Medical Corps Scholar Program Guide

DISCLAIMER: This guide was adapted from the West Point Pre-Medical School Scholarship Program. It is intended for ROTC Cadets pursuing Ed-Delay for medical school. Information in this document may change over time. Questions should be directed to LTC Mary Alice Noel – mary.a.noel5.mil@army.mil.

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Introduction

In accordance with Army Regulation (AR) 601-141, AR 601-25, and USACC Circular 601-26-1 (annually updated), Army ROTC cadets may request an Educational Delay to attend medical school under military sponsorship, including the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) and Uniformed Services University (USU). Historically, Army ROTC had no formal mission to commission cadets directly into medical school, and although there was no cap on Educational Delay participants, a lack of structured guidance and incentives limited participation. Beginning in FY 2027, United States Army Cadet Command (USACC) has the mission to commission at least 25 pre-medical cadets annually.

This guide supports that mission by providing ROTC cadets with a clear roadmap to prepare for, apply to, and succeed in the Educational Delay process and Medical School application process. Selection is overseen by the cadet's ROTC PMS and Brigade Commander, in coordination with university pre-health advisors, and follows procedures outlined in current regulations and guidance.

Core Competencies

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) governs the medical school application process for allopathic schools in the United States and Canada. The seventeen core competencies prescribed by the AAMC include proficiency in pre-professional activities, thinking and reasoning, and science competencies. ROTC Cadets demonstrate aptitude in these areas through academic success, performance on the Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT), clinical exposure, research, volunteer work and community service. In addition to meeting program requirements, ROTC cadets must perform well in their ROTC programs. ROTC Cadets are appealing applicants because the qualities and attributes that make them successful in ROTC closely align with the core competencies sought by medical schools.

AAMC Core Competencies

Pre-professional Activities	Thinking and Reasoning	Science Competencies
-Commitment to learning and growth -Cultural awareness -Cultural humility -Empathy & compassion -Ethical responsibility to self & others -Interpersonal skills -Oral communication -Reliability & dependability -Resilience & adaptability -Service orientation -Teamwork & collaboration	-Critical thinking -Quantitative reasoning -Scientific inquiry -Written communication	-Human behavior -Living systems

Educational Delay Program Requirements

The official document for Educational Delay is **USACC Circular 601-26-1** (updated annually). Cadets applying for Educational Delay to attend medical school must meet the following standards:

- Completion of Educational Delay Packet (see next page from USACC Circular 601-26-1) NLT August of senior year
- Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 (with BCPM[1] GPA ≥ 3.2 strongly preferred)[2]
- Minimum MCAT score of 500 overall and 124 in each section[2]
- Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) upon graduation
- Official acceptance to an accredited medical school (MD or DO) in the U.S. or Puerto Rico (typically due by June 1 of year you would start medical school)
- Note that Active GRFD recipients in any component cannot apply for Educational Delay
- Green-to-Gold cannot apply for Educational Delay

Participation in the Education Delay program is based on academic performance and meeting the minimum requirements. However, meeting these standards does not guarantee endorsement or acceptance into medical school—successful applicants typically exceed these benchmarks.

[1]BCPM GPA stands for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Math Grade Point Average. It's a specific GPA calculated by medical schools (especially via AMCAS) to reflect your academic performance in core science and math courses that are most relevant to medical school readiness.

[2] These standards are the minimum for the HPSP Scholarship. There are waivers; however, each fiscal year changes the absolute minimum scores or GPA. Your medical recruiter will have the most up-to-date information for this.

Excerpt from USACC Circular 601-26-1 – These documents must be submitted in a single PDF document.

Any (DL) request sent directly from a program to USACC G1 ASD will be returned without action. The contents of the (DL) packet(s) are to be uploaded as one single *.PDF document and in the order listed below:				
Order of Documents	**Name of Required Document**	**Chaplain**	**JAG Corps**	**AMEDD**
1	Accessions Management Sheet (Signed and Dated by Cadet and PMS)	X	X	X
2	Official Transcripts with school Registrar's Seal	X	X	X
3	Graduate Studies Admissions Test Results (LSAT, MCAT, GRE, etc.)		X	X
4	Cadet Letter of Intent to the board (Signed/dated by Cadet)	X	X	X
5	Signed and Dated Letter(s) of Recommendation	X	X	X
6	Letter(s) of Acceptance from Graduate School (Only if Cadet has already received one)	X	X	X
7	Civilian resume`	X	X	X

Figure J-1. Educational Delay Request packet required documents

Educational Delay Packet Components

1. Accessions Management Sheet - available in CCIMM after CST results are posted
2. Official Transcripts – request all college transcripts from your school(s)
3. Graduate Studies Admissions Test Results – MCAT (note that MCAT scores are typically posted 30 days after taking the test)
4. Cadet Letter of Intent to the board - example Letter of Intent for Ed Delay packet provided by 2LT Landen Conner (See Appendix A and https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ezzq8nBv3rXUpjxEbrTEA6oUTZd8fEfj/edit?rtpof=true&sd=true)
5. Signed/Dated letters of Recommendation (similar what you are submitting to medical school in addition to letter from PMS)
6. Letters of Acceptance from Graduate School – this is very rare to have an acceptance letter to a medical school at the time the Educational Delay Packet is due; if you have one, submit it
7. Civilian resume – formatting will vary

Timeline of processing your Educational Delay packet:

- Spring of Junior (MS3) year – start working with your PMS/HRA for building your Ed Delay Packet
- August of Senior (MS4) year – Internal Brigade deadlines for submission of Ed Delay Packet
- End of September of Senior (MS4) year – Educational Delay Board meets
- Mid-October of Senior (MS4) year – Educational Delay Board results released

Overall Recommended Experiences for ROTC Pre-Med Cadets

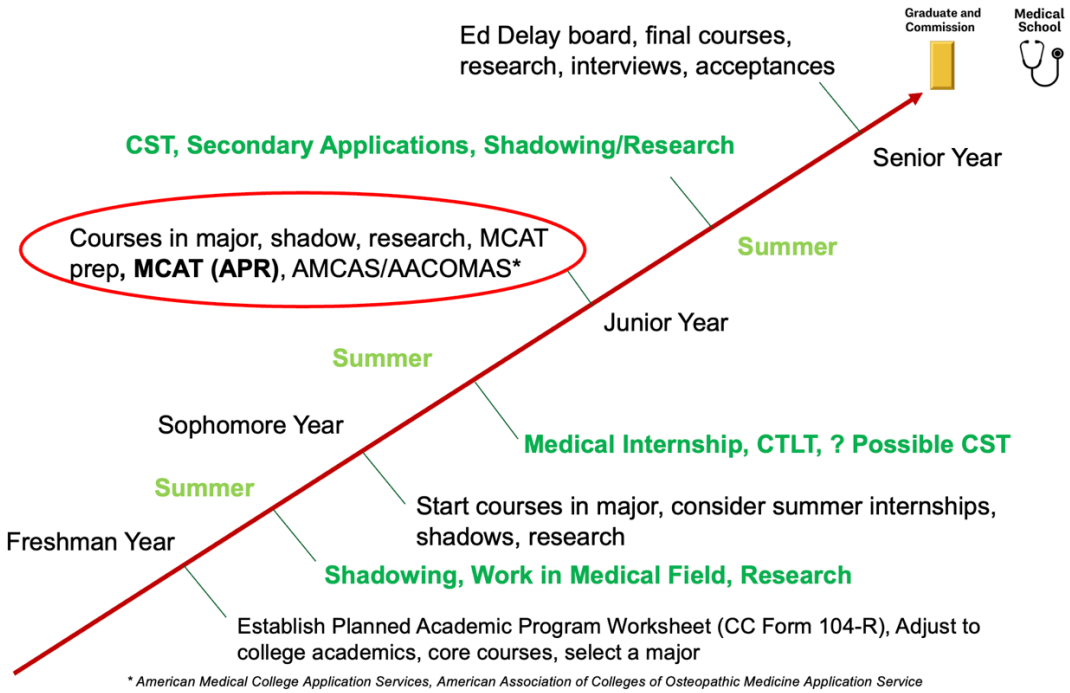
To be competitive for medical school, ROTC cadets should maintain a strong academic record and perform well in their military training, particularly in their Military Science classes and Advanced Camp. Key experiences include conducting research, shadowing physicians, and working in clinical roles such as a scribe, CNA, or EMT. Cadets should also engage in consistent medical volunteerism and take on leadership positions in pre-medical or science clubs as well as community service organizations. These activities, combined with demonstrated excellence in ROTC, highlight the discipline, leadership, and service orientation valued by medical schools.

