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# Admission Requirements/Application Procedures

for the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine

Address all admission inquiries to:

Admissions Office

F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

4301 Jones Bridge Road, Room A1041

Bethesda Maryland 20814-4799

Telephone:

Toll free: 1-800-772-1743

Commercial: (301) 295-3101

DSN: 295-3101

Website: [www.usuhs.mil](http://www.usuhs.mil)

E-mail: [admissions@usuhs.mil](mailto:admissions@usuhs.mil)

The School of Medicine subscribes fully to the policy of equal educational opportunity. There are no quotas by race, sex, religion, marital status, national origin, socioeconomic background, or state of residence. There are no congressional quotas or appointments. All applicants are judged on personal merit in terms of demonstrated aptitude, potential, and motivation for the study and practice of military medicine. Only the best-qualified, most promising candidates are selected.

Both civilian and uniformed services personnel are eligible for admission. The term “uniformed services personnel” means individuals who are currently on (or on orders for) active duty for a period of 90 days or more in any of the seven components making up the uniformed services: U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, and Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Individuals engaged in programs of study sponsored by the armed forces must have approval from their military departments or sponsoring components before applying. This includes those in undergraduate programs of the service academies, scholarship ROTC, nonscholarship advanced ROTC, and USA Reserves. Each military department has established regulations governing procedures for initiating and processing requests for approval. The School of Medicine does not take final action on the application of any individual who is in service or who is in a sponsored training program until receipt of an official “Letter of Approval to Apply.”

Applicants should know the procedures involved in applying to a medical school. An excellent source for such information is *Medical School Admission Requirements*, published annually by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), 2501 M Street, NW, LBBY-26, Washington, D.C. 20037-1300. This handbook contains information on college academic course planning, application procedures for medical school, the medical school admissions process, and medical school requirements.

## Requirements for Medical School Admission

### General Requirements

Applicants to the School of Medicine must:

- Be citizens of the United States
- Be at least 18 years old at the time of matriculation, but no older than 30 as of 30 June in the year of admission (civilians and enlisted personnel). Applicants older than 30 years of age may apply to the School of Medicine. If they are recommended for a position by the admissions committee and approved by the dean, an age waiver is requested from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), prior to extending an offer.
- Meet the requirements for holding a commission in the uniformed services (see Appendix A)
- Be of sound moral character
- Be motivated for a medical career in the uniformed services
- Meet the academic, intellectual, and personal qualifications of the School

The age limits for entrance parallel those governing appointment in the regular medical corps of the armed forces (Section 532, Title 10, United States Code). The age of any student who has served on active duty as a commissioned officer in the uniformed services, however, may exceed the age limit by a period equal to the time served on active duty, provided the student is no older than 35 as of 30 June in the year of admission.

## Academic Requirements

Military medicine needs individuals with a variety of interests and talents; thus, the School welcomes applications from individuals with diverse educational backgrounds. Intellectual maturity, however, is an important consideration in admissions decisions. Applicants should be well-informed, knowledgeable individuals who have demonstrated competence in scholastic pursuits. They should be adept in organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing factual information. Mathematical ability and a background in the sciences—natural, physical, and social—are expected.

Prior to matriculation, applicants must have:

- Attained a baccalaureate degree as of 15 June of the year of planned matriculation from an accredited academic institution in the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico

An accredited institution is any college, university, or institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized for such purpose by the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Included within this definition are those institutions that are in the process of seeking accreditation and currently have provisional or conditional accreditation, or candidacy status for accreditation, based solely on the newness of the institution.

- Completed the following academic coursework:
  - One academic year of general or inorganic chemistry including laboratory
  - One academic year of organic chemistry including laboratory
  - One semester of calculus (precalculus or computer science courses are not acceptable)
  - One academic year of general physics including laboratory (courses in astronomy are not acceptable)
  - One academic year of biology including laboratory (botany courses are not acceptable)
  - One academic year of college English (introductory courses in composition or literature are acceptable).

An academic year of coursework consists of studies extending over a two-semester or three-quarter period, carrying total credits of between eight semester or 12 quarter hours. Persons who have not taken all required courses or who are not in the process of completing the last eight semester hours (or 12 quarter hours) of these courses at the time of application are ineligible for admission.

Applicants must take all prerequisites under a letter grade system. Grades of D or D+ are unacceptable and do not satisfy the minimum requirements. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Advanced Placement (AP) credits cannot be used to fulfill the prerequisites. Also, all prerequisites must be taken in a traditional classroom setting with a letter grade.

