

## UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

### *Admissions Committee Procedures and Criteria*

The most important function of the School of Medicine is the education of future physicians, and candidate selection constitutes a serious responsibility of the faculty. The clear goal is the development of a class of intelligent, well-prepared, diverse and inquisitive students. Delineated below are the details of the method by which admissions shall be determined.

A. General

The Admissions Committee is responsible for admissions of students to the School of Medicine. Actions of this Committee shall be guided by instructions from the Dean. These instructions shall be given at the beginning of the Admissions cycle in the fall of the academic year.

B. The Admissions Committee

1. Constitution

The Committee shall consist of a minimum of 15 members plus an administrative officer (herein referred to as the Associate Dean of Admissions) appointed by the Dean who shall serve as Chair of the Committee and shall vote only in the case of ties. The Dean may, at his/her discretion, appoint an Assistant Dean of Admissions. The Associate Dean of Admissions shall appoint the Committee from among the Faculty of the School in such a manner as to assure the broadest possible representation of interests and skills. Student representatives will hold five voting seats which will be rotated among fifteen students. Their manner of selection will be determined by the Associate Dean of Admissions.

2. Rules of Rotation

The term of Committee service will be determined by the Associate Dean to ensure appropriate faculty representation and distribution of Committee workload.

3. Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held. If the work-load exceeds that which was anticipated or if special decisions of working policy are required, extra meetings shall be called at the request of the Associate Dean of Admissions.

4. Quorum

Two-thirds of those scheduled to rank shall constitute a quorum.

C. General Administrative Admissions Policy

1. Nondiscrimination

No otherwise qualified applicant shall be denied admission to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual

orientation or marital, veteran or handicapped status. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 precludes discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title IX, the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibits sex as a criterion in admissions for any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits age as a criterion in admissions for any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The American Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits institutions receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against “otherwise qualified” handicapped individuals. An “otherwise qualified” handicapped individual is defined as an “individual who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the recipient’s education, program or activity.” The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine adheres to a policy of compliance with above legislation.

2. Applicant Health

The effects and disadvantages of a great variety of serious physical defects can be overcome in the process of acquiring a medical education and in rendering service to the medical profession, to medical science and to the community. The Faculty of the School of medicine endorses the Report of the AAMC Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admissions (January 25, 1979). The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Technical Standards for the Doctor of Medicine Degree (Appendix) are based upon this model.

3. Citizenship Status

On December 8, 2009, the UPSOM Executive Committee approved the Admissions Committee to welcome applications from all qualified individuals regardless of citizenship status. All applicants must have at least one full year of college work in the United States.

4. U.S. Students in Foreign Medical Schools

The School does not accept applications for transfer from students enrolled in non-LCME approved foreign medical schools; this rule applies to U.S. citizens as well as those holding resident visas.

5. Transfer and Advanced Standing

Applicants for transfer to the third year class shall be considered provided they are students matriculated currently in good standing in LCME approved medical schools for the M.D. degree. Applicants must submit academic transcripts both from their undergraduate colleges and from their current medical schools, together with their Medical College Admission Test scores, and letters of recommendation from the Deans of their respective medical schools, verifying their current status.

6. Delayed Matriculation

Delayed matriculation will be granted by the Associate Dean of Admissions to a limited number of accepted candidates to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Requests for delayed

matriculation must be in writing specifying the reasons for deferral. These reasons must be compelling. In order to defer, the applicant will be required to reapply to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in the year they wish to defer. A non-refundable \$100 deposit is required to hold delayed matriculant's place. A progress report from the applicant or his/her preceptor must be sent to the Admissions office by January of the year in which the student will matriculate. Those approved for deferral must sign and adhere to the deferral agreement given by the Associate Dean of Admissions.

D. Admissions Committee Procedures

1. The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine shall participate in and adhere to the regulations of the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS).
2. All eligible applicants may be permitted to submit a secondary application. To be eligible the applicant must have taken the MCAT within three years, not have applied more than twice previously.
3. Applicants for admission shall undergo an initial screening by the Associate Dean of Admissions or Assistant Dean of Admissions or committee members as designated by the Associate Dean. On the basis of criteria established yearly by the Admissions Committee, suitable applicants will be invited for interviews.
4. No student shall be accepted for admission without an interview. Faculty interviewers will be provided some of the information from the AMCAS application but not the applicant's GPA or MCAT score.
5. The entire application, with the exception of the interview reports, will be reviewed by two committee members. Together these will provide a summary for the committee of the background, any noteworthy aspects of the academic performance, the activities, the written material of the applicant and the recommendations.
6. Each interviewed applicant shall be ranked by Committee members after a review of a minimum of the face sheet, summaries by reviewers and both interview reports. The entire application, however, will be available on line for the committee to review as necessary. Acceptance will be offered based on the rankings of the committee. The Committee will establish minimum ranks for 1) acceptance; 2) placement on the wait list 3) rejection. As withdrawals occur, students will be selected from the wait list.
7. No absentee balloting shall be permitted. If a member of the Committee has information of value about an applicant but must be absent from the meeting at which the applicant is to be considered, such information may be submitted to the committee in writing or communicated to the Associate Dean of Admissions.
8. Notification of Committee action shall be sent to each applicant at the end of January. and on a rolling basis thereafter. Under no circumstances shall the actions of the Admissions Committee be imparted to anyone by members of the Admissions Committee or by the Admissions office staff

before formal notification of such action shall have been received by the applicant, unless authorized by the Associate Dean of Admissions.