Internship and Summer Training Opportunities for Pre-Med ROTC Cadets

ROTC cadets have access to a range of internship and summer training programs that support medical school preparation while meeting Army training requirements. Some of these internship programs are sponsored by USACC and others are to be pursued and funded by the cadet or their university. These opportunities fall into three primary categories: research, clinical, and combined. Research internships allow cadets to engage in focused scientific investigation, often at academic or government laboratories, strengthening critical thinking skills and enhancing competitiveness through publication or presentation. Clinical programs take place at military medical centers or civilian teaching hospitals, where cadets shadow healthcare professionals across diverse specialties. Combined programs—typically held at Army facilities—offer both lab-based research and clinical shadowing, giving cadets a comprehensive experience in military medicine.

Timeline

The pre-medical timeline provides a useful framework for the delivery of comprehensive information on the various steps required to earn a scholarship to attend medical school. These components will be addressed chronologically. An overview of the process is depicted below:



Freshman Year

Academics

In 2025, the nationwide average GPA for applicants accepted to medical school was 3.81. The average science GPA was 3.57; the average non-science GPA was 3.80. The MCAT average for medical school matriculants was 512.1. While acceptance to medical school is not all about grades, establishing a firm foundation in academics to attain a high Grade Point Average (GPA) is extremely important. Concentration on academics in the first year is critical. During the first semester, ROTC cadets are strongly encouraged to develop good study habits and optimize performance across all pillars.

Selecting a Major

A common question among pre-med students is, "What should I major in?" ROTC cadets can choose any major, as long as they complete all required pre-med coursework. When deciding, consider both your passion and academic strengths. Double majors and minors are discouraged—time is better spent on research, shadowing, volunteering, and other essential pre-med experiences.

Research

Freshman year is an excellent year to begin to be involved in research. These endeavors can be performed independently or as part of a course. Early entry into the research arena provides time for training in specific techniques and accumulating experience while establishing leadership opportunities for the future. It also enhances prospects for presentations and publications at conferences.

Volunteerism and Community Service

Medical schools value selfless service, often demonstrated through volunteer work and community involvement. ROTC cadets should engage in meaningful activities that align with their interests, such as Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, tutoring, or scouting.

Organizations to Consider to Expand your Knowledge and Understanding of Military Medicine

- **Military Medical Communities** – Monthly webinars with military physicians sharing their stories about their specialties and their careers with live chat rooms to engage with panelists and program directors. Also has bylaws to start an MMC Chapter at your undergraduate school! https://medschool.usuhs.edu/resources/mmc
- **Wardocs Podcast** – Incredible stories about military medicine and have an organization called "Wardocs Ambassadors" you can join as a cadet! https://www.wardocspodcast.com/

Clinical Exposure

Clinical experience is essential for medical school admission, as it demonstrates a clear understanding of the profession. Most accepted applicants have hundreds to thousands of clinical hours, often gained during gap years spent working in healthcare roles. The most direct path to medical school with ROTC does not allow for a gap year, which makes obtaining shadowing hours more challenging. While the Medical Corps Scholar Program recommends 100-150 shadowing hours, cadets should aim higher to remain competitive. Seek opportunities at local clinics, hospitals, or military facilities, and focus on gaining meaningful insights, as interviewers frequently ask about clinical experiences to assess motivation and readiness for a medical career.

Freshman Year (MS-I) in Army ROTC

During freshman year (MS-I) in Army ROTC, cadets begin building foundational military and leadership skills while adjusting to college academics. Here's an overview of what typically happens:

Classroom Instruction
- Introduction to the Army's structure, values, and customs.
- Basic leadership principles, time management, and communication skills.
- Overview of military orders, drill and ceremony, and basic land navigation.

Leadership Lab
- Hands-on training in small-unit tactics, first aid, radio communication, and basic marksmanship.
- Emphasis on followership and team participation.

Physical Training (PT)
- 3–5 days per week of Army-style fitness training.
- Focus on building endurance, strength, and preparation for the Army Fitness Test (AFT).

Academic Planning
- Completion of the 104-R Academic Worksheet with your PMS to map out college courses through graduation, including ROTC requirements
- This is a crucial time to ensure you have the pre-requisite courses to apply for medical school and to ensure you have completed courses in time to be successful for the MCAT in spring of junior year
-If you desire to go to Cadet Summer Training (CST) between sophomore and junior year (uncommon but a possible option for pre-medical cadets), you should engage your PMS early about this consideration as it impacts your military science curriculum

Scholarship Eligibility & Retention
- Non-scholarship cadets can compete for campus-based 3- or 2.5-year scholarships.
- Must maintain minimum GPA (typically ≥2.5), pass the AFT, and meet height/weight standards to remain in good standing.

Summer After Freshman Year
- Optional: Some cadets may attend Basic Camp (especially if they joined ROTC late), but most continue with shadowing, research, internships, or volunteer activities. They may also have an opportunity to go to tactical military schools (Airborne, Air Assault, etc).

Sophomore Year

Summer Opportunities

Most ROTC cadets have summer leave, making it an ideal time to gain clinical experience through shadowing. Cadets should build long-term relationships with diverse healthcare providers to strengthen their exposure and secure strong letters of recommendation. Broad experience across multiple specialties and roles—including nurses, PAs, and physical therapists—is highly encouraged. While ROTC limits total hours compared to civilian peers, meaningful, patient-centered clinical exposure remains essential for a strong medical school application.

Academics

As ROTC cadets take on greater responsibilities, it is essential to maintain strong academic performance across all subjects. While science GPA is important, medical schools evaluate overall academic excellence. A high cumulative GPA—achieved by performing well in all coursework—is a key factor in remaining competitive for medical school admission. Prioritizing time management and academic consistency is critical to long-term success.

Clinical Exposure

Sophomore year is an ideal time to continue gaining exposure to medicine through shadowing and other clinical opportunities. For those who did not start shadowing during freshman year, it is extremely important to begin. This can be done independently or through programs at your school. These shadowing opportunities help inform the decision to become a physician. If medicine is not the right path, it is good to figure that out as early as possible. Conversely, if clinical exposure reinforces the decision to enter the healthcare profession, having a variety of experiences will strengthen one's medical school application and improve chances for success.

Research

By sophomore year, ROTC cadets should ideally be continuing research started during freshman year or exploring new projects that align with evolving interests. Those not yet involved should begin now, considering options such as bench science, clinical, translational, or interdisciplinary research. These projects can be pursued with mentors from any academic department and should aim to generate or apply knowledge in meaningful ways. While publications and presentations aren't required by all medical schools, they significantly strengthen applications—especially to top-tier programs.

Volunteerism and Community Service

These endeavors should continue during the sophomore year. ROTC Cadets are encouraged to serve in leadership positions as available in their ROTC programs.

Sophomore Year (MS-II) in Army ROTC

During the MS-II year, cadets build on foundational leadership skills and begin preparing for Advanced Camp in earnest.

- Continued focus on small-unit tactics, land navigation, and Army leadership principles.
- Greater emphasis on leading small teams in training environments.
- Participation in physical training (PT) remains mandatory, with increased expectations.
- Leadership roles may begin in lab or PT sessions.
- Academic planning and GPA maintenance remain critical for scholarship eligibility.
- Some cadets may attend Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT), summer internships, or tactical military schools (Airborne, Air Assault, etc.)