The quality of an applicant's work at the preprofessional level is of major interest to the School and is important in admissions decisions. Although grades are not the only criterion used in making decisions, college achievements are scrutinized very carefully since academic performance speaks to achievement potential, interest, motivation, and self-discipline. Applicants are encouraged to take college courses in the humanities and social sciences. Courses in history, philosophy, literature, political science, psychology, economics, sociology, and foreign languages are relevant and valuable, and the School believes they enhance a student's preparation for medical studies. The admissions committee strongly encourages applicants to pursue some form of clinical work (e.g., emergency room, EMT, shadowing a physician) since applicants are seldom accepted without clinical experience. While extracurricular activities, community service, employment, graduate study, military service, and personal accomplishments are considered in evaluating the applicant as a total individual, these factors cannot substitute for a poor academic undergraduate record.

## Test Requirements

Applicants to the School must take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), a national standardized examination designed to measure general and specific aptitude for medical studies. Applicants must provide scores from tests that have been taken within three years of desired matriculation.

Applicants must make their own arrangements for taking the MCAT. Administered by the American College Testing Program (ACTP), the test can be taken at any university testing center or at key military educational centers abroad. A registration packet containing an announcement, registration card, and other information concerning application for the test (including examination dates, testing locations, sample questions, score reports, and deadlines) is prepared annually. This packet is usually available at college premedical advisors' offices, military education centers, and major university testing bureaus or may be obtained by contacting the ACTP in writing or by phone:

MCAT Program Office  
P.O. Box 4056  
Iowa City, Iowa 52243  
(319) 337-1357

Applicants should not send personal MCAT score reports to the School. Arrangements should be made to have the ACTP furnish official reports. The ACTP designator code for the USUHS is 821. The August MCAT is the latest testing date considered by the admissions committee from those students applying to the School of Medicine for admission the following summer. Applicants cannot take the MCAT and enter the School in the same year.

## **Profile of the Entering 2003 Class (Class of 2007)**

Entrance to the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine is on a competitive basis. For the class that entered in 2003, 1,686 applicants competed for 167 places. Of those applicants, 465 were interviewed. Students who were accepted to the class had a mean college grade-point average of 3.53 and a mean science GPA of 3.50. The mean score on the MCAT has been averaging an overall score of 30. The applicant-to-position ratio was ten to one, and the student acceptance rate was 63 percent.

All entrants had received baccalaureate degrees. Eleven held master's degrees; two had doctoral degrees, one a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and one a Doctor of Optometry. Biology was the most-represented undergraduate major of matriculants (35 percent), followed by chemistry (13 percent), and seven percent in biochemistry. Other majors for class members were: microbiology, political science, neurobiology, psychology, nutrition, engineering, and anthropology.

Sixty percent of the entrants had no military experience. The 40 percent of entrants previously associated with the military included active duty officer and enlisted service members, prior officer and enlisted service members, service academy graduates, and graduates of ROTC programs.

Women comprised 40 percent of the class. Forty-four students in the entering class were from minority groups, including thirteen from groups classified as underrepresented in U.S. medicine.

## **Application Procedures**

### **Initial Procedures**

The School of Medicine participates in the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), a nonprofit organization founded to provide centralized processing of applicants to United States medical schools. Accordingly, applicants to the School must apply electronically through AMCAS by completing the web application. This application is available only online through the AMCAS website at [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org). Click on the "AMCAS" link for instruction materials and the application. The designation code assigned to the School of Medicine by AMCAS is 821. Applicants must not send application materials directly to the School of Medicine unless they are specifically requested to do so by the USUHS Admissions Committee. Application materials must be properly routed through AMCAS.

Following completion of the web application, students must submit official transcripts to AMCAS from all the colleges or universities attended for verification of academic records. Failure to complete this step in a timely manner can delay the processing of an individual's application.

Individuals with a current application on file with AMCAS need not complete another application to apply to the School of Medicine. For the original application materials to be forwarded, however, the applicant must submit a new school-designation form and the appropriate fee to AMCAS .

The earliest date for submitting an AMCAS application for admission to the School of Medicine's first-year class is 1 June. The deadline for having all required credentials into AMCAS is 1 November. This is the receipt date, not a postmark date. **The cutoff date is firm**; therefore, applicants should submit materials well in advance of the deadline. The School of Medicine does not grant deadline extensions due to the early date of matriculation. Because USUHS has a rolling admissions procedure, in which the admissions committee begins processing applications as soon as they are received, **applicants are advised to apply during June and July**, even if taking the August MCAT.

Once AMCAS receives an individual's electronic application, the data are verified for completeness and accuracy. If no irregularities are encountered, AMCAS forwards the candidate's application to the School of Medicine and notifies the applicant.

