Core Competencies for Success

Professional schools have identified core skill sets (competencies) they expect entering students to have. You should highlight some of these throughout your application in the activities you choose, your letters of recommendation, and your application essay (personal statement). Working toward competency in these areas will prepare you for success in professional school admissions, as a professional school student, and in any employment situation.

Professional Competencies

Capacity for Improvement: Set goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engage in reflective practice for improvement; solicit and respond appropriately to feedback.

Cultural Competence: Demonstrate knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; recognize and act on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engage multiple and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognize and appropriately address preconceptions held by yourself and others; interact effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: Behave in an honest and ethical manner; cultivate personal and academic integrity; adhere to ethical principles and follow rules and procedures; resist peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourage others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develop and demonstrate ethical and moral reasoning.

Oral Communication: Effectively convey information to others using spoken words and sentences; listen effectively; recognize potential communication barriers and adjust approach or clarify information as needed.

Reliability and Dependability: Consistently fulfill obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; take responsibility for personal actions and performance.

Resilience and Adaptability: Demonstrate tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapt effectively to them; be persistent, even under difficult situations; recover from setbacks.

Service Orientation: Demonstrate a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrate a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognize and act on your responsibility to society; locally, nationally, and globally.

Social Skills: Demonstrate an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjust behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treat others with respect.

Teamwork: Work collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; share information and knowledge with others and provide feedback; put team goals ahead of individual goals.

Science Competencies

Human Behavior: Apply knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

Living Systems: Apply knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.

Thinking and Reasoning Competencies

Critical Thinking: Use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

Quantitative Reasoning: Apply quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.

Scientific Inquiry: Apply knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems, and formulate research questions and hypotheses; easily use and understand the language of the sciences and use it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.

Written Communication: Effectively convey information to others using written words and sentences.

- While these competencies were developed as the [Core Competencies of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)](), they apply well to ALL professional programs. https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies
- They are also very similar to the job skills sought by employers that are identified in the [National Association of College and Employers (NACE) Competencies]() https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/pages/knowledge/articles/career-readiness-fact-sheet-jan-2019.pdf?_ga=2.110459779.721170832.1592921858-539359848.1574880773
- Several of these competencies also fit within the [Steps to Leaps Pillars](). https://www.purdue.edu/stepstoleaps/about/framework/learning-pillars.php
- Whether you are a pre-medical student or planning for another area, the AAMC offers a great document to help you strategize how you will demonstrate your competencies in these areas called [Anatomy of an Applicant](). https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/6916/download
- The [LEAD Competencies]() developed by the Roger C. Stewart Leadership and Professional Development Department are also similar to the AAMC Core Competencies. https://www.purdue.edu/vpsl/leadership/myExperience/competencies-list.php