Admissions Policies and Procedures

University of Michigan Medical School
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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Admissions Policies and Procedures

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I. Admission Policy Summary

The goals of the University of Michigan Medical School include educating individuals who are imbued with achieving the highest ethical performance standards required to provide exemplary patient care, and graduating physicians who will assume leadership roles in the areas of clinical medicine, research, and teaching.

The University of Michigan Medical School is dedicated to providing a cadre of physicians capable of caring for the diverse medical needs of the people of the state of Michigan and beyond. Those needs range from the immediate diagnostic and therapeutic needs of an individual patient to the need of our population for research into disease entities and the means by which to treat them. This medical school trains physicians who will be directly involved in patient care, physicians who will teach the next generation of physicians, and physicians who will become clinician scientists, expanding the medical knowledge base. The admissions policies therefore are designed to ensure that our selection process each year matriculates a class made up of individuals collectively and individually capable of meeting a variety of the needs of our current and future patients.

The University of Michigan Medical School recognizes that, in training physicians, there is a dual responsibility to be met. The first is to the medical students, to provide a medical education of the highest quality so that they may become highly effective and competent physicians. The second responsibility is to the future patients of the graduates of the medical school. Graduates should be well trained in all aspects of medicine and able to make appropriate diagnostic and treatment decisions in a manner that recognizes and respects the individual patient’s needs, including cultural, financial and social nuances. Each matriculating class will be selected in light of this dual responsibility. Each applicant will be evaluated not only on his or her ability to become a competent physician, but also on his or her potential to contribute to the educational experience of fellow medical students. The admissions process will evaluate both the individual capabilities of a student, and the overall composition of the matriculating class, with the goal of providing a rich and diverse educational experience for all members of the class. The diversity embodied in the class composition should include, but not be limited to, gender, racial or national origin, cultural identity, religious and political viewpoints, life experiences, undergraduate or graduate educational background, and other unique talents.

A. Each applicant will be treated with respect, and will be individually assessed for their potential as a physician. Information used to assess individual potential may include:

1. Application form

2. Letters of recommendation

3. Personal statement
4. Supplemental essay and information (i.e. secondary, including course requirements)

5. Interview with U of M Admissions Committee

6. Personal communication from those acquainted with the individual

Each applicant will be considered in the pool of the entire group of applicants, and will be individually assessed on both essential attributes and on their unique potential to contribute to the educational experience at the Medical School and to the profession of medicine. The first are those attributes considered essential to the practice of medicine, and therefore are required of all students admitted to the University of Michigan Medical School. Unique potential relates to the unique and valued, but not required, characteristics that an applicant may possess, which would enhance their potential to contribute to the educational experience and diversity of the Medical School, and to the profession of medicine. The parameters of both the essential attributes and the unique potential to contribute to the educational experience at the Medical School and to the profession of medicine characteristics will be reviewed on an annual basis.

B. Each applicant will be individually assessed for his/her essential attributes and unique potential to contribute to the medical school class.

1. Essential Attributes
   a Academic Excellence: The curriculum at the University of Michigan Medical School is academically rigorous and requires that the applicants demonstrate prior ability to perform well in a challenging academic setting. The undergraduate grade point average and the Medical College Admissions Test scores are two measures that are used to assess the applicant's ability. Other factors which are used in the evaluation may include the quality of the undergraduate institution, the rigor of the course load and steadily improving grades.
   b Competency: We strive to enroll students capable of accumulating the scientific knowledge, the diagnostic acumen, the technical skills, and the interpersonal skills required for the competent care of patients. Assessment of competency will include intellectual competency, technical competency, and communication competency. All applicants must sign the medical school technical standards form (attached).
   c Dedication to Medicine: Every effort will be made during the admissions process to assess the applicant’s dedication to a practice of medicine. Assessment of dedication to medicine will include, but is not limited to, assessment of the application materials for documented interest in medicine, focused questioning in the interview, and the applicant’s knowledge of current medical issues.
d **Altruism**: Altruism, or the devotion to the needs of others, can be assessed through review of the applicant’s activities such as participation in community service, or volunteer activities as well as responses to interview questions about the applicant’s goals and desires for a life of providing patient care.

e **Integrity**: Honesty and integrity are essential in both the medical education process and eventual practice of medicine. Applicants should be able to articulate an understanding of the importance of ethical behavior, of honesty, of professionalism in medicine. Dishonesty on the application form or in the interview as well as information provided in the letters of evaluation will be considered in assessing integrity.

f **Communication skills**: Potential physicians should demonstrate to the admissions committee an ability to communicate effectively. The personal statement, letters of recommendation, and the interview provide opportunities to assess effective communication skills.