Once an individual's basic application materials are received from AMCAS, the medical school's Admissions Office notifies the applicant by e-mail and postcard that they are eligible to submit supplemental application materials. This step involves submission of a personal statement, a premedical committee letter (or three letters of recommendation from premed faculty and a clinical supervisor), and a two-by-two inch passport-type photograph.

The admissions committee requires a premedical committee letter from the program attended by the applicant. If unable to obtain one, a letter from the applicant should be enclosed with the supplemental application materials stating the reason a composite premedical committee reference letter was not available. If a premedical committee letter is not enclosed, three individual faculty recommendation letters are required. At least one letter of recommendation must be from a clinical supervisor. If an applicant is unable to provide a letter from a clinical supervisor, a letter of explanation should be sent with the applicant's supplemental materials stating why. Letters from an applicant's relative, regardless of that relative's profession or status, do not satisfy the reference requirement.

The School of Medicine provides pre-printed forms for letters of reference, however, it is not necessary to use them. They are furnished for the convenience of applicants and the faculty who write recommendations on behalf of students'. Writers of recommendations should provide in-depth information on the character, personality, and attributes of the candidate and elaborate on any relevant major events and/or achievements. The School of Medicine asks for substantive letters because recommendations are extremely important in the selection process. Recommendation letters should be sent directly to the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, USUHS Admissions Office, Room A1041, 4301 Jones Bridge Road, Bethesda, MD 20814-4799.

Applicants are responsible for requesting required letters of reference and for submitting supplemental application materials. Applicants who fail to submit these materials



by the deadline are not considered. All application materials submitted to the School of Medicine become the property of the University and are not returned.

Once all supplemental application materials are received, the admissions committee begins review of an individual's file. Applicants who merit further consideration on the basis of academic, intellectual, and personal qualifications are invited for a personal interview. Those not selected for an interview are notified once that decision is made.

## **Personal Interviews**

Candidates selected for an interview are notified in writing. All appointments are scheduled through the medical school's Admissions Office. Once applicants are invited to interview, physical examinations are arranged with the services (see Physical Examination section below).

Interviews are conducted at the University, in Bethesda, Maryland. Those accepting the invitation spend a day at the medical school. On interview day, applicants are briefed by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Records, Assistant Dean for Clinical Sciences, the Commandant, Vice President for Recruitment and Diversity, and campus representatives of the uniformed services. Applicants are given a tour of the campus by USUHS students and, if they choose, can stay at a student's home the night before. During this time two representatives of the medical school interview applicants. Interviewers evaluate each applicant's motivation and potential as a future military physician by observing the candidate's maturity, stability, personality, and other pertinent qualities.

## **Final Screening and Acceptance Status**

Once interviews are completed, the USUHS Admissions Committee reviews all files and makes decisions about each application. Final decisions are based on the collective evaluations of committee members. Possible actions are (1) conditional acceptance, (2) designation as an alternate, or (3) rejection.

The School of Medicine does not participate in the Association of American Medical College's (AAMC) Uniform Acceptance Dates Program or in the AAMC Early Decision Plan. Applicants who are conditionally accepted or designated as alternates receive written notification of their status following the admissions committee decisions. Applicants not selected are also advised.

Applicants offered a conditional acceptance have two weeks to acknowledge their intent to enroll. This acceptance must be in writing. Applicants failing to meet the deadline automatically forfeit their place in the class. No deposit is required to hold a class space.

Those applicants who are selected as alternates may be offered conditional acceptances at any time prior to the start of classes whenever a vacancy arises. In such cases enrollment procedures are explained in the "Letter of Conditional Acceptance."

## **Service Assignments**

Conditional acceptance letters specify the branch of service (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Air Force) in which the conditional selectee has been nominated to serve. The particular service assignment is dependent on the preference indicated on an applicant's service preference statement, a form that is completed on interview day, and on the projected needs of each service component.

An individual can accept appointment in the branch stipulated or decline the offer to matriculate. The school does not guarantee that service nominations are compatible with applicant preferences but it makes every effort to accommodate individual choices. Applicants on active duty are tendered a position in the same service unless they requested transfer to another branch of service. Such a request should have been included in the "Letter of Approval to Apply." Service academy and ROTC students are commissioned in the service in which they have been commissioned.

Service preference statements have no bearing on admissions decisions. Applicants compete for places in the class rather than for specific service assignments. The decision to nominate an individual for a given service component is purely administrative and is not a selection factor for the medical school. The School's determination of service nominations is based on the total preferences expressed for each service by all conditional applicants, individual backgrounds and desires, and service quotas established by the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

## **Physical Examinations**

As soon as individuals accept interview invitations, they are referred to the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB) for physical examinations and are required to complete the necessary paperwork for background investigations. (See Appendix A.)

