



CHOOSING YOUR SCHOOLS

How to build an effective school list, for *medical, dental, physician assistant, veterinary, podiatry, and optometry applicants.*

Agenda



Demystifying "holistic review"



Where to search for health professional programs



How to holistically review health professional programs

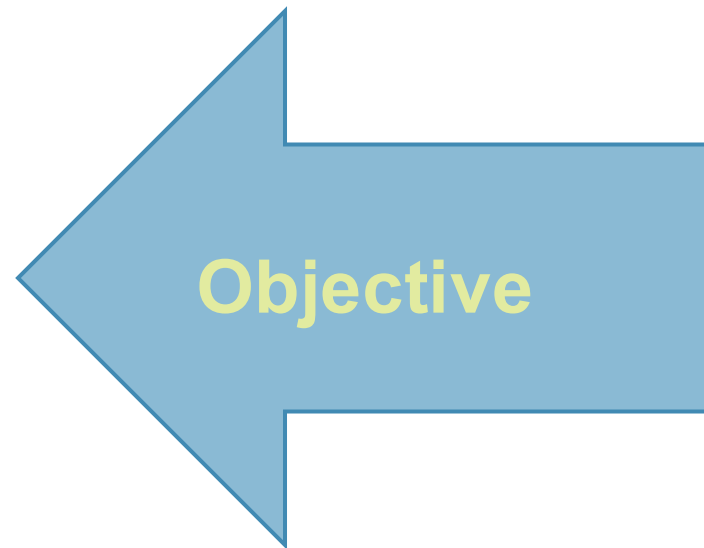
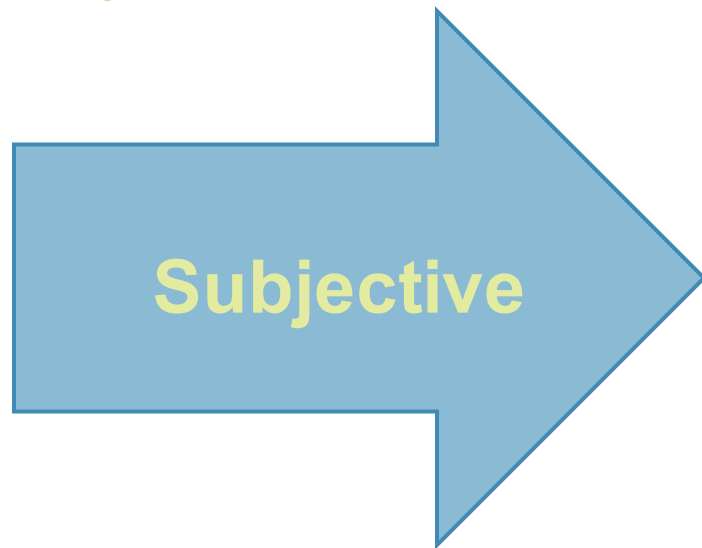