2. **Unique Potential to Contribute to the Medical School Educational Experience and to the Profession of Medicine**

Each year, there will be many more applicants who possess all of the essential attributes to become a competent and effective physician than there are positions available. Many of the applicants will also possess unique attributes that can contribute both to the educational experience of their fellow classmates and eventually to the field of medicine. Although each applicant will present a unique set of academic and other talents, many will have an approximately equivalent potential to contribute to medicine, albeit in a wide variety of ways. The selection process cannot therefore focus solely on the individual, as many applicants will be equally, if differently, suited to the practice of medicine. The admission process, following evaluation and rating of the individual applicant, will seek to build a richly diverse class both to enhance the educational experience of the class itself, and to provide for future patient care of the highest quality.

a) **Future Potential re Underserved Populations of Patients**: “Chronically underserved” may be either geographic (rural, inner city), or involve specific populations of patients (e.g. financially disadvantaged, minority populations, or uninsured). Applicants who provide evidence, stated or otherwise, that they are inclined to serve in one of these areas may be ranked as highly desirable for admissions to the medical school. Assessment would include, but is not limited to, demographic factors, past experiences, and demonstrated interest in practicing in an underserved area or with underserved populations.

b) **Underserved medical specialties**. This assessment can include particular underserved specialties such as primary care, but will also include neglected medical areas such as bioethics, the understanding and teaching of cultural competency, medical education, and so on. These underserved areas will change from time to time, and will be continuously monitored.

c) **Race and Ethnicity**: Race is one of many factors that contribute to a diverse learning environment for all students. The University will continue to seek a
critical mass of students from groups underrepresented in medicine as one aspect of its overall effort to provide opportunities for all students to receive educational benefits from interactions with peers who are broadly diverse with regard to the full range of personal characteristics and backgrounds. As with all of the other personal characteristics and attributes taken into account, race will be considered in a flexible, non-mechanical way, and shall not be treated as the defining feature of any application. Underrepresented in medicine populations are defined as those whose representation in the U.S. physician workforce is below their representation in the general U.S. population, based on the Year 2000 national census data. These groups currently comprise: African Americans, Native Americans (including Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians), Hispanic (including Mainland Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and Other Hispanic Populations), Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian.

d) **Leadership:** The physician is the leader of the health care team and must be able to effectively direct the diagnosis and treatment course of patients. Previous team leadership experience (for example, advancement in the military, captain of an athletic team, selection for a leadership position in an organized environment), or leadership training experiences will be considered in assessing leadership.

e) **Life Experiences:** Each physician must care for patients with a wide variety of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Experiences with other ethnicities and cultures is deemed valuable, such as study abroad, involvement with multicultural organizations, or other unique life experiences.

f) **Scientific or social research experience:** Advancement of medical knowledge benefits large populations of patients, and applicants with skills in research have the potential to provide such benefits. While involvement in research is not an absolute requirement, it is considered a very desirable experience for the admission evaluation.

g) **Additional degrees:** Applicants who present with another graduate degree such as JD, Masters in Public Health, Ph.D. etc, bring a unique set of skills that will be valuable both to the other members of the class and to the future cohort of physicians.

h) **Educational background:** Although the practice of medicine is heavily grounded in the sciences, the art of medicine requires an understanding of and appreciation for psychosocial issues such as economics, history and philosophy among others. Students who have undertaken studies in these areas will be assessed for their potential to contribute to the educational experience of the class.
II. Admission Procedures

A. Processing of applications

1. Applicants to the University of Michigan are required to have completed 90 hours of undergraduate level education in an undergraduate institution in the United States, take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), and submit an application through the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS).

2. Applicants are required to be United States citizens or hold a permanent resident alien visa ("green card")

B. Screening of application

1. Each applicant’s file will be reviewed individually and holistically to assess his or her suitability for a career in medicine. Materials reviewed will include the application, all secondary materials and any additional information requested by the Admissions Office.

2. A select group of applicants will be invited for an interview. The admissions counselors, the Director of Admissions and the Assistant Dean for Admissions will screen application materials for the interview decisions.

3. As a courtesy, interviews may be offered to applicants with specific or significant ties to the University of Michigan. Other than the opportunity for interview, no special considerations will be offered to these applicants.

C. Interview process

1. Invited applicants will interview with members of the admissions committee, including a faculty member.

2. Interviewers will be provided with guidelines and an orientation to the basics of the interview process, including concepts such as treating the applicant with respect, which questions or topics are inappropriate for the interview, and which qualities are to be evaluated.

3. Interviewers will complete a standardized evaluation form for each interviewee that provides a clear definition of qualities to be evaluated.
4. Interviewees will be provided an opportunity to anonymously evaluate the interview process and provide feedback to the assistant dean and director about the quality of the interview experience.

D. Ranking process

1. The Admissions Executive Committee (AEC) will review the complete files of each of the interviewed applicants, including the assessment by the interviewers, and provide a rating of the future potential of the interviewee as a physician.

