

# Medical (MD, DO) & Podiatry Programs

**Pre-Professional Advising (PPA)** can help with your professional school application! Schedule an appointment through [BoilerConnect](https://purdue.campus.eab.com) (purdue.campus.eab.com) and look for CCO/Pre-Professional) or send questions to [preprofessional@purdue.edu](mailto:preprofessional@purdue.edu).

As you begin to think about applying, you will find advance preparation will make the process much less stressful. This to-do list will help you prepare for your application.

## Applying

- **Explore**—Visit the online common application (application service) you will be using and read over the website, FAQ, and instructions. This will educate you on what information you will need for your application.
  - [AMCAS](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/applying-medical-school-amcas) for MD applications <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/applying-medical-school-amcas>
  - [AACOMAS](https://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/how-to-apply-to-osteopathic-medical-college/aacom-application-instructions-and-faqs) for DO applications <https://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/how-to-apply-to-osteopathic-medical-college/aacom-application-instructions-and-faqs>
  - [TMSAS](https://www.tmdsas.com/PLAN/index.html) for MD & DO schools in Texas <https://www.tmdsas.com/PLAN/index.html>
  - [AACPMAS](https://help.liasonedu.com/AACPMAS_Applicant_Help_Center) for podiatry schools [https://help.liasonedu.com/AACPMAS\\_Applicant\\_Help\\_Center](https://help.liasonedu.com/AACPMAS_Applicant_Help_Center)
- **Get Advice**—[Make an appointment](https://www.purdue.edu/boilerconnect/) with Pre-Professional Advising to discuss your application. <https://www.purdue.edu/boilerconnect/>
- **Letters**—Figure out who will write your letters and seriously consider the **PPA Letter Service (for MD and DO schools)**
  - The PPA Letter Service is easy to use for you and for letter writers.
    - We can see your letters and make sure there are no issues with the letters before they go out to schools.
    - We keep them for 5 years in case you need to apply again.
    - Totally free for you.
  - Podiatry letters will be submitted directly to AACPMAS by your letter writers (not through the PPA Letter Service).
  - Letters needed for most schools:
    - 2 science faculty who have had you in class—typically the lecture (not lab instructor) and at least one should be from a biology, chemistry, or physics professor
    - 1 non-science faculty who has had you in class
    - 1 personal letter from someone who supervised or observed you in a non-classroom setting—typically this would be from research, shadowing, a job, volunteer work, etc.
  - Research your schools early on and make sure you are obtaining appropriate letters for the schools at which you are applying.
- **Brainstorm**—Start thinking about your application essay and your activities section. Gather some thoughts to help you write your personal statement. Request some brainstorming documents from pre-professional advising ([preprofessional@purdue.edu](mailto:preprofessional@purdue.edu))
- **Writing the Personal Statement**—This essay is an important element of your application and needs to be taken seriously. It expresses why you want to enter the field and allows schools to get to know you better. Some schools may ask for additional essays as part of their secondary application.
  - Pay close attention to any required prompt
  - Focus on 2-3 main points
  - Write clearly and concisely
  - Be descriptive and provide concrete examples
  - Think about your reader
  - You have 5300 characters counting spaces for AACOMAS and AMCAS. TMSAS allows 5000 characters counting spaces; there is also a personal qualities statement of 2500 characters and an optional essay of 2500 characters. Podiatry allows 4500 characters counting spaces.
- **Review your Personal Statement**
  - Have trusted friends, faculty, and advisors provide comments on your personal statement. You want a range of people reading and commenting on it as different people will react differently to it.
  - Discuss any writing difficulties with [Purdue Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/writinglab/the_writing_lab_at_purdue.html). [https://owl.purdue.edu/writinglab/the\\_writing\\_lab\\_at\\_purdue.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/writinglab/the_writing_lab_at_purdue.html)