9. If an applicant wishes to challenge a decision of the Admissions Committee, he/she shall be instructed by the Associate Dean of Admissions to request Committee reconsideration in writing, giving the reasons for the request. At the Associate Dean of Admission's discretion, such written requests shall be considered by the Committee at a regular meeting.

E. Criteria for Selection of Candidates

Taken from Functions and Structure of a Medical School: Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the M.D. Degree. Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

The faculty of each school must develop criteria and procedures for the selection of students that are readily available to potential applicants and to their collegiate advisors. The final responsibility for selecting students to be admitted for medical study must reside with a duly constituted faculty committee. Each medical school must have a pool of applicants sufficiently large and possessing national level qualifications to fill its entering class. Medical schools must select students who possess the intelligence, integrity and personal and emotional characteristics necessary for them to become effective physicians. The selection of individual students must not be influenced by any political or financial factors. Each medical school should have policies and practices ensuring the gender, racial, cultural and economic diversity of its students. Each school must develop and publish technical standards for admission of handicapped applicants, in accordance with legal requirements. The University of Pittsburgh subscribes to this policy.

Acceptable applicants come from widely diversified backgrounds; small colleges and large universities, large cities and rural areas; those who have purely scientific emphasis and those who have majored in the arts, history or literature; those who have pursued any of a wide range of extracurricular activities or work experience (e.g. human service organizations, sports, arts, politics or other activities). Inevitably, the importance of several criteria used in evaluation will vary with each individual applicant. Broadly educated students with intelligence, integrity, energy, creativity and motivation are sought. There are seven (7) basic categories used for evaluating the applicant's total profile as an individual: objective scores on nationally administered tests, academic Q.P.A., technical standards, extracurricular activities, recommendations, personal interviews, the applicant's written material and the applicant's personal and academic journey.

1. Medical College Admissions Tests

The scores achieved by an applicant on this national test give the Committee some indication of the applicant's intellectual achievement. MCAT scores are required with the exception of those guaranteed admission through the University of Pittsburgh Guaranteed Admissions program and those applicants who apply through the Linkage Programs between the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the approved post baccalaureate program and those entering the Oral

Maxillofacial Surgery Program. The MCAT must be taken no more than three years prior to matriculation.

2. Academic Quality Point Average

This average must be interpreted in terms of the selectivity of the college attended. Specific major courses of undergraduate study are not defined by the Committee; however, college programs should be designed to enable the student to assimilate the great quantity of scientific information required in medical school. In addition, knowledge of the humanities, the behavioral sciences and the arts are essential in order to best serve the demands of the medical profession. An interest in continued learning and an aptitude for scholarly pursuits is indispensable and probably cannot be nurtured by a concentrated or narrow undergraduate program.

3. Technical Standards See Appendix

4. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are important in selection. These may include work experience, research endeavors, an indicated concern for one's fellow man, interest in learning more about medicine or other professions and occupations, talent in the arts or leadership ability.

5. Letters of Recommendation

No limit shall be placed on the number of letters of recommendation; however, the evaluation and recommendation of the official premedical committee of the college is preferred. If such a committee does not exist, then letters from different departments, preferably from senior faculty are preferred. It is recommended that the letters should be from faculty who has had the applicant in a course designated in their AMCAS application and preferably at least two letters from faculty in science departments. Letters from research mentors may substitute for letters from faculty and will be considered academic letters of recommendation. While any three individual letters will be accepted, it is preferred that the applicant submit three academic letters. Letters from non-academic sources constituting character references are helpful only if the author has direct and personal knowledge of the applicant. Anonymous letters concerning an applicant shall be discarded.

6. Interviews

Since no student shall be accepted for admission without an interview, the interviews constitute a very important part of the criteria for admission. Interviewers shall be designated from the faculty by the Associate Dean of Admissions and are chosen for their ability to obtain insight into the applicant's personal competencies as determined by the UPSOM Admissions Committee and to communicate this information to the Committee. If the first interviewer has difficulty in evaluating an applicant, the admissions office shall be contacted and arrangements made for the student to be seen by another interviewer. Interviewers shall not have access to academic

credentials and objective test scores should not be imparted to the interviewer, since it is important that the interview report stand as a separate, uncolored source of information to the Committee. In addition to faculty interviews, interviews by enrolled students of the School of Medicine shall also be conducted.

7. Essays

A brief essay of between 250 and 300 words shall be required of each applicant. This requirement is met by the Personal Comments in the student's AMCAS application. The subject matter of this essay shall be unspecified, but it should be designed to supplement other information contained in the application file, add new information, demonstrate the applicant's ability to communicate in writing and provide the Committee with any additional information which the applicant believes will advance his/her cause with the Committee. In addition, each applicant is required to provide two additional short paragraphs.

F. Applicant File Security

The application file or any part thereof, of any applicant shall be accessible only to members of the Admissions Committee, members of the admissions office staff, and the Dean or his representatives.

G. Follow-up

The Admissions Committee may request that the admission office prepare reports on characteristics of the matriculants to identify features of applications that are associated with risk of failures in medical school. Such reports could consist of but are not limited to evaluation of non-traditional students, students with low MCAT scores or low GPA average, etc. These reports will not identify individual students but represent a composite of students to protect all students' privacy.