: under “documents” on UCIHP Web site
  - **Brief bio**: major, explanation of why this career, a description of the strengths and weaknesses of your application
  - **Resumé**: GPA, cocurricular experiences, special skills/experiences (e.g., languages, study abroad, research), employment history
  - **Personal Statement Draft**
Letters of Recommendation (LOR)—Strategy and Etiquette

- Include due date for LOR
- Politely follow up after a few weeks, asking if you may provide additional information
- Send thank-you note once letter has been submitted
- Inform writer of outcome, and thank him/her again

**Note:** It is *your* responsibility to check AdviseStream to ensure letters have arrived.
Standardized Exams

- Success requires longitudinal preparation:
  - Understand both the material on the test, and how the test will require you to apply it
  - Develop and hone individualized test-taking strategies
  - Master the psychology of test-taking
- Take only when prepared, and take only once
- Complete standardized exam by Jun 21
Taking Ownership of Your Application

- Make certain you are applying for your own reasons
- Be proactive
  - Anticipate that things might go wrong, and plan accordingly
- Details matter
  - Never underestimate the significance of seemingly small things
  - Keep copies of everything (e.g., sent e-mails)
- Professional & Ethical Conduct (AG-16, p. 5)
  - Be kind
  - Social media, public presence, and you
  - Take responsibility
Overall Timing

**SUBMIT BY JUNE 15**

- AMCAS Processing 2-4 weeks
- Rec’d by med school July 15
- *HMC Letter received by July 5*
- *Secondary completed by July 5*

- Enters med school queue:
- Interview decision made by August 15

- Interview slots available:
  - October 15-?

**SUBMIT BY AUG 15**

- AMCAS Processing 6-8 weeks
- Rec’d by med school October 15
- *HMC Letter received by Sept 6*
- *Secondary completed by Sept 6*

- Enters med school queue:
- Interview decision made by November 15

- Interview slots available:
  - January 15-?
Quick Summary of Big Steps

- Next up: Personal Statement Seminar November 18
- Work on Academics and Engagements Planner and Personal Statement during Winter Break
- Sign up for individual statement review with your primary adviser throughout January
- Work on UCIHP Application next
- Attend School Selection, Interviewing and Financing Seminar February 9th
- Sign up for HMC Letter Interview starting January 5th; be sure UCIHP application complete 2 weeks prior
Quick Summary of Steps, Cont.

- Conduct HMC Letter Interview before March 20th
- Let us know programs applying to by April 1
- In the meantime...start researching schools and LOR; Plan for MCAT as needed
- Make sure LOR are here by May 15
- AMCAS opens in May; start in!
- Submit AMCAS by June 21; Release HMC letter
- Complete Secondaries throughout summer
Finally...

- Don’t forget to breathe....
- Thank those around you...
- Ask us for help...
- Enjoy the process...this is the next step to achieving your dream! Step back and enjoy the journey!
Tools to make life easier:

- Download all deadlines to your personal calendar:
  - https://careeradvancement.uchicago.edu/health/deadlines

- Remember to use AdviseStream:
  - https://uchicago.advisestream.com