How to decide which programs make the final cut for your list

Holistic Review – *what does that mean?*

Personal Background &
Identity

Lived Experiences
& Journey Traveled

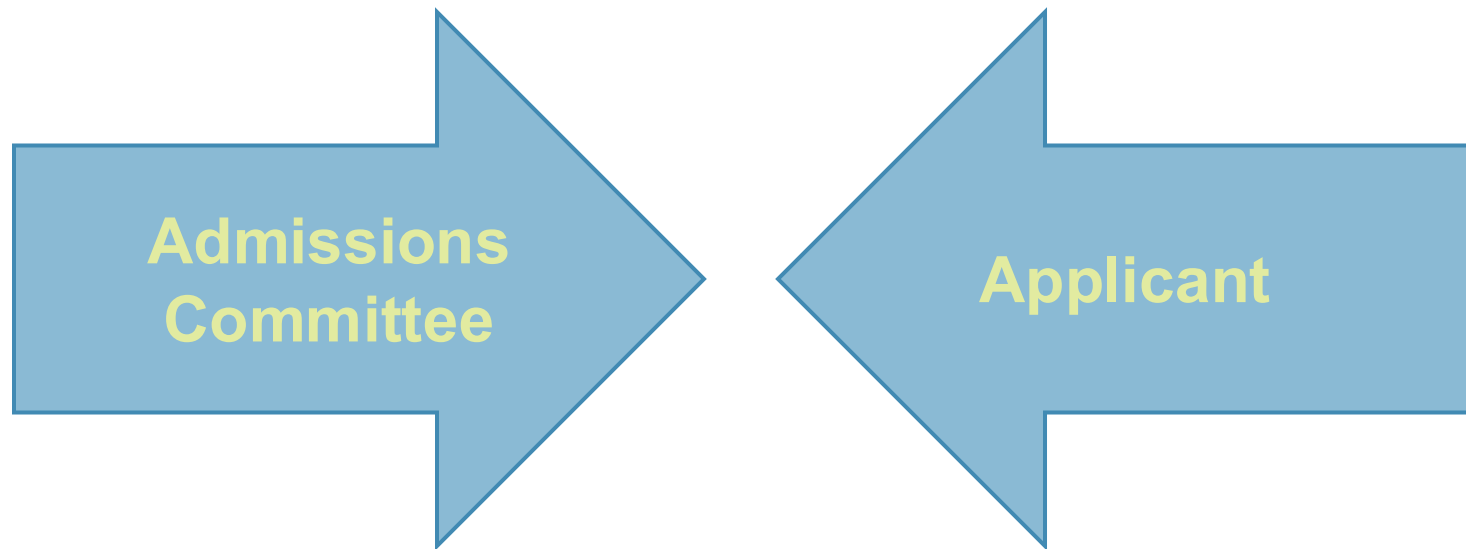


Professional Readiness

Academic Readiness

Mission/Values Alignment

Holistic Review Goes Both Ways...



If health professional programs are going to holistically review you, wouldn't it be advantageous to holistically review them prior to giving them your application?

First, Identify Which Programs Exist...

Allopathic Medicine (MD): [AAMC's Medical School Admissions Requirements](#) (MSAR)
(\$28 one-year/\$36 two-year)

Osteopathic Medicine (DO): [Choose DO Explorer](#) (Free!)

Dental Medicine: ADEA's [Dental School Explorer](#) (\$25)

Podiatry: AACPM's [Podiatric Medical College Information Book](#) (Free!)

Physician Assistant: [PAEA PA School Finder](#) (Free!)

Veterinary: [AAVMC's Veterinary Medical School Admissions Requirements](#) (VMSAR) (Free!)

Optometry: [ASCO Optometry Programs Admissions Directory](#) (Free!)

Note to Pre-PA students: Choosing Your Schools should begin as soon as you identify yourself on a Pre-PA track to ensure your course of study will meet the requirements for your schools of interest, as they vary **greatly from program-to-program.*



**THEN,
USE THE SOAP
METHOD TO
HOLISTICALLY
REVIEW HEALTH
PROFESSIONAL
SCHOOLS**

SUBJECTIVE: Mission/Values Fit

Identify 2-3 threads that represent the core mission/values of a program, AND tie a line from 2-3 of your experiences that demonstrate alignment with those threads.

Mission/Values ▼	My Alignment ▼
Social justice	Health Equity Internship, Boston Healthcare for the Homeless
Teaching & Learning	Tutor, TA Position, Capstone
Discovery & Scholarship	Research, RISE Presentation



How can you identify a program's mission or value threads?



1. Program Search Engines

- MSAR, Choose DO, PAEA Finder, etc.

2. Program Website

- About Us or Mission Page
- Year-by-year Curricular Plan
- Specific program tracks
- Research or project areas

3. Admissions Events

- Individual Program Events (often virtual)
- Virtual School Fairs
- Health Professions Conference

4. Secondary Questions/Program Specific Materials

- ProspectiveDoctor.com

Mission/Value Examples

Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine: is dedicated to the educational, intellectual, professional, and personal development of a diverse group of exceptional students, trainees, and faculty who are deeply committed to the study and to the practice of medicine, to biomedical research, and to the health of the public. We, as a community, place great value on excellence, integrity, service, social justice, collegiality, equality of opportunity, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Chobanian & Avedisian SOM is a social justice medical school. This emphasis on social justice is evident in our curriculum and extra-curricular activities for students, in our faculty's areas of research and expertise, and in the patients we take care of.

