

Disclaimer: These are all just opinions of current students! Feel free to still reach out to others for second opinions and further advice.

Question	Answer
<p>Would you suggest taking time off to prepare for the MCAT? Is it reasonable to study while also taking classes/working?</p>	<p>I was working about 40 hours per week while studying for the MCAT, but I took about 6-9 months to study. So, it was spread out over a long time.</p> <p>It's very much a personal decision! I took two months of dedicated time to study between transitioning full-time jobs and was very lucky to be able to do so. Others may have the ability to study alongside a regular work schedule but may need to adjust the study timeline to make sure they get those study hours in.</p> <p>I took it in May of my senior year of college and studied while taking classes and working, but studied over 4-5 months. I think it just depends on what you feel like you can take on or whether you feel like you have the capacity to take time off.</p>
<p>I scheduled the MCAT in April, but I'm thinking about rescheduling it to May. I know it's cutting it kind of close to when applications open. We're encouraged to apply early, so would y'all recommend that change?</p>	<p>I think that either would be ok. I was told that the MCAT could be taken even after the application had been submitted, but usually no later than late June.</p> <p>If you think that the extra month would be advantageous to your score, then it might be a good idea.</p> <p>Something to keep in mind is that it takes a little over a month for them to grade your MCAT, and I know some schools don't consider your application "complete" until they have your scores so they won't look at your app. Things have changed with COVID and schools are much more flexible with scores now but it's worth checking with schools you're interested in to see what their policy is. It's still totally possible to submit your app a month late and get into schools though!</p> <p>I took my MCAT in mid-May with the thought that if I somehow did poorly, I would likely wait another year to apply instead of trying to cram in another summer test. The goal is obviously to do well, so take it when you think you will be best prepared so that you only have to take that beast ONCE.</p>

<p>So, would I wait until my score would be released (which would be late June) and submit my application together, or would I just put in the application without the scores and submit my scores later?</p>	<p>I would play that one by feel — in hindsight, I felt good enough walking out of the exam I took in May (it felt like all of my recent practice exams) that I probably could've submitted. I ended up submitting 2 days after my scores rolled in, but I had everything ready to submit aside from my score.</p> <p>You can submit your application to schools without your MCAT score or wait until you get your score to decide where to apply. There is a delay for processing after you submit your application so it will take a little bit for schools to see your application if you wait but can also be worth it to guide how to use your finances for application expenses most effectively.</p> <p>I would recommend not waiting to submit your application because AAMC could take up to a month or more to verify your application and send it to schools. Instead, I would recommend you submit to one school you'll for sure apply to regardless and just add more schools once you get your score back. That way your application does not get caught in verification stasis while schools could be looking at it. The only drawback would be if you get your score back and decide you actually don't want to apply at all this cycle.</p> <p>One thing to keep in mind is that it typically takes ~30 days to receive your MCAT score, so if you are planning to use your score to guide where/if you apply it may be worth waiting before submitting your primary app.</p> <p>AMCAS also needs your transcript from your undergrad, which can cause another delay in your processing. So, make sure to request your transcript to be sent as soon as you open your application!</p> <p>Also, if you studied abroad, depending on the program you may need that transcript as well. It took me 2 months to get mine sent to AMCAS so if it applies to you be proactive!</p>
<p>It was really hard to get clinical hours over the covid years. How important is it that we get clinical hours?</p>	<p>A lot of schools like to see clinical/shadowing experience, but I think it has been flexible lately due to COVID.</p>

	<p>Schools should be aware of barriers due to COVID (and you won't be alone in having to navigate these barriers) so they will definitely take that into account as part of a more wholistic review. What's more important is that you are able to articulate an understanding of what a career in medicine looks like, and how you fit in the role as a physician (traditionally what shadowing experiences helps students attain).</p> <p>I think this depends a lot on the school as well. Some put more emphasis on this compared to others. I think looking at the admissions websites of the schools that are on your list would be very helpful. For example, I know some schools will put more emphasis on research or service compared to clinical exposure.</p> <p>Admissions Perspective: I think as each year passes the exceptions made for this will continue to decrease. At this time, there are a lot of available clinical opportunities whether through volunteering or jobs as an MA, scribe, CNA, etc so if you are planning to apply in future cycles, it should be reasonable to start getting experience again.</p>
<p>Does it take time to be approved for the Fee Assistance Program?</p>	<p>This does take processing time, so make sure to complete the application for this program as early as possible.</p>
<p>Is there a difference to the committee if you are a 1st vs. 2nd time applicant?</p>	<p>My understanding is that the focus shifts a little bit. It is less of a pure focus on "why do you want to be here/in medicine" and becomes more of a focus on that PLUS acknowledging that you have applied previously and that you've since identified where you may have had gaps and how you worked to address those.</p> <p>It varies from school to school, to some admissions committees it can show dedication/resilience in the face of adversity, some other schools might hold you to a higher standard because they expect you to improve your application. I think the most important thing when reapplying is to identify what in your app needed improvement, and then actively work to improve that in the time between your first and second application. Regardless of committee preference, that will make your reapplication the strongest.</p>

	<p>Re-applicants are in the same “stack” as first-time applicants. I applied twice - my re-applicant was BRAND NEW, started from scratch & addressed what has changed since my first application.</p> <p>Also, as a reapplicant, a majority of your secondary applications will have a section that asks you to talk about being a reapplicant, so it's good to reflect on that experience.</p> <p>Admissions Perspective: There are not many differences. The main thing is if you are a re-applicant, what has changed? Have you addressed weaker aspects of your application?</p>
<p>Do you think being a CNA is less beneficial than being an EMT if you're going to med school instead of nursing school?</p>	<p>I was a CNA and LOVED it. It was amazing. I learned so much about hospital medicine and direct patient care. I don't know anything about EMT, so I can't speak to that. But my CNA experience was my favorite of all my pre-med stuff.</p> <p>If you're pursuing an EMT because you are interested in the difference in scope and experience, cool! The letters/acronym doesn't matter — the experience you have (and the way you communicate it to others) is what does.</p> <p>I would not rank one over the other! I think any clinical & patient-facing positions are helpful. I worked as a CNA before med school and feel I learned SO MUCH about being a caregiver and working with patients.</p>
<p>Are some clinical experiences "more weighted" than other experiences?</p>	<p>I think admission reps are more interested in knowing you as a person and what the experiences mean to you versus having the right experience.</p> <p>Admissions Perspective: There are some circumstances where certain experiences can be better than others. Experiences where you are really involved in direct patient care are better than passive shadowing, on average.</p>