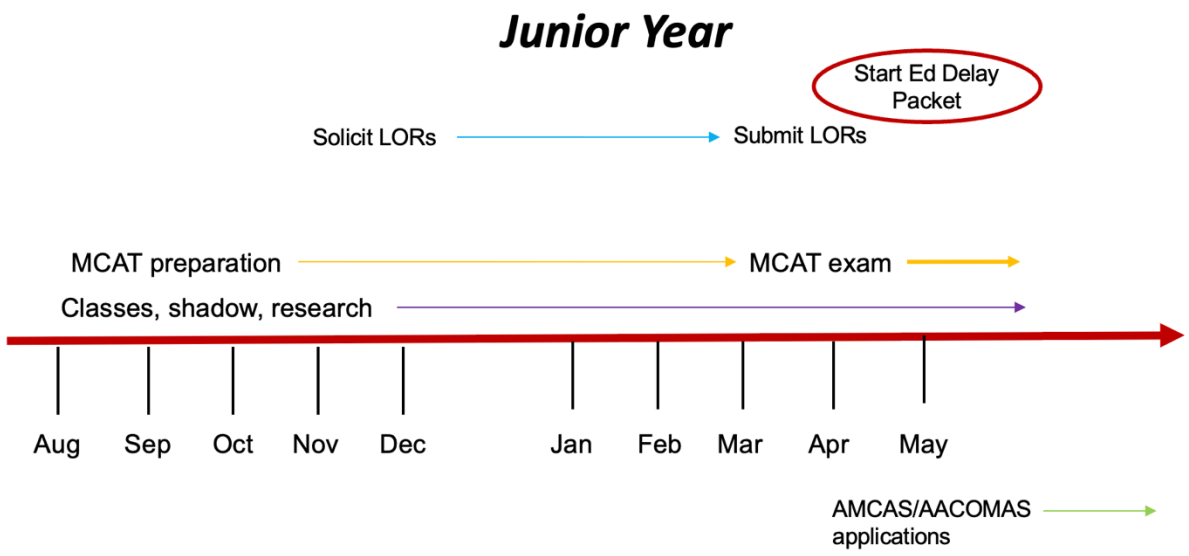
Junior year

Summer Opportunities

It is extremely important to manage summer requirements to free up time during the beginning of the summer prior to senior year. ROTC Cadets are strongly encouraged to discuss their medical school aspirations with their Professors of Military Sciences (PMS) to develop summer programs that will facilitate the medical school application process. Some may consider doing CST between Sophomore and Junior summer, but that should be a thoughtful conversation with the PMS. If they complete CST during summer between sophomore and junior year, that will allow for unstructured time at the beginning of senior summer. This option provides opportunities to work on applications or potentially study to retake the MCAT if needed. Of note, ROTC Cadets are STRONGLY encouraged to take the MCAT between March and May of their Junior year to submit AMCAS/AACOMAS as soon as it opens.

The medical school application process is detailed and time-consuming. Devoting quality time to it in May and June of one's senior year pays tremendous dividends down the road. However, if one can complete their medical school applications for medical school BEFORE attending CST in first or second regiment, they will be set up well to submit within a few weeks of secondary applications being sent from the schools.

Timeline



Academics

Cadets complete their premedical coursework during the junior year in anticipation of taking the MCAT.

Clinical exposure, research, volunteerism and community service

These endeavors, detailed in the sections above, continue into junior year. Schedule permitting, internships are available during the summer. Shadowing, research, volunteerism and community service should continue throughout the junior year. Premed cadets often assume senior positions in pre-medical student clubs and volunteer organizations.

Junior Year (MS-III) in Army ROTC

MS-III is a critical year where cadets assume significant leadership roles and prepare for Cadet Summer Training (CST)/Advanced Camp.

- Cadets plan and lead tactical training lanes, labs, and PT sessions.
- Intense preparation for Advanced Camp with focus on orders production, troop leading procedures (TLPs), and peer leadership.
- Leadership and communication skills are evaluated by cadre.
- Continued academic excellence is necessary for Educational Delay and scholarship continuation.
- Medical school applicants often take the MCAT and submit medical school applications this year.

The Medical College Admission Test® (MCAT)

Overview

The Medical College Admission Test® is a standardized, multiple-choice examination administered by the AAMC. It is designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, and knowledge of natural, behavioral, and social science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. The test provides a consistent way to compare applicants from a wide range of undergraduate colleges and universities. In April 2015, the AAMC launched the current version of the MCAT exam. Scores are reported in four sections:

- Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
- Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems
- Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills

Successful completion of the MCAT is a required element of the Medical Corps Scholar Program and Educational Delay. USU, HPSP and almost all U.S. medical schools require submission of MCAT exam scores. The total score ranges from 472 to 528. **The absolute minimum scores to receive a scholarship are 500 overall and 124 on each section**; however, gaining acceptance to medical school usually requires considerably higher numbers. A score of 512 is the generally accepted cutoff to be competitive for medical school. The average score nationwide of medical school matriculants in 2025 was 512.1.

The key to success on the MCAT is preparation. Historically, ROTC cadets have underprepared and underperformed on the exam, limiting their opportunities at many medical schools. Conversely, those who scored well were accepted by many of the best schools in the country. AAMC data demonstrate that the largest number of applicants who take the MCAT study more than 30 hours a week for over 16 weeks.

Time spent preparing	Percentage of respondents
Weeks	
0-8	**26%**
9-12	**27%**
13-16	**19%**
More than 16	**28%**
Hours per week	
0-10	**21%**
11-20	**28%**
21-30	**22%**
More than 30	**29%**

AAMC recommendation:

240 hours over 3 months

Preparation Materials

There are many companies that provide test preparation services. These include Blueprint, Kaplan, Princeton Review, Altius, Khan Academy, MCAT Self-Prep, Magoosh, Prep 101, etc. AAMC provides a variety of study resources including full length practice tests. Practice tests are also available through the Army at www.march2success.com. Since AAMC writes and administers the MCAT, applicants are encouraged to use their resources with supplementation as needed from any of the myriad companies that offer materials.

Test Format

The standard MCAT is a 7.5-hour computerized test divided into four sections. The exam is presented in the order depicted and includes the components detailed below:

Section Name	Abbreviation	Questions	Minutes	Biochemistry	Biology	General Chemistry	Organich Chemistry	Physics	Psychology	Sociology
Examinee agreement			8							
Tutorial (optional)			10							
Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems	Chem/Phys	59	95	25%	5%	59	95	25%	0%	0%
Break (optional)			10							
Critical Analysis and Reading Skills	CARS	53	90	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Break (optional)			30							
Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems	Bio/Biochem	59	95	25%	65%	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Break (optional)			10							
Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior	Psych/Soc	59	95	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	65%	30%
Void question			5							
Survey (optional)			5							
Overall		230	453	16.7%	25.0%	11.7%	6.7%	8.3%	21.7%	10.0%

Scoring

Raw scores: Scoring is based on the number of questions answered correctly. The raw score reflects correct answers only; a wrong answer is scored the same as an unanswered question. There is no additional penalty for wrong answers, so it is advisable to make an educated guess when the occasion arises. The raw scores from each of the four sections are converted to a scaled score ranging from 118 (lowest) to 132 (highest).

Scaled Scoring: The conversion of raw scores to scaled scores compensates for small variations in difficulty between sets of questions. The exact conversion of raw to scaled scores is not constant because different sets of questions are used on different exams. Two students of equal ability are expected to get the same scaled score, even though there might be a slight difference between the raw scores each student obtained on the test.

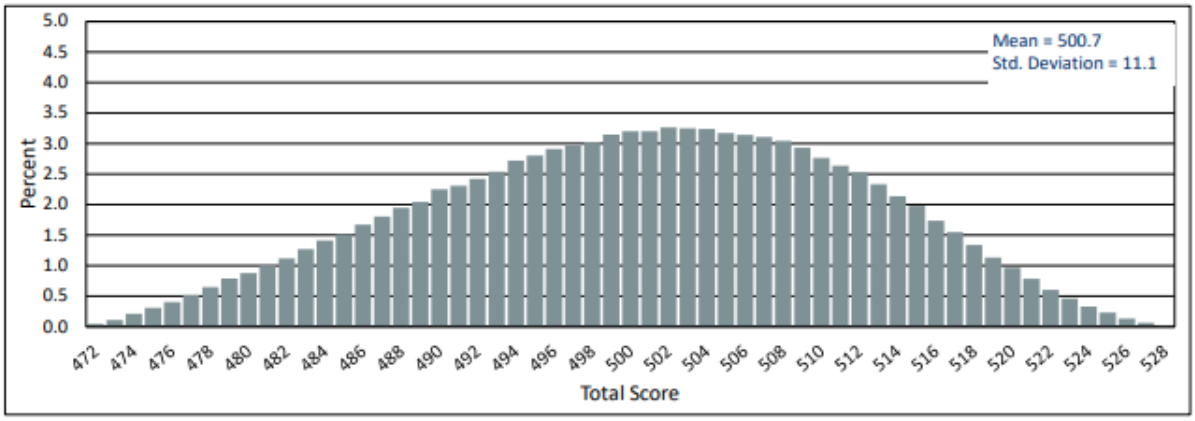
Percentiles: The percentile ranks reflect the percentage of test takers who received the same scores, or lower scores, on the exam. They provide a comparison to the scores of other examinees. On May 1st each year, the percentile ranks are updated using data from one or more testing years. These annual updates ensure that the percentile ranks reflect current and stable information about the scores. As a result, changes in percentile ranks from one year to another reflect meaningful changes in the scores of examinees, rather than year-to-year fluctuations.

