

Professional schools have identified a number of core skill sets (competencies) they expect entering students to have. These competencies should be highlighted 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.

## Thinking & 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 to describe or explain phenomena.

**Scientific Inquiry:** Apply knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems, and formulate research questions.

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

## Intrapersonal Competencies

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

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

**Resilience and Adaptability:** Demonstrate tolerance of stressful or changing situations and adapt effectively to them; be persistent and recover from setbacks.

**Capacity for Improvement:** Set goals for continuous improvement and learning; respond appropriately to feedback.

## Science Competencies

**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.

**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.

## Interpersonal Competencies

**Service Orientation:** Demonstrate a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; recognize and act on responsibilities to society locally, nationally, and globally.

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

**Cultural Competence:** Demonstrate knowledge of social and cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; show an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; engage diverse perspectives in learning, citizenship and work; recognize and appropriately address bias in yourself and others; interact effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

**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.

**Oral Communications:** Effectively convey information to others using spoken words and sentences; listen effectively, recognize potential communication barriers and adjust approach.

- While these competencies are based on the [Core Competencies of the Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\)](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/), 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) [https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/pages/knowledge/articles/career-readiness-fact-sheet-jan-2019.pdf?\\_ga=2.110459779.721170832.1592921858-539359848.1574880773](https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/pages/knowledge/articles/career-readiness-fact-sheet-jan-2019.pdf?_ga=2.110459779.721170832.1592921858-539359848.1574880773)
- 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://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/50/74/5074e78f-3f39-401c-ae58-e071fde87ef1/aamc-anatomy-applicant-workbook_final_for_web.pdf). [https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer\\_public/50/74/5074e78f-3f39-401c-ae58-e071fde87ef1/aamc-anatomy-applicant-workbook\\_final\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/50/74/5074e78f-3f39-401c-ae58-e071fde87ef1/aamc-anatomy-applicant-workbook_final_for_web.pdf)