

Hello Gauchos!

We often receive questions from students asking us for advice on how to choose which professional schools they should apply to or which schools they might have the best chances of getting into. These are good questions to consider, but the reality is that there is no secret formula to follow or online tests anyone can take that can accurately predict their chances of gaining acceptance at any particular professional schools or that will ensure that an applicant receives an offer of acceptance. All any applicant can do is work to ensure that they perform well academically (utilizing campus and outside resources as needed, such as tutoring, academic skills workshops, etc.) in their undergraduate courses and on the MCAT (or other admission test), gain relevant, meaningful experiences that will help them to learn about themselves, other people, healthcare, and what it means to be a physician/dentist/nurse, etc., are pursuing their profession for the "right" reasons, and being confident in one's self and preparation. The rest is up to the individual admissions committees and their members.

That being said, there are some resources and a few key issues that applicants should keep in mind when trying to create their list of schools that they wish to apply to.

For those considering applying to MD medical schools, a great place to start is on the AAMC's website, <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/deciding-where-apply-0>. As stated on their site, where to apply is a very personal decision, and the reasons students choose to apply to specific medical schools varies greatly. In addition to using the AAMC's resources, below are a few other issues to consider when deciding where to apply. Other pre-health students can use this information and the tips below as a basis to begin creating their own lists of professional school programs.

1. Budget-Money and Time. This is important because each person's financial means are unique. The process as a whole is expensive, so consider your own budget when deciding how many schools you will apply to and also keep in mind that you will also have to pay to submit secondaries. ***Many application services offer fee assistance programs for those who qualify, so be sure to look into these!* Additionally, keep in mind that the more programs you apply to, the more research you will have to do into each, the more time you will spend completing secondaries or submitting program-specific materials (non-AMCAS applications), and, potentially, the more availability you will need to have for interviews/interview prep.

2. State of Residence. Your state of residence is important because, statistically, you have a better chance of being accepted to a school in your state of legal residence. Additionally, you may pay much more at a public medical school as an out of state student. This is not to say that you should not apply to schools out of state, just something to keep in mind.

3. GPA & MCAT Averages/Ranges. It can be somewhat helpful to apply to programs at which your own GPA (Both cumulative and BCPM) and MCAT score fall within the school's average or range. If you're slightly below these, this, in and of itself, does not mean that you should not apply there.

4. Aspects of each school that resonate with you. This is important because you will not only need to tailor your secondary responses to each school, but you will also need to be able to have a good answer when asked, "Why do you want to come to our school?" In order to do these things well, you need to explore each professional school beyond their admissions requirements. Consider reviewing their mission statements, special programs they offer for their students, and even aspects of the school's location that resonate with you.

5. Review class profiles for previously matriculating classes. This can be useful when you are trying to figure out what you will add to a particular class in terms of your own unique characteristics and experiences.