Summary of MCAT Total and Section Scores

Percentile Ranks in Effect May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025

N = 280,733

MCAT Total



Total Score	Percentile Rank
472	<1
473	<1
474	<1
475	1
476	1
477	2
478	2
479	3
480	4
481	5
482	6
483	7
484	9
485	10
486	12
487	14
488	16
489	18
490	20

Total Score	Percentile Rank
491	22
492	25
493	27
494	30
495	33
496	36
497	39
498	42
499	45
500	48
501	51
502	54
503	58
504	61
505	64
506	67
507	70
508	73
509	76

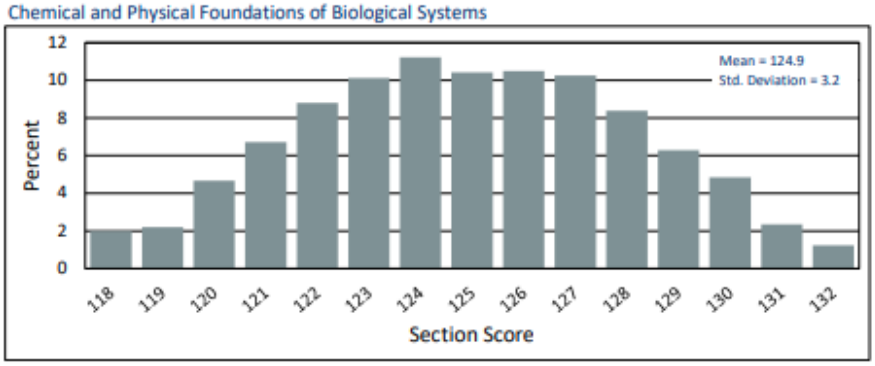
Total Score	Percentile Rank
510	79
511	82
512	84
513	87
514	89
515	91
516	92
517	94
518	95
519	96
520	97
521	98
522	99
523	99
524	100
525	100
526	100
527	100
528	100

MCAT AAMC

Summary of MCAT Total and Section Scores (*Continued*)

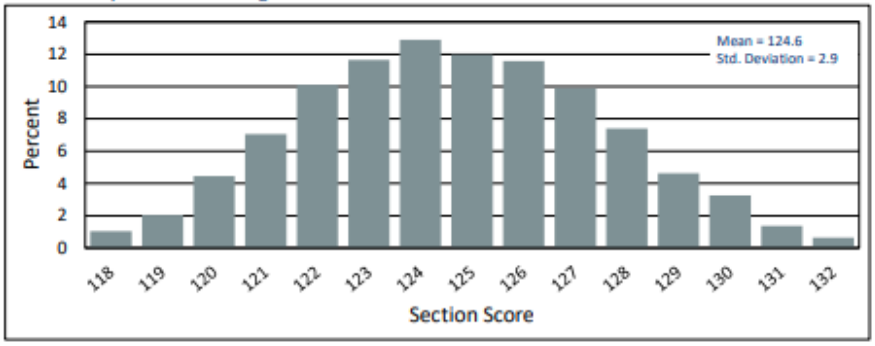
Percentile Ranks in Effect May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems



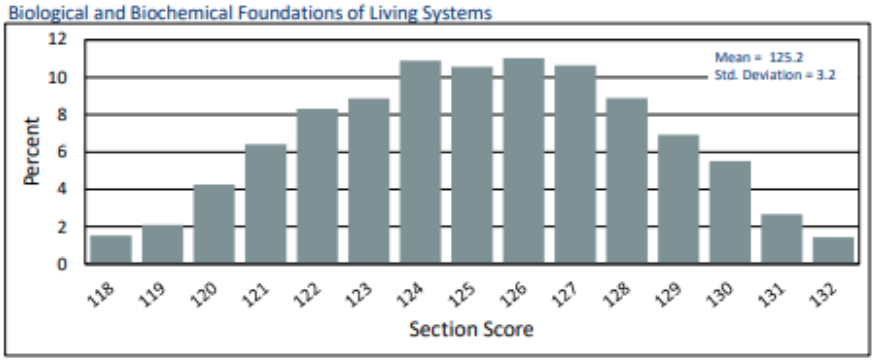
Section Score	Percentile Rank
118	2
119	4
120	9
121	16
122	24
123	34
124	46
125	56
126	67
127	77
128	85
129	92
130	96
131	99
132	100

Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills



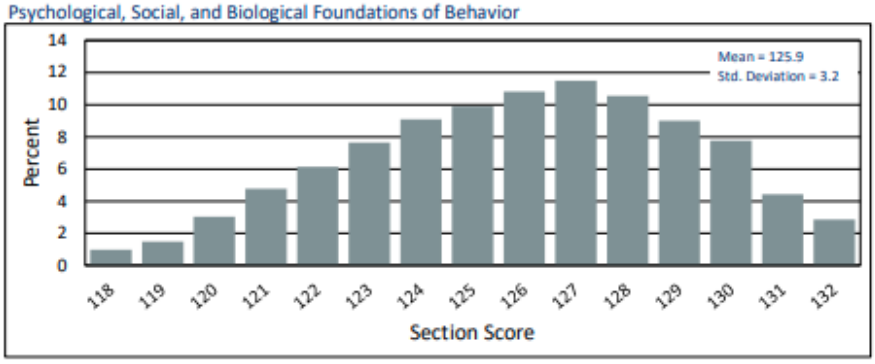
Section Score	Percentile Rank
118	1
119	3
120	8
121	15
122	25
123	36
124	49
125	61
126	73
127	83
128	90
129	95
130	98
131	99
132	100

Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems



Section Score	Percentile Rank
118	2
119	4
120	8
121	14
122	23
123	31
124	42
125	53
126	64
127	75
128	83
129	90
130	96
131	99
132	100

Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior



Section Score	Percentile Rank
118	1
119	2
120	5
121	10
122	16
123	24
124	33
125	43
126	54
127	65
128	76
129	85
130	93
131	97
132	100

Timing

ROTC Cadets are strongly encouraged to take the MCAT in April of their junior year. The **latest** date a ROTC cadet should take the MCAT is **June of junior year**. This provides an opportunity to retake the examination in the event of a low score no later than August. The scores must be received by mid-July and ROTC cadets who do not meet the cut-off scores (500 overall and 124 on each section) by that date may not be selected for Educational Delay. While they may attend medical school in the future, those ROTC cadets are obligated to serve in the Army prior to pursuing their studies if they branch Regular Army/Active Duty.

Educational Delay

ROTC Educational Delay for Medical School: Overview

The Educational Delay (Ed Delay) program allows Army ROTC cadets to delay their active duty service in order to attend medical school immediately after graduation. Instead of commissioning directly into a basic branch, cadets can pursue a medical degree and later serve as a physician in the U.S. Army.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for Ed Delay, ROTC cadets must:

- Be in **good academic and military standing**.
- Score competitively on the **MCAT**
- Demonstrate a strong **pre-medical academic record** (GPA, clinical exposure, research, volunteerism).
- Submit a complete **Ed Delay application packet** to their Professor of Military Science (PMS) during beginning of senior year.

*Of note, Cadets must have an acceptance to an **accredited U.S. medical school** (MD or DO) by June 1 of commissioning year.*

Application Process & Timeline

Junior Year:

- Prepare for, register, and take the **MCAT** (ideally by April).
- Begin preparing **Letters of Recommendation (LORs)** in January
    - Your PMS should be one of your letter writers
- Start working on **medical school applications** via:
    - **AMCAS** (MD)
    - **AACOMAS** (DO)
    - **TMDSAS** (Texas Schools)

Summer after Junior Year:

- Submit primary (May) and secondary applications (July – August)

Senior Year:

- Apply to the **Ed Delay Board** (typically in August for board in September) – see pages 3 and 4 of this guide
- Receive decision later in the fall
- Ed Delay applicants must have Ed Delay as their 1st preference and then choose Active Duty or USAR/ARNG in the event of non-selection or not obtaining admission to medical school
- For those looking to go to medical school within 1-2 years of commissioning (whether by choice or if not accepted to medical school, 2nd preference is recommended to be USAR). This is a recommendation by observation of the release process from the USAR if a 2LT is accepted for medical school.