- If you want a Pre-Professional Advisor to read your draft and provide comments, please email as a Word attachment to [preprofessional@purdue.edu](mailto:preprofessional@purdue.edu)
- **Research Schools**—Research the schools to which you will apply.
  - Resources:
    - MD programs: investing in the [Medical School Admission Requirements](#) (MSAR) can pay for itself by helping you avoid applying to schools that are not a good fit for you. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/medical-school-admission-requirements/medical-school-admission-requirements-applicants>
    - DO programs: Register for the [Choose DO Explorer](#) <https://choosedo.org/choose-do-explorer-registration/>
    - [Texas programs](#): [https://tmdsas.com/about/TMDSAS\\_schools.html](https://tmdsas.com/about/TMDSAS_schools.html)
    - [Podiatry programs](#): <https://aacpm.org/colleges/>
  - Your state residency makes a huge difference in terms of acceptance. Your state school is the most likely to accept you. Even if you hope to leave your state, you must apply at your own state school.
  - Think about what you value in a program. Location (area of country, urban/college town/rural setting, relatively close to family, far from family, etc); curriculum structure; school's mission; etc.
  - Be aware of that school's admission credentials and in-state admissions (for state schools). This process is expensive. Don't throw away money making poor decisions about where to apply.
    - If they require research to graduate and you have no interest in research, don't apply there.
    - Applying to the Uniformed Services Medical School but you don't want to join the military? That doesn't work. If you go there, you have to join the military.
    - Your MCAT is only moderate and you are applying to Harvard Medical School with no other remarkable aspect to your application—why?
    - Applying as an out-of-state applicant to a school that typically interviews 1 out of state student a year? What's up with that?
  - Make a chart with items such as contact information, any additional requirements you need, extra application requirements, and the types of letters of recommendation they prefer. This process is easier if you are organized.
- **Organize**—You will need to list your activities, awards, research, and shadowing/observation experiences. Start gathering all this information early. Better yet, as an undergrad, keep a log as you go.
- **Clean House**—Be sure all of your social media is professional and your email address and phone messages are appropriate for communication with professional programs.
  - Please note, some schools do look for and check your social media to see if it is appropriate. Make sure you lock down your privacy settings as much as possible.
  - Make sure your phone mailbox is open and available in case they need to reach you.
  - Check your email regularly during the application process—this is the most common method of communication for schools.
  - Be sure to check your junk mail/spam as well in case a school's messages somehow get caught there.

### *Additional Preparation*

- **Sending Transcripts**—You will need to send transcripts for all college-level credits you have earned.
  - The application service will provide a transcript form that should be sent along with your transcript.
  - [Instructions for sending your Purdue transcripts](#) are available on the PPA website. <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/Learning%20Center/Applying.php>
- **Interview Preparation**—Watch for news in your professional area and start preparing for interviews.
  - Pay attention to current events and [health news](#). These often come up in interviews. <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/Documents/Health%20News%20Resources.pdf>
  - Research the interview process at the schools where you applied.
  - The PPA website has details on using [Big Interview](#), an online tool to practice interviewing. The benefit of Big Interview is you can record yourself being interviewed and evaluate for yourself how you perform on your interviews as well as asking others to provide feedback. <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/Learning%20Center/Interviews.php>
  - PPA can also provide lists of questions to help you practice. [preprofessional@purdue.edu](mailto:preprofessional@purdue.edu)
- **Parallel Planning**—Develop your back-up plan during your application year and fill any gaps in your application in case you

### *Preparing for your Giant Leap*

[purdue.edu/preprofessional](http://purdue.edu/preprofessional)

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need to apply again.

- Think carefully about where any gaps are in your application as you fill it out. During your application year, work on filling those gaps so that if you need to apply again, you will be in a better place.
- In interviews, schools often ask about what you will do if you don't get in. You need to be able to answer this. So work on your back-up plan if for no other reason than to have a great answer to this question.
- **Financial Planning**—If you qualify for U.S. Federal Loans, file your FAFSA even if you have not yet been admitted.
  - Regardless of whether you are applying to MD, DO, or podiatry, check out the financial resources at [FIRST](https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid).  
<https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid>
- **Apply Early**—Early Application is a Good Thing!
  - One of the easiest things you can do to help your application is to apply early. Try to submit your application within 1-1.5 months of the application service opening.
  - Since the applications open in early May, this means submitting in June or early July. (For Podiatry the application opens in early August. Submit in late August through September. Very early October at the latest.)
  - While many MD and DO programs have deadlines in November, December, and January, the main application time period is really happening in June, July and August. If you apply in September and October thinking you are applying early since their deadline is in January, you are applying too late.
  - The Texas application has a hard deadline in October.