

THE PRIMARY APPLICATION

By: @abisanatomy

Step 1: Create your account. This site will open for you to register in May of the year you are applying to medical school. I recommend getting on in May to get started on your application.

The screenshot shows the AAMC website's 'Applying to Medical School' section. The header includes the AAMC logo and navigation links: Members, Students, Residents, Search, Store, and Sign In. A secondary navigation bar lists: ADVISORS, ADVOCACY, CALENDAR, DATA, FINANCIAL AID, NEWS, and SERVICES. Below this is a horizontal menu with five tabs: 'Choosing a Medical Career', 'Applying to Medical School' (highlighted in red), 'Attending Medical School', 'Applying to Residency', and 'Training in a Residency or Fellowship'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: Home > Applying to Medical School > Understanding the Process. The primary heading is 'Applying to Medical School with AMCAS®', followed by a descriptive paragraph. To the right, a red 'AMCAS® Sign In »' button is prominent. Below it, a text box states: 'The 2019 AMCAS application is now open. If you wish to start medical school in Fall 2019, please complete and submit the 2019 AMCAS application.' This is followed by a list of updates as of October 24, including transcript marking, application verification, and processing of change requests. At the bottom right, there is a 'Contact AMCAS®' section with the hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-7:00 pm ET. On the left side of the main content area, there is a photograph of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a pink shirt, looking at a laptop screen.

Step 2: You will pick the year you plan to apply to medical school. This is what your page will look like. Click on your application.

The screenshot displays the '2019 Application Cycle' page on the AAMC's AMCAS Applications portal. The header features the AAMC logo and the text 'American Medical College Application Service ®'. A user profile 'Abigail Felsted' is visible in the top right corner. The main heading is 'AMCAS Applications', with a sub-heading '2019 Application Cycle'. To the right of the heading, it says 'Application - AMCAS Processing is Complete'. Below the heading, there is a section for 'Application for 2019 year' with a 'View/Update Application' button and a 'Help' link. On the right side, a 'Quick Links' sidebar lists: AMCAS Deadlines, AMCAS FAQs, How to Apply to Medical School, and Contact AMCAS.

Step 3: Your main application will have each of these sections. You will fill out detailed information about your identifying information (your name, date of birth, sex, gender, etc.) Next you will identify the universities you attended. You then fill out your biographic information which includes your ethnicity/race, family information, languages spoken, income, etc. The course work section takes the longest to fill out because you must manually input every college level course you have taken, including AP classes. You will list their credit hours and your grade. You must fill the classes out correctly otherwise AMCAS will be delayed in processing your application. You are required to list ALL classes you took including classes you re-took. In the work and activities section you will list 15 activities that you have participated. You will also list where your letters of recommendation are coming from. Finally you will list the medical schools you want to apply to and enter your personal statement.

American Medical College Application Service®

2019 Application

My AAMC Profile

Main Menu

My Application

Help

Identifying Information

Schools Attended

Biographic Information

Course Work

Work/Activities

Letters of Evaluation

Medical Schools

Essays

Standardized Tests

You have already submitted your application. See what changes you can make to your application

< Back

Save & Continue >

✓ Course Work*

Course Work

You must enter all of the courses you took at each school. Prior to entering your coursework, you are encouraged to watch some brief tutorials that will guide you through the process of entering your coursework. Click on the links below to learn about the process of entering coursework:

▶ Watch Basic Coursework Tutorial

▶ Watch AP Coursework/Credit Tutorial

▶ Watch Current and Future Coursework Tutorial (where you have not yet earned a grade)

▶ Watch Study Abroad Coursework Tutorial

Please review additional information about coursework in the AMCAS Applicant Guide.

Step 4: Your work/activities section will take some time and effort. Essentially you have 18 categories to identify your activity in. You need to describe your activities in 700 characters. You will get to pick three activities that are the “most meaningful” and you will get to write an extra essay about them in 1,225 characters. Think of these as mini personal statements. Just because this isn’t your official personal statement does not mean you should take them lightly. Admissions committee members read thousands of applications and you want your activities to sound meaningful to you.

The screenshot shows the AMCAS application interface for the Work/Activities section. At the top, a progress bar indicates the status of various sections: Identifying Information, Schools Attended, Biographic Information, Course Work, Work/Activities (currently active), and Letters of Evaluation. Below this, a sidebar on the left shows 'Work/Activities*' as the selected section. The main content area is titled 'Work/Activities' and contains an information box with the following text:

The Work and Activities section is designed to give you the opportunity to include in your application any work or extracurricular activities that you would like to bring to the attention of the medical schools to which you are applying. You can add up to 15 entries. You will be prompted to summarize each experience.

As part of this process, you will be asked to identify up to three experiences that you consider the most meaningful. If you have two or more entries you will be required to identify at least one as the most meaningful. When considering which experiences are the most meaningful, you might consider the transformative nature of the experience: the impact you made while engaging in the activity and the personal growth you experienced as a result of your participation.

Below the information box, it says: 'Please add your work/activity entries (up to 15 entries). You have already entered 15 activities'.

I would like to point out two things about the AMCAS application. 1. Everyone talks to pre-meds about getting “patient exposure, shadowing, volunteering, research, etc”. These are not real categories when you enter your activities. The real categories are:

- Artistic Endeavors
- Community Service/Volunteer - Not Medical/Clinical
- Community Service/Volunteer - Medical/Clinical
- Conferences Attended
- Extracurricular Activities
- Hobbies
- Honors/Awards/Recognitions
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Leadership - Not Listed Elsewhere
- Military Service
- Other
- Paid Employment - Medical/Clinical
- Paid Employment – Not Medical/Clinical
- Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation
- Presentations/Posters
- Publications
- Research/Lab
- Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant

Step 5: Your personal statement. This is a highly important essay that is limited to 5,300 characters. You are essentially answering the question “why do you want to go into medicine.” You need to show why they should pick you. The steps for approaching this are:

1. Remember why you want to go into medicine
2. Identify what interesting things about you stand out
3. Identify a story or good “hook” to open the statement
4. Start writing. I know it’s hard when you don’t know where to start. I have 18 drafts of my personal statement and it changed so much over time. Don’t worry about characters or spelling just brain dump onto a page.
5. Spend a few nights a week looking over your personal statement and making edits until you are somewhat satisfied with a story.
6. Send it to every single person you know. Only send it one at a time though because people will edit an old draft.
7. Send it to more people. ESPECIALLY people who are English/writing professionals AND people in medicine or medical school.
8. If you are really struggling, take it to your school’s writing center or ask advice from a writing agency.
9. You can do it!