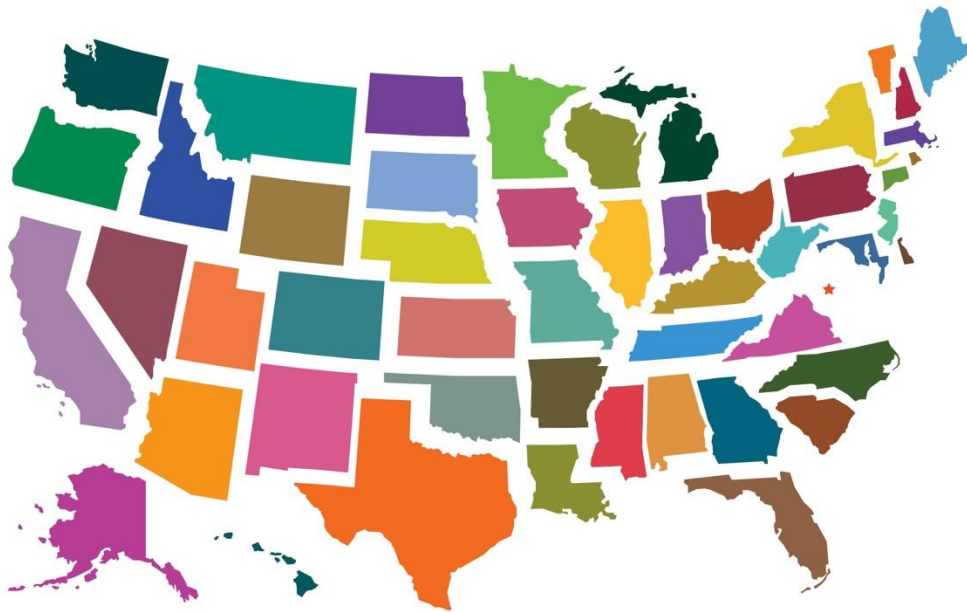
Albert Einstein College of Medicine: is a research-intensive medical school. For more than 60 years, our diverse faculty and staff have set the standard for excellence in medical and graduate education and patient-centered clinical care, and have made major contributions to scientific research enhancing human health in our communities and beyond. Our mission is to prepare a diverse body of students to become knowledgeable, compassionate physicians and innovative scientific investigators, and to create new knowledge.

Mission/Value Examples

Loma Linda: The mission of the School of Medicine is to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

Meharry Medical College: Meharry Medical College is a global academic health sciences center advancing health equity through innovative research, transformative education, exceptional and compassionate health services and policy-influencing thought leadership. True to its legacy, Meharry empowers diverse populations to improve the well-being of humankind. In 1876, Meharry Medical College was founded and established as the Meharry Medical Department of Central Tennessee College by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Meharry's inception was part of the society's continuing effort to educate freed slaves and to provide health care services for the poor and underserved. Today, the School of Medicine continues to provide excellent educational opportunities to promising students from groups underrepresented in medicine.

SUBJECTIVE: Geographic Location



- **Public schools are funded by the state** and part of their mission is to provide the state with physicians from the state and for the state!
- We recommend **applying to public schools where an applicant has state residency** and **limiting applications at public schools where an applicant does not have residency.**
 - *State residency requirements vary from program to program*
 - *Typically, public schools accept 20-30% out of state applicants*
- Private schools typically accept students from various locations, but having **significant ties to the geographic location** always helps!
- Think broadly about applying to programs serving **specific communities** (urban, suburban, rural, etc.) rather than just the climate.
- ***International students** should also pay special attention to ensure the schools on their list accept international students (most program search engines have a filter for this!)

Examples of Public-School Considerations: University of Washington

Accepts applications from	Policy	Additional Information
Out-of-state Applicants	Case-by-case	Non-WWAMI applicants are considered if they meet our mission-based criteria. Must have ties to WWAMI. See uwmedicine.org/admissions for more information.
Canadian Applicants	No	
International Applicants	No	

If your AMCAS legal residence is not one of the WWAMI states (WA, WY, AK, MO, ID) you will be considered as an out-of-region applicant. Out-of-region applications undergo additional screening processes and will only be considered for admission into the MD program if they have an **exceptional** record of **service** and/or come from a **disadvantaged background**.