Commissioning and Status

- If approved, cadets commission as **Second Lieutenants (2LTs)** in the **Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)** if they are taking the HPSP Scholarship. They will remain on Active Duty if they go to USU.
- They do **not go on active duty** immediately but maintain their commission status.
- While in medical school, they are **not paid by the Army** unless separately funded (e.g., via HPSP).

Funding Medical School

Educational Delay only grants permission to delay active duty—it **does not fund** medical school. Most cadets pursue one of the following:

1. **Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP)**
    - Pays full tuition + stipend + $20,000 bonus
    - Adds a 4-year service obligation
2. **Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU)**
    - Military medical school (full active-duty status during training)
    - 7-year service obligation post-graduation

Key Considerations

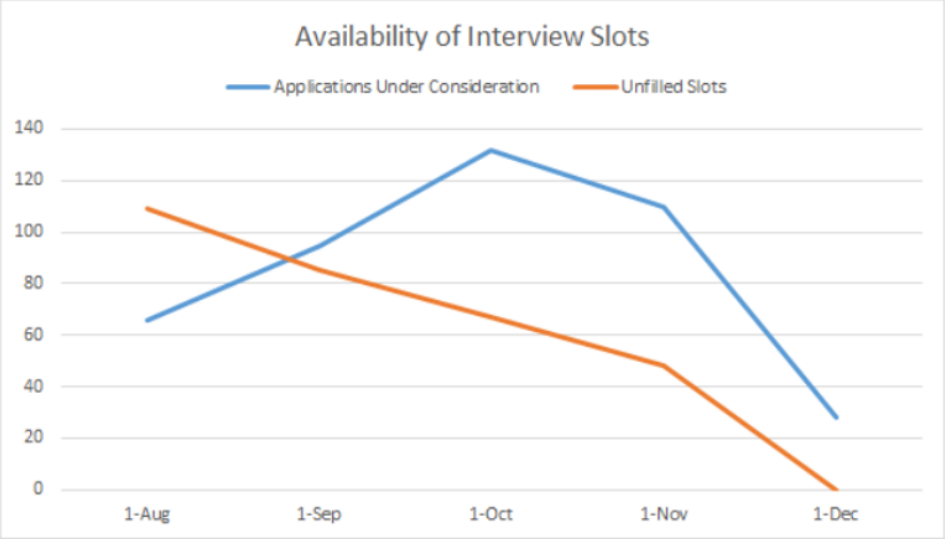
- Ed Delay is **not guaranteed**—cadets must be competitive both for medical school and the board.
- **Fellowships** and **civilian-sponsored residencies** may impact service obligations.
- Final **Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO)** is cumulative:
    - ROTC obligation + HPSP/USU obligation (some overlap depending on residency length).

Senior year

Primary Applications

Primary application to the vast majority of allopathic (MD) medical schools in the United States is done through the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS). Schools in Texas use a different application that is administered by the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS)—

cadets can apply to allopathic (MD) schools and osteopathic (DO) schools. Osteopathic schools employ the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS). ROTC Cadets are strongly encouraged to send their applications on the day that the annual cycle opens for submission to the respective services (usually in May).



Data from Washington University demonstrating the advantages of early application

AMCAS Application – Major Components

ROTC Cadets are strongly encouraged to use the AMCAS application guide: https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/publication/2026-amcas-applicant-guide

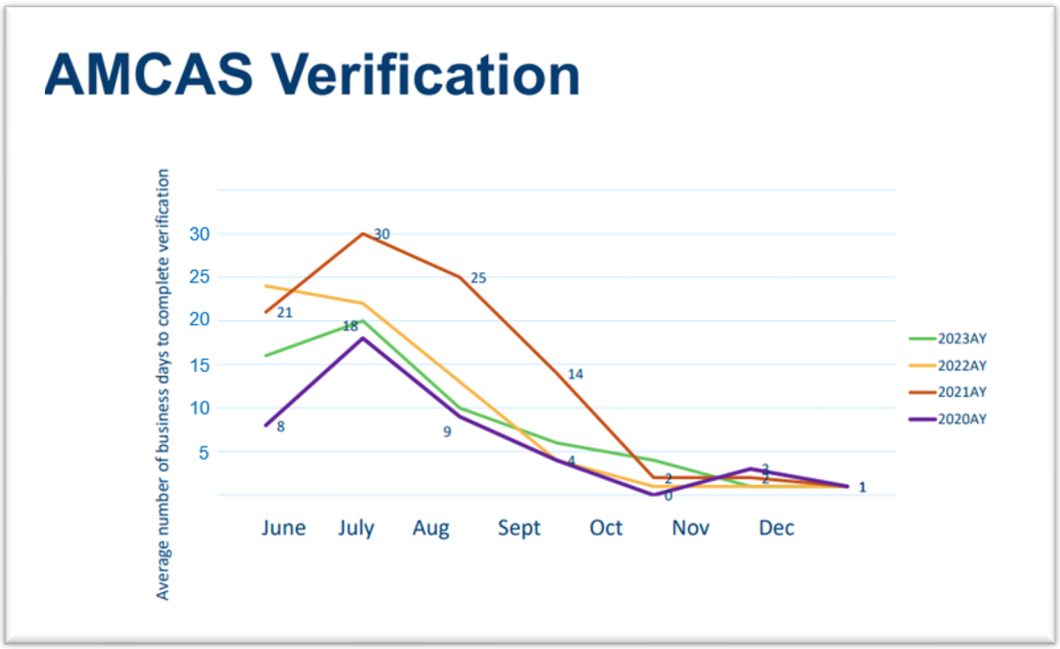
This is available each application cycle year.

Background Information

This section includes basic background information including name, date of birth, schools attended, citizenship, etc.

Course Work

Applicants are required to enter all courses from every college and university attended. This includes military science courses. College courses taken in high school programs that offer college credit through a partner institution are listed; however, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are not included. The calculated GPA consists of all classes that confer a grade and offer credit hours. The highest grade recognized by the system is an "A." Courses are verified by AMCAS after receiving transcripts. The length of time for verification increases as the cycle progresses, presenting another reason to apply on the earliest possible date (see graph below). Applications are returned for missing or incomplete information so attention to detail is paramount. Further guidance on all sections of the application is available in the AMCAS Applicant Guide.



Transcripts

ROTC Cadets arrange for their transcripts to be sent by their school to AMCAS. This is accomplished by sending the transcript request form generated in the AMCAS application to the school, or however the school manages transcripts. Transcripts should be sent as soon as possible following the conclusion of the spring term. Application verification cannot begin until transcripts have been received.

Work and Activities

This is an important section where applicants enter work experiences, extracurricular activities, awards, research, chain of command activities, military training, etc. Individuals may enter up to fifteen items; however, quality is more important than quantity. Applicants are not required to meet the maximum number, but it is encouraged to include ROTC in SEVERAL sections. Narratives of up to 700 characters are written for each item. These should be thoughtful reflections highlighting leadership, teambuilding, and the development of qualities and attributes that will make the applicant a better physician. In addition, three items may be designated as "most meaningful" and an additional 1,325 characters are permitted to provide remarks.

Medical schools do not receive a separate resume or curriculum vitae, so the Work and Activities section provides a critical window into contributions outside the classroom. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate balance in their selection of entries. Clinical exposure/shadowing, research and other experiences that relate to the practice of medicine should be included. Activities performed while in high school should NOT be included unless the applicant continues to contribute to the activity/organization in a meaningful way as an undergraduate (example: Special Olympics 2020-2026).

Letters of Evaluation

In this section, applicants enter information about their letter writers and indicate which schools should receive recommendations. The number of letters accepted by schools varies, ranging from three to ten. Since the AMCAS application is distributed to many schools, up to ten letters can be uploaded; however, ROTC cadets are encouraged to submit five to seven letters, not counting their committee letter if their school provides this.

Cadets should request letters of recommendation from mentors or instructors who have worked with them over an extended period and can speak to their character, performance, and growth. The writer's familiarity with the cadet is far more important than rank or title. Ideally, cadets should reach out to potential letter-writers around January of their junior year to allow sufficient time for thoughtful letters to be submitted by May. When making the request, cadets should provide a current resume, a draft of their personal statement (and may request feedback), and clearly communicate what qualities they hope each writer will highlight—for example, asking a professor to speak to academic ability, while a PMS focuses on leadership and military potential.