2. No quotas will be set up for any particular quality sought in future physicians.

3. Certain Medical School programs, such as the Medical Scientist Training Program or the Oral Maxillofacial Program, have variable numbers of positions available in any given year, depending on funding or numbers of qualified applicants. If fewer than the desired number of individuals are found in any year for these special programs, the remaining spots in the entering class will be filled with standard applicants.

4. The final decision regarding which applicants will be offered admission resides with the Assistant Dean for Admissions. Every effort will be made to select a class of individuals who, in the aggregate, are capable of addressing the specific different needs of future patients, and the educational environment for their classmates. The AEC serves as an advisory body for admissions decisions.

F. Evaluation of Admissions Policies, Procedures and Activities

1. The Office of Admissions is within the Office of Student Programs and is directly supervised by the Associate Dean for Student Programs. Each year the Assistant Dean for Admissions will provide to the Associate Dean a report of the policies, procedures and activities for the year.

2. These Admission Policies shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee of the Medical School on a regular basis.
A. Purpose

1. Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee is the body of the medical school that is responsible for the assessment of an individual applicant, both via review of the applicant’s file and the face to face interview.

2. Admissions Executive Committee (AEC)

The AEC is the body that is responsible for assessment of the individual applicant in the pool of all of the applicants. In addition to a review of the files and interview comments of each of the interviewed applicants, the AEC will assign each applicant a rating score indicating desirability among all current applicants.

B. Responsibilities

1. Admissions Committee

Members of the Admissions Committee will interview and provide an assessment of the essential and unique attributes of each interviewed applicant to the Admissions Executive Committee

2. Admissions Executive Committee

- The AEC will recommend suitable candidates, and reject unsuitable candidates, to the Assistant Dean for Admissions. The AEC will provide an approximate rating of the desirability of each applicant among the pool of all applicants.

- The AEC will advise the Assistant Dean for Admissions on appropriate policies and procedures for the evaluation and admissions of applicants to the medical school.

- On occasion, the AEC will review requests for waivers of existing requirements and make recommendations regarding the action on such requests to the Associate Dean for Student Programs and the Executive Committee of the Medical School.

C. Structure and Membership

1. Admissions Committee
Membership will be sufficient to interview the 700-800 applicants interviewed each year. Members may be current or retired faculty members, house officers, medical students or alumni of the University of Michigan Medical School.

Membership is for four year, renewable terms. Each interviewer is expected to participate in at least four interview days during each year.

Nominations for the Admissions Committee will be solicited from Departmental Chairs, members of the Admissions Committee, from the leadership of the medical school, and from the faculty at large.

Nominations for the medical student members of the Admissions Committee will be solicited from the medical student leadership, former student members of the Admissions Committee, from the medical school leadership, and from the medical student body at large. Each student nominated for membership shall submit a personal statement regarding their desire to join the committee, and should include any previous experience with admissions.

Individuals selected to join the Admissions Committee will be provided with specific instruction and guidelines regarding the policies and procedures of the admissions committees and the interview process. In addition, each new member of the Admissions Committee will observe a limited number of interviews with an experienced faculty committee member.

Admissions Committee members whose actions are not in accordance with the Admissions Policies and Procedures will be counseled by the Assistant Dean or the Director of Admissions, and may be removed from the Committee if necessary.

2. Admissions Executive Committee

The AEC shall consist of the Assistant Dean for Admissions, the Director of Admissions, 10 to 12 faculty members, and two student members.

Nominations for the Admissions Executive Committee will be solicited from Departmental Chairs and from the leadership of the Medical School. Nominees should be current or former members of the Admissions Committee and be well versed in the policies and procedures of the Admissions Committee. The credentials for the nominees will be presented to the Associate Dean for Student
Programs and to the Dean of the Medical School who will appoint the membership.

- Each member shall serve three-year, renewable terms of service.
- Every effort will be made to include appropriate faculty representation of the constituents of the medical school
- The Associate Dean for Student Programs, the Assistant Dean for Diversity, and the Director of the Medical Scientist Training Program shall serve as ex officio members of the Admissions Executive Committee.

IV. Procedures

1. The schedule of interview days will be made available to the Admissions Committee members in early summer, and members will be asked to pick a minimum of four days for participation.

2. Each invited applicant will typically have three 30-minute interviews, an introduction to the curriculum and mission of the school, a financial aid presentation and lunch and a tour with current medical students.

3. Interviewers are encouraged to meet with other Admissions Committee members for lunch following the final interview. This provides an opportunity to discuss common experiences with interviewees, and to come to a consensus regarding the applicant’s suitability for acceptance.

4. The Assistant Dean of Admissions, guided by the rating scores of the AEC, will make sufficient admission offers by March 15th to fill the entering class.

5. The Admissions Executive Committee will meet as necessary to review each interviewed applicant and to assign a rating score. The rating score represents a comparative assessment of the entire application and not just the interview evaluation. Frank and open discussion of the applicant’s merits and deficiencies, and essential and unique attributes, is encouraged.