Examples of Public-School Considerations: University of Massachusetts

The mission of UMass Chan Medical School is to advance the health and well-being of the people of the commonwealth and the world through pioneering advances in education, research and health care delivery.

The UMass Chan Medical School Office of Admissions is committed to employing the most effective and evidence-based methods to recruit and matriculate future physicians and scientists who will provide the highest quality medical care for our communities in keeping with the mission of the T.H. Chan School of Medicine. Our graduates will contribute in a meaningful way to the elimination of health care disparities and the establishment of health equity in Massachusetts and beyond.

Matriculation Data for First Year Class ?

Categories	In-state	Out-of-state	International	Total
Verified Applications	1084	4037	143	5264
Interviewed	486	553	11	1050
Deferred	1	1	0	2
Early Assurance Program	0	0	0	0
Early Decision Program	2	0	0	2
Baccalaureate/MD	0	0	0	0
MD/PhD	3	6	0	9
Matriculated	133	66	1	200

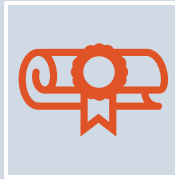
Other Subjective Considerations for your Holistic Review...

- *Curriculum Structure*
- *School Culture*
- *Support Services*
- *Extracurricular Activities*
- *Cost/Finances*
- *Affiliated Hospitals*
- *Elective Opportunities*
- *Residency Placements*
- *Research Opportunities*
- *Patient Contact*
- *Special Programs (i.e. dual degree)*
- *Secondary Questions*
- *Branch Campuses*
- *Specialized Tracks*
- *Global opportunities*

Goal: Find the right for yourself!

OBJECTIVE:

Academic Record & Entrance Exam



An applicant's academic record and entrance exam are used as evidence to support the applicant's academic readiness for medical education and licensure exams!