Committee letters are not offered by all undergraduate institutions, and in some cases, the committee letters are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis through the pre-health advisors. It is important to check the requirements of the medical schools. Most institutions permit a committee letter packet that includes the additional individual recommendations. Some schools only allow committee letters without a packet, necessitating the submission of separate individual letters.

Medical Schools

Applicants list the medical schools where they wish to apply. The current Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR), a document provided by AAMC, is an excellent resource to guide the selection of allopathic schools. ROTC Cadets are advised to apply to 15 to 20 medical schools but are permitted to apply to as many as they want. In 2023, the national average number of schools per AMCAS applicant was eighteen, resulting in three interviews and one acceptance per individual. We hope through this program that ROTC Cadet success in receiving interviews and acceptances will exceed the outcomes reflected in the national statistics. Of note, some medical school admissions directors advise up to 40-45 applications due to trends that they are observing.

Several guidelines are offered when developing a school list: 1) Apply to USU, even if it is not your top choice, 2) apply to all the state schools in your state (unless there are a very large number like in Texas and California), 3) only apply to state schools outside your state if the MSAR confirms that they take a reasonable number of out-of-state residents. Acceptance to medical school is all about "fit," a concept that transcends numbers alone. Analyzing the mission of a medical school is critically important when determining fit. However, the metrics (GPA and MCAT score) should also guide applicants. Beyond MCAT and GPA averages, the MSAR details ranges of scores for all accepted applicants to each school.

ROTC Cadets are encouraged to divide schools into three categories: 1) “reach” schools, 2) “in the zone” schools and 3) “comfortable by metrics” schools. There are no true “safe schools” in the medical school application process. Applicants should carefully research the medical schools to establish places that provide the best fit. Do not rely on reputation and metrics alone. As stated by an expert advisor, “Speak to those in the know, honor your deal breakers, align your passions/program and consider your support system.”

Essays

The personal statement is uploaded in this section. It is a 5,300-character (including spaces) essay that introduces the medical school admissions committee to the applicant. The completion of a well-crafted personal statement is an iterative process that takes considerable time and effort. Most applicants write multiple drafts before arriving at their final product. Meticulously edit the personal statement for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and create a well-written and compelling essay.

Standardized Tests

MCAT scores will be directly loaded into applications by AAMC as soon as the results are available. For applications submitted prior to receipt of MCAT results, the scores will automatically be forwarded to the schools listed by the applicant as soon as they become available. ROTC Cadets should submit their AMCAS applications as soon as possible in May and not wait for their test results. School lists can be revised once the scores are received.

Application Costs

The application fees in 2026-2027 cycle were as follows:

- AMCAS: $180 for the first school, $48 for each additional (*USU has no fee)
- TMDSAS: $230-235 flat fee for any/all schools.
- AACOMAS: $198 for the first school; $60 for each additional
- Secondary application fees varied from $75-150 ($100 as the average)
- MCAT Registration is $355

Allopathic and Osteopathic Medical Schools

ROTC Cadets may attend any accredited medical school in the United States and Puerto Rico. Schools fall into two broad categories: allopathic and osteopathic. Allopathic (“M.D.”) schools comprise a system in which medical doctors and other healthcare professionals (such as nurses, pharmacists, and therapists) treat symptoms and diseases using remedies (ex: prescription drugs, radiation, surgery). Allopathic medicine is also known as conventional medicine, mainstream medicine, and Western medicine. Osteopathic (“D.O.”) schools are a system of institutions that promote the body’s innate ability to heal itself. Osteopathy offers the benefits of modern medicine including prescription drugs, surgery, and the use of technology to diagnose disease and evaluate injury. It offers the added benefit of hands-on diagnosis and therapy through a system of treatments known as osteopathic manipulative medicine. Approximately 28% of current medical student in the U.S. are enrolled at DO schools. Applicants can apply to either, or both, types of programs. ROTC Cadets seeking admission to osteopathic schools are strongly encouraged to learn the philosophy and approach of osteopathy prior to preparing applications and interviewing.

Secondary Applications

Almost all medical schools require the completion of secondary applications. Some schools require all applicants to complete them while others are selective and send requests after a screening process. These applications are extremely important because they demonstrate how an applicant aligns with a specific school. ROTC Cadets are encouraged to research each school before completing the secondary application.

Timing is important. Since these submissions often represent the "rate limiting step" in the application process, quick turnaround is imperative. Most medical schools do not change the questions from one year to the next so most secondary applications can be completed well in advance. The questions are easily accessible through the internet. **ROTC Cadets are strongly encouraged to complete the secondary applications for their top 5-10 schools well in advance to expedite the process.** When the applications arrive, simply re-check the questions, adjust as necessary, and submit as soon as possible.

Timing Challenges: CST & Secondary Applications

One of the biggest challenges for ROTC cadets applying to medical school is completing secondary applications while attending **Cadet Summer Training (CST)** between junior and senior year.

- The **first CST regiment** usually begins **just days after the AMCAS application opens**.
- **Secondary applications** begin rolling out in the **last week of June**.
- In **2025**, **First Regiment CST ended July 6**.
- Be aware of deadlines for secondary applications for each school you are applying to—if schools have a 2-3 week deadline for secondary applications, you may have to proactively reach out to the school if you are in CST when you receive it

Ways to Stay Ahead:

1. Enroll in First/Second Regiment

- Submit AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS *before* CST begins.
- Engage your leadership to **choose an early regiment**—leadership at USACC understand the time constraints of the medical school process.

2. Attend CST Between Sophomore & Junior Year

- Coordinate with your **PMS early (Freshman year)**.
- This option frees up senior summer for applications but may limit time for shadowing or research.

3. Request Extensions

- Your **PMS or the Medical Corps RIO (currently LTC Noel)** can write to admissions offices in advance requesting **secondary deadlines be extended** for those who have 2-3 week turnarounds; it is advised to check the deadlines for each school's secondary application.
- These letters **must be arranged before CST begins**.

Non-Cognitive Assessments in Medical School Admissions

Medical schools are increasingly using non-cognitive assessments to evaluate applicants' professionalism, ethics, communication, and interpersonal skills. This summary outlines the most common assessments and how they apply to AMCAS (MD) and AACOMAS (DO) applicants.

Situational Judgment Tests: CASPer and PREview

CASPer and PREview are the two primary Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs) used in the U.S. medical school application process. Below is a detailed comparison of their key features.

Assessment	Format	Length	Cost	Administered By	When Used	MD Schools	DO Schools	Where Results Are Sent	Participating Schools	Required?
CASPer	Typed responses to video/text prompts	90–110 min	$85 base + $16/school	Altus Assessments (Acuity Insights)	Pre-interview	Some	Many	Directly to designated schools	Dozens of MD & DO schools	School-specific
PREview	Multiple choice	75 min	$100	AAMC	Pre-interview	Some	Rare	To selected AMCAS schools	Growing number of MD schools	School-specific

For schools that require the exams, the results are an important part of their holistic admissions process. Many institutions use Casper as an initial screening tool to assess applicants' non-cognitive skills (e.g., empathy, communication, ethical decision-making). Schools consider Casper and PREview scores alongside other application components (GPA, MCAT, letters of recommendation). Each school has its own policies regarding these tests, so it is essential to check individual requirements when applying. Study materials are available to assist with preparation. These exams should be completed as soon as possible in May or June since the results may govern the proffering of interviews and acceptances.

Interviews

ROTC Cadets are encouraged to accept all interviews until they are accepted to medical school. Once accepted, applicants can be more selective based on their prioritized lists. The costs of travel and lodging are the responsibility of the applicants; Army ROTC does not provide funding for interviews.

Interview formats are specific to each school ranging from traditional one-on-one interviews to the multiple mini interview, a format that uses many short independent assessments to obtain an aggregate score of each candidate's soft skills. During 2020, schools conducted interviews remotely in response to COVID-19. Since that time, most schools have continued with online interviews. ROTC Cadets are strongly advised to research the school before attending the interview. Understand the mission of the institution and investigate specific features of the medical school. Acceptance to medical school is all about "fit" and the interview is the time and place to demonstrate suitability to attend a specific program. Consider wearing your AGSU ("Class A") uniform (must research school first) to the interview (and ensure you have a uniform inspection before attending interview).

Application Costs

Applying to medical school is a costly endeavor. Beyond the basic fees associated with submission of the application, there are costs associated with the MCAT, interviews, etc. The chart below provides perspectives on the financial outlays in **calendar year 2024 (please note some costs have increased slightly)**.