Physical examinations for potential entrants are performed without charge at the medical facility closest to his or her place of residence. The cost of travel to and from the examination site is each applicant's responsibility and is not reimbursable by the government or the medical school.

Individuals with a conditional acceptance who pass both the physical exam and the security check receive unconditional (final) acceptance to the School of Medicine. Individuals who do not meet commissioning standards are ineligible for matriculation.

Applicants offered unconditional acceptances must maintain an acceptable level of performance in pending academic work. Those who fail to achieve an acceptable level of performance or who fail to complete baccalaureate degree requirements by 15 June are denied admission and, if already enrolled, are considered for disenrollment.

## **Reapplication**

Any applicant who reapplies in a subsequent year is evaluated and reviewed along with the entire applicant pool for that particular cycle of application and admission. Reapplicants are advised to enhance their competitive status by demonstrating to the admissions committee continued scholarly activity and clinical motivation. Such evidence includes any or all of the following: completion of additional academic coursework, repeat of the MCAT exam, expanded clinical exposure, improved communication or interview skills, and additional contemporary letters of recommendation. Simply resubmitting a previous application is unlikely to increase one's competitive standing in a new application cycle.

## **Advanced Standing and Transfer**

The School of Medicine does not have an advanced standing program and admits students only to the first-year class.

## **The Physician–Scientist (M.D./Ph.D.) Training Program**

The M.D./Ph.D. program at USUHS was established to train outstanding, dedicated military officers as independent physician–scientists to carry out both clinical investigations and biomedical research in the basic sciences. The program combines a rigorous basic science graduate curriculum with outstanding clinical training and special, integrated M.D./Ph.D. activities that qualify students for careers in academic medicine, biomedical and clinical research, as well as clinical practice.

The criteria to enter this program are formidable and the process requires that students dedicate seven to eight years for completion of this challenging combination of medical and scientific training. Entering students must demonstrate a high level of preparedness, outstanding academic credentials, motivation, and commitment to the program's goals. Matriculants to the M.D./Ph.D. program must maintain all requirements necessary to be commissioned into the United States military throughout the Ph.D. portion of his or her training.

### **Financial Support and Military Service**

Students admitted to M.D./Ph.D. Program receive a graduate stipend from the graduate program for the first three years. In most cases, the M.D./Ph.D. student is commissioned in the United States military as an O-1 after completing the three-year program. Commissioning marks the beginning of the student's military service.

### **Application and Admission Procedures**

Applicants interested in the M.D./Ph.D. program should first apply directly to the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine using AMCAS. Once these applicants receive notification from the Admissions Office to submit supplementary application materials for entry to the medical school, they should indicate their interest in the combined M.D./Ph.D. program by completing USUHS's Ph.D. program application (GRE scores not required). Return the completed Ph.D. application with the supplementary application materials for the medical school.

The admissions committee for the medical school then reviews the application and, if the applicant is deemed acceptable for admission into the medical school, forwards the file to the Graduate Education Office. The admissions committee of the appropriate graduate program then reviews the graduate application to determine if the applicant is admissible to the Ph.D. program. If an applicant is not accepted into a Ph.D. program, he or she may continue the medical school application process.

## **The Curriculum**

The curriculum combines and integrates requirements for both the M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. The M.D./Ph.D. program consists of three phases to be completed in seven to eight years. The first or graduate program phase generally lasts three years. The M.D./Ph.D. student completes this initial phase as a civilian under the guidance of the graduate program director, thesis advisor, and M.D./Ph.D. advisory committee. The student completes all required courses for the Ph.D. during the first and second years and many of the courses required for the first two years of the medical school curriculum. The qualifying examination for advancement to candidacy is taken at the end of the second year; a doctoral thesis proposal is subsequently submitted to the thesis advisory committee. The third year is devoted to research.

The second or transition phase begins after the third year and lasts two years. The student completes all requirements needed to be commissioned in the United States military and attends officer basic training. As a uniformed officer, the student completes the remaining requirements of the first and second years of the medical school curriculum. The student also continues to spend significant time on thesis research, finalizes the thesis project, and prepares and defends his or her doctoral dissertation.

The third and final phase of the M.D./Ph.D. program is the clinical phase over years six and seven. The student begins full participation in the medical school curriculum and completes all required clinical rotations and clerkships. Subsequent to completion of all requirements, the student is awarded both the M.D. and Ph.D. degrees and commissioned as an active duty officer (O-3) at commencement.