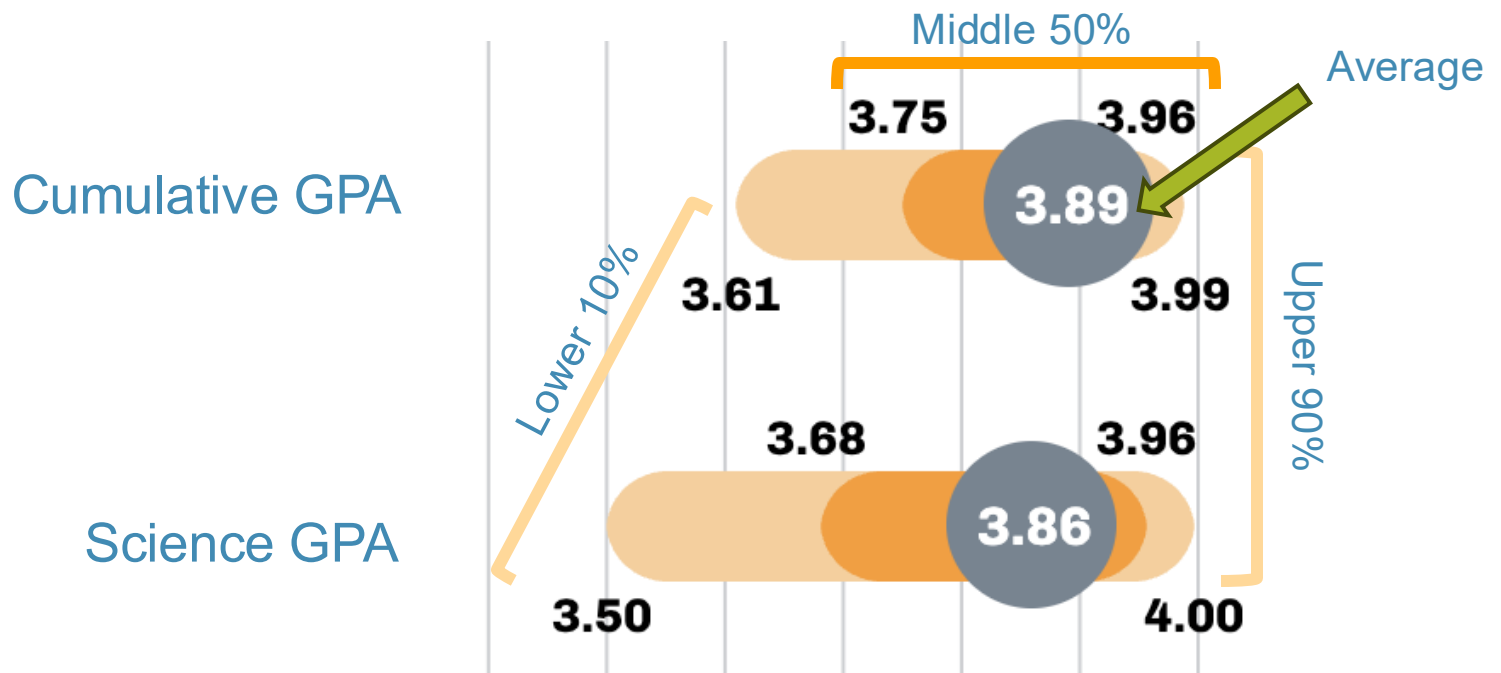


One aspect of the holistic review process, but should not be ignored.

OBJECTIVE: GPA Ranges

When possible, work off a range of scores (middle 50%). If a range is not available, work off the average.

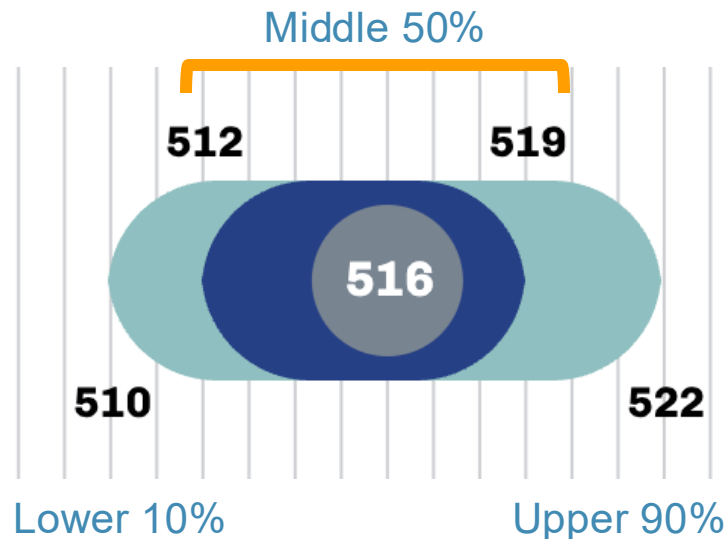
UMass Chan Medical School



OBJECTIVE: Admission Exam Ranges

When possible, work off a range of scores (middle 50%). If a range is not available, work off the average.

UMass Chan Medical School



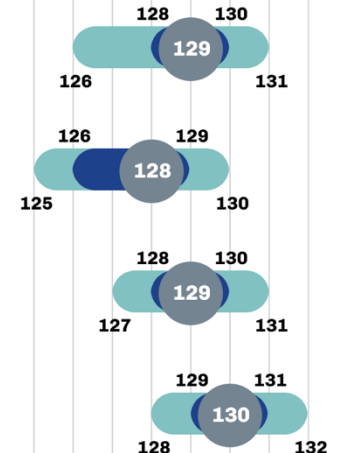
Section Scores

Chemical and Physical
Foundations of Biological
Systems

Critical Analysis and
Reasoning Skills

Biological and Biochemical
Foundations of Living Systems

Psychological, Social, and
Biological Foundations of
Behavior



Individual section scores should also be noted

GPA and Entrance Exams

Table A-23: MCAT and GPA Grid for Applicants and Acceptees to U.S. MD-Granting Medical Schools, 2020-2021 through 2022-2023 (aggregated)



The table below displays the acceptance rates at different MCAT and GPA levels for applicants and accepted applicants from 2020-2021 through 2022-2023. The frequencies are combined totals of three years. Please email datarequest@aamc.org if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