	Range of Costs	Sample cost
MCAT preparation	Varies widely	$500
MCAT registration	$335	$335
MSAR	$28	$28
Primary application	$175 first school	$1,075 (20 schools)
AMCAS	$45 each additional	
Transcript	$5	$5
Secondary application	Avg. $100 ($0-250)	$1,500 (15 schools)
Casper test	$85 ($15 per school ≥8)	$85
PREview test	$100	$100
Interviews	Varies – majority remote	
Deposits	Varies – may be non-refundable	
Total		$3,628

Tracking and reporting

Applications, interviews, and acceptances should be tracked by the cadet. ROTC Cadets are expected to provide regular updates as they receive interview offers and acceptances to their PMS.

Medical School Selection

Many medical schools employ a system of rolling admissions. By applying early, most ROTC cadets gain acceptance to medical school during the first semester. In order to provide enough time to issue orders and complete administrative requirements, ROTC cadets should receive acceptance by the beginning of June (may change based on annual guidance).

In 2019, AAMC introduced the AMCAS ® Choose Your Medical School tool to facilitate enrollment management for medical schools by enabling applicants to communicate their decisions about which schools they plan to attend. Final selections must be communicated to AMCAS by 30 April using the tool. After that date, applicants can only select a different school if accepted from a waitlist.

Pre-medical Physicals

A commissioning physical examination is required for all ROTC cadets prior to graduation. The pre-medical physical includes a few items beyond the requirements of the basic commissioning examination. The pre-medical physical doubles as the commissioning physical; only one examination is required. ROTC Cadets endorsed to attend medical school will be advised of the timing of the physicals. Contact your PMS to find out when your school offers these commissioning physicals.

Medical School Scholarship Options

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU)

The mission of USU is to support the readiness of America's Warfighter and the health and well-being of the military community by educating and developing uniformed health professionals, scientists and leaders; by conducting cutting-edge, military-relevant research, and by providing operational support to units around the world. USU is the nation's federal health professions academy — akin to the undergraduate programs at West Point, Annapolis and Colorado Springs. Students are not charged tuition; they repay the nation for their education through service. In many respects, USU's curricula and educational experiences are similar to those of civilian academic health centers, with one important difference: its emphasis on military health care, leadership, readiness and public health set USU apart.

The F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine offers doctorate degrees in medicine and other disciplines. Each year approximately 40 percent to 50 percent of incoming students have prior service either as academy graduates, ROTC program participants, or service members. The remainder come from civilian backgrounds with no prior military experience. Medical students remain on active duty throughout their education and are compensated as such. More than 60 percent of USU graduates willingly serve 20 years or longer.

Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP)

The Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) provides paid medical education to prospective military doctors (M.D. or D.O.) in exchange for service as commissioned medical officers. HPSP was established under the 1972 Uniformed Services Health Professions Revitalization Act and remains the main source of qualified healthcare personnel joining the U.S. Armed Forces. Scholarship recipients are placed on inactive reserve status as second lieutenants during their medical training. While on scholarship, the Army pays the following expenses:

- $2,999+ monthly stipend (increases each July)
- $20,000 sign-on bonus (potential increase in coming years)
- Books, equipment, other fees
- Full tuition up to 4 years
- Officer's pay during school breaks

Students are expected to serve 45 days of active training duty (ADT) each fiscal year. Upon graduation, students are promoted to the rank of captain. Almost all HPSP graduates do their residencies in the Military Healthcare System.

A United States Army Medical Recruiter is the point of contact for initiating the HPSP. General timeline for applying for HPSP is the summer before senior year with collecting documents; each month of the fiscal year (starting in October of a cadet's senior year), candidates will be selected for HPSP through September of the following fall.

ROTC-Friendly Medical Schools

The following medical schools have indicated a willingness to consider ROTC cadets, acknowledging the demands and commitments of ROTC participation. While this consideration does not excuse substandard academic performance, these institutions recognize the leadership development, discipline, and character cultivated through the ROTC experience:

MD Schools

- Texas A&M Medical School
- NEOMED
- University of Louisville
- Mercer (Georgia Residents)
- Case Western
- Vanderbilt
- Brown
- Columbia
- Cornell
- Dartmouth
- University of Florida (Florida residents)
- Florida State University (Florida residents)
- Florida Atlantic University (Florida residents)

DO Schools

- Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (4 campuses)
- Rocky Vista College of Osteopathic Medicine (3 campuses)
- Kansas City University College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine
- California Health Sciences University
- New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine (2 Campuses)
- Kansas University College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Touro New York College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine

This list continues to evolve as awareness of the value of ROTC increases and relationships with medical schools are further developed. For the most up-to-date information, please contact LTC (Dr.) Mary Alice Noel at **mary.a.noel5.mil@army.mil**.

Commissioning Options for ROTC Cadets Pursuing Medical School

Cadets planning to matriculate into medical school immediately following graduation should apply for an Educational Delay. This is the most common and streamlined pathway, and following the guidance in this document will help maximize your chances of a successful application.

Cadets considering a gap year before medical school may request to commission into the Army Reserve. You must obtain a release from the Reserve to attend medical school—either through the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) or the Uniformed Services University (USU. **Cadets cannot take HPSP or go to USU if they sign a a Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty (GRFD) contract**, as it may limit

flexibility in pursuing a medical career under the HPSP scholarship or attending USU. There is a process of GRFD revocation that must be pursued several months (>12 months) before commissioning.

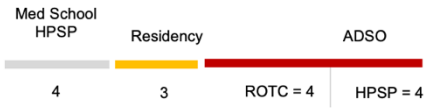
U.S. Army Cadet Command (USACC) is currently exploring additional options to accommodate cadets who wish to commission Active Duty and attend medical school after a gap year. Updates and official guidance will be shared as they become available.

Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO)

The Active Duty Service Obligation for ROTC cadets attending medical school varies depending on the school, type of residency and fellowship training. The ADSO for attending USU is 7 years while the obligation for attending a civilian school through HPSP is 4 years. Obligations are served in chronological order: Army ROTC – HPSP/USU – residency – fellowship. The ROTC and medical school ADSO's are served consecutively; residency and USU/HPSP are paid back concurrently. Fellowships generally add one year for each year of training. **Examples** are detailed below (noting there may be 3- or 4-year commitments for ROTC):

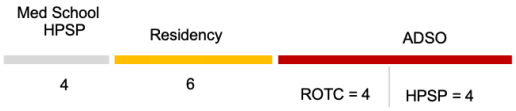
HPSP

Short Residency (example: Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine)



ROTC + 15 years, ADSO = 8 years

Long Residency (example: Orthopedics, General Surgery)



ROTC + 18 years, ADSO = 8 years

Calculations

HPSP – short residency

Ex: FM, Peds, EM, IM

- ROTC = 4 years
- HPSP = 4 years
- Internship = 0 years
- Residency = 2 years

- **Obligation = 4 + 4 = 8 years**
  - Years after completing residency
  - 4 HPSP & 2 residency concurrent
  - Fellowships add more time

- **ROTC graduation + 15 years**
  - 4 years medical school
  - 3 years residency
  - 8 years pay back

HPSP – long residency

Ex: Gen Surgery (6-year program)

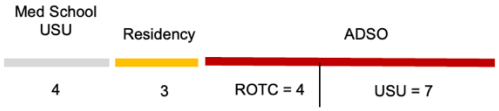
- ROTC = 4 years
- HPSP = 4 years
- Internship = 0 years
- Residency = 5 years

- **Obligation = 4 + 4 = 8 years**
  - Years after completing residency
  - 4 HPSP & 4 residency concurrent
  - 1 year for residency is concurrent with ROTC obligation
  - Fellowships add more time

- **ROTC graduation + 18 years**
  - 4 years medical school
  - 6 years residency
  - 8 years pay back

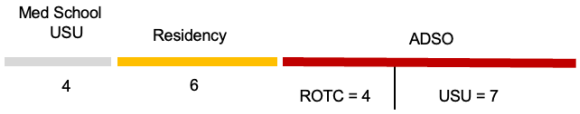
USU

Short Residency



ROTC + 18 years, ADSO = 11 years

Long Residency



ROTC + 21 years, ADSO = 11 years

Calculations

USUHS – short residency

Ex: FM, Peds, EM, IM

- ROTC = 4 years
- USUHS = 7 years
- Internship = 0 years
- Residency = 2 years

- **Obligation = 4 + 7 = 11 years**
  - Years after completing residency
  - 7 USUHS & 2 residency concurrent
  - Fellowships add more time
- **ROTC graduation + 18 years**
  - 4 years medical school
  - 3 years residency
  - 11 years pay back