Acceptance Rate for Applicants		Total MCAT Scores					Total MCAT Scores					All Applicants
		Less than 486	486-489	490-493	494-497	498-501	502-505	506-509	510-513	514-517	Greater than 517	
Total GPA												
Greater than 3.79	Acceptees	7	8	41	329	1,036	2,528	5,036	7,965	8,419	9,726	35,095
	Applicants	210	352	835	1,857	3,630	6,438	9,579	11,881	11,061	11,692	57,535
	Acceptance rate %	3.3	2.3	4.9	17.7	28.5	39.3	52.6	67.0	76.1	83.2	61.0
3.60-3.79	Acceptees	6	8	68	340	939	1,873	3,243	4,784	3,910	2,564	17,735
	Applicants	535	744	1,373	2,700	4,423	6,246	8,123	8,417	5,882	3,503	41,946
	Acceptance rate %	1.1	1.1	5.0	12.6	21.2	30.0	39.9	56.8	66.5	73.2	42.3
3.40-3.59	Acceptees	9	11	39	271	679	4,793	5,525	4,790	2,832	1,317	28,827
	Applicants	796	872	1,528	2,652	3,722	4,793	5,525	4,790	2,832	1,317	28,827
	Acceptance rate %	1.1	1.3	2.6	10.2	18.2	26.1	34.0	46.3	56.0	62.0	30.4
3.20-3.39	Acceptees	8	7	40	167	403	746	885	929	582	271	4,038
	Applicants	926	907	1,380	1,940	2,575	2,986	2,824	2,284	1,198	488	17,508
	Acceptance rate %	0.9	0.8	2.9	8.6	15.7	25.0	31.3	40.7	48.6	55.5	23.1

Association of American Medical Colleges. 2023. Table A-23: MCAT and GPA Grid for Applicants and Acceptees to U.S. MD-Granting Medical Schools, 2020-2021 through 2022-2023(aggregated). Retrieved from <https://www.aamc.org/media/6091/download>

Special mention for MSTP, MD/PhD, and DO/PhD programs in 2026 Cycle

- **Due to federal funding cuts to the NIH and DOE, many MSTP, MD/PhD, and DO/PhD programs rescinded offers to applicants in the 2025 cycle.** This trend is likely to continue in the 2026 cycle.
- Some schools have more internal funding and have been able to continue their MD/PhD or DO/PhD programs.
- **We recommend keeping up with public communication from the specific programs you are considering applying.** During admissions events it is appropriate to ask admissions contacts about the status of their MSTP, MD/PhD, or DO/PhD program for the 2026 Cycle.
- When applying, we encourage you to consider selecting the **"I would also like to be considered for our traditional MD or DO program"** box.
- Overall, while there are current disruptions in the research landscape, **we encourage all applicants to continue moving forward in their careers** in ways that are accessible. **Adding a PhD component can come later!**

Special mention related to research for *all medical programs* in 2026 Cycle

Federal funding cuts to the NIH and DOE may also disrupt research programs and faculty labs at MD and DO programs in the 2026 cycle.

As applicants are reviewing schools to apply to, we recommend they do a deep dive on status of research opportunities and labs at the programs they are considering.

ASSESSMENT: Evaluating Information Gathered

Use a well-organized spreadsheet to evaluate & interpret all the factors considered during your subjective and objective data gathering!

[illegible]

[Click here to access our school list template!](#)

ASSESSMENT: Honest Self-Reflection

Why do you think you'd be happy at this program?

What do you hope to receive from your medical education?

What experiences are central to your career goals?

What is your learning style?

What do you need to support your personal well-being?

What do you picture yourself doing in the future? Where? With whom?

Plan: Develop Your School List

Phase 1: Pre-Entrance Exam Score

- Develop a tentative school list.
- Longer list of schools with strong subjective alignment and a gradient of objective alignment (academics/entrance exam).

Phase 2: Post-Entrance Exam Score

- Finalize your school list, adjust to admissions exam score.
- 15-25 schools for medical school applicants.
- 8-12 schools for dental, PA, podiatry, veterinary, & optometry applicants.

Closing Thoughts...



Quality of fit is more important than **quantity** of schools one applies to!



Your spreadsheet can (and should) grow and evolve as you receive secondaries & interviews.



An effective school list is key to a fruitful application cycle!

Q&A