USUHS – long residency

Ex: Gen Surgery (6-year program)

- ROTC = 4 years
- USUHS = 7 years
- Internship = 0 years
- Residency = 5 years

- **Obligation = 4 + 7 = 11 years**
  - Years after completing residency
  - 7 USUHS & 5 residency concurrent
  - Fellowships add more time
- **ROTC graduation + 21 years**
  - 4 years medical school
  - 6 years residency
  - 11 years pay back

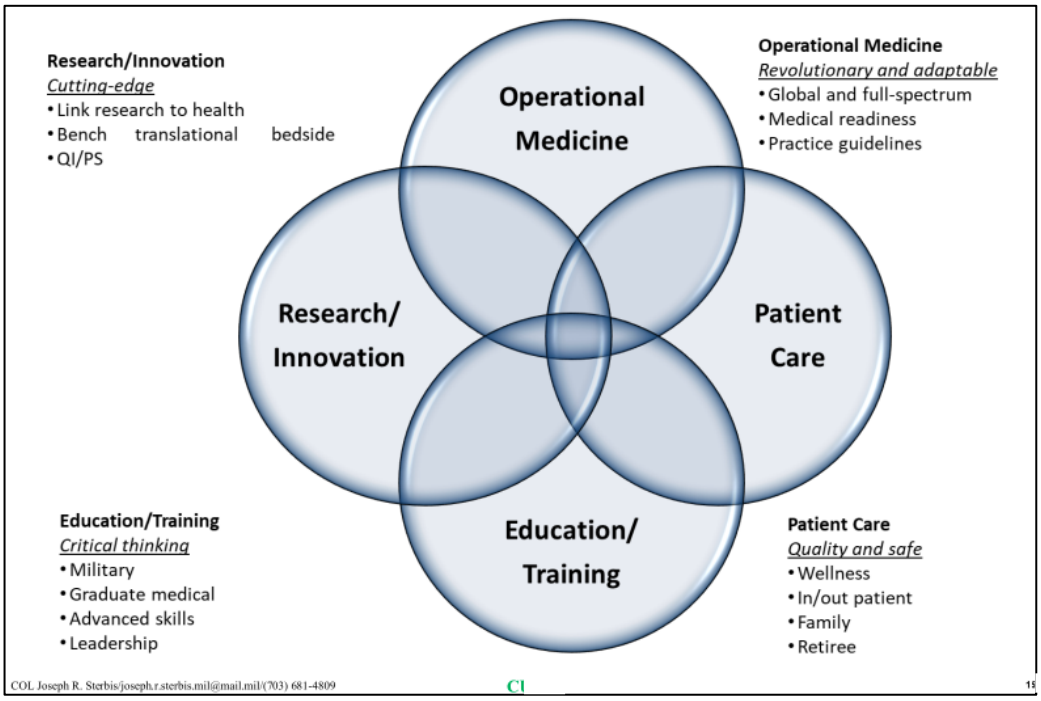
Graduate Medical Education (GME)

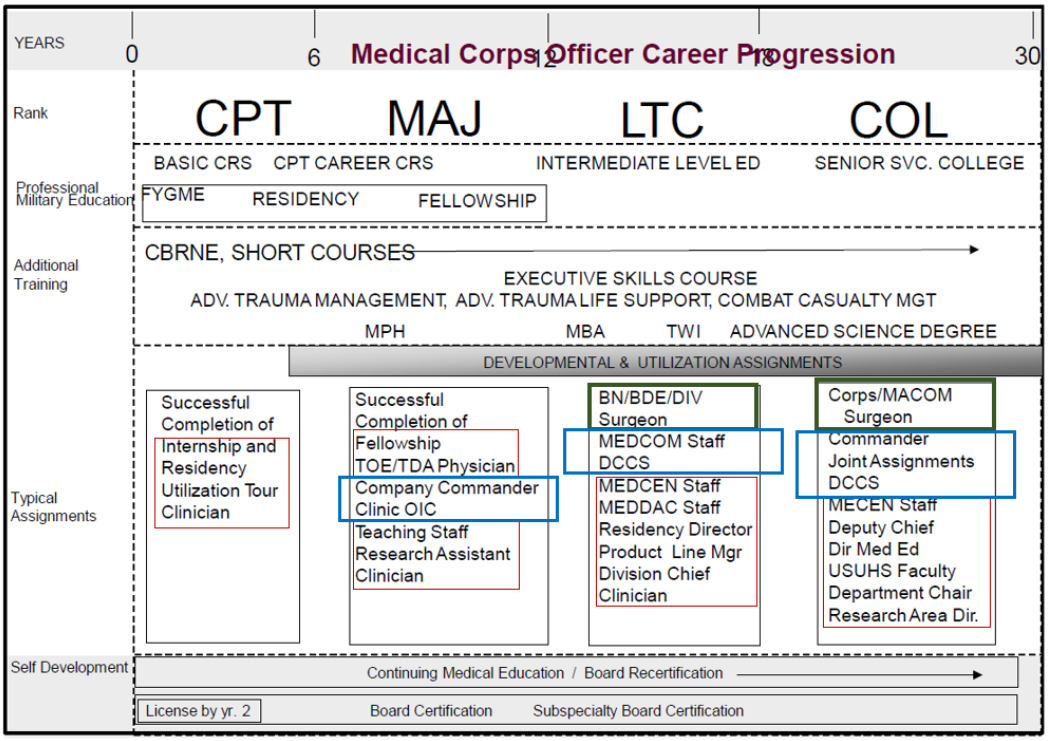
Graduate Medical Education includes internship, residency and fellowship training. At any given time, 33-38% of active-duty Army Medical Corps officers are in GME. The Army provides training at 12 military hospitals that offer 72 residencies. In addition, partnerships have been developed with civilian training programs in general surgery, neurosurgery, emergency medicine, plastic surgery, radiation oncology, urology, and more. Over 70 fellowships in a wide variety of specialties are supported at civilian and military institutions. **All ROTC cadets who do Educational Delay are required to apply to the military residency match, whether they accept the HPSP scholarship or not**. Over 95% of USU and HPSP graduates do their training in military hospitals.

All programs are in good standing and accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The first-time specialty board pass rate for the military programs is 96% (civilian 86-87%).

Career Progression

The Army provides opportunities for highly rewarding careers as healthcare professionals. Four major tracks exist: 1) clinical, 2) operational, 3) administrative/command, and 4) research. Most physicians spend time on more than one track throughout their careers. The following slides highlight medical corps areas of emphasis and career progression for Army physicians.





Red = clinical, black = operational, blue = administrative/command

Questions

Questions regarding the material in this guide should be addressed to LTC Mary Alice Noel, Medical Corps Recruiting Integration Officer, USAREC, at mary.a.noel5.mil@army.mil . The greatest efforts will be made to keep this document updated as guidance and timelines may change.

Acknowledgements

Much appreciation to COL (Ret.) Alan Beitler, MD, who developed this original guide for cadets at the United States Military Academy and graciously allowed adaptation for the success for pre-med ROTC cadets.

Appendix A. Example Letter of Intent for Educational Delay (Please see your PMS to get a sample memorandum format and utilize AR 25-50 for correct formatting).

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNIVERSITY OF [Your School]
U.S. ARMY CADET COMMAND
YOUR ROTC PROGRAM ADDRESS
CITY, STATE 00000-1111 [<-zip code]

ATCC-HHM-TUM [<- your program will have a specific code] August 6, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Letter of Intent for Education Delay.

1. I,FIRST LAST NAME, request consideration by the Ed Delay Board and enrollment in the Ed Delay Program.

2. I intend to attend medical school starting in the Fall of 20XX in order to become a U.S. Army physician.

3. I aspire to provide expert, holistic medical care to the sick and injured among the United States warfighters and our allies, particularly addressing mental health and rural access disparities.

4. I am applying to [X] medical schools and [have received multiple interview invitations] as of the signing of this memorandum. I intend to fund my medical education through the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) offered by the U.S. Army.

5. I am the point of contact for this Letter of Intent and can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX or youremail@gmail.com.

[WET SIGN HERE]

FIRST MI. LAST NAME
SROTC Cadet, U.S. Army