

SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Applicant name:

Directions: Using the comments of each category denote (highlight, bold, etc.) the phrases that accurately reflects your current status in that section. Prior to beginning this self-assessment, you should review the [Core Competencies](#) and [sample applicants](#) to get a sense from medical schools how they review applications. The Core Competencies are relevant for allopathic, osteopathic, and dental applicants. Further information is available at: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/anatomy-applicant/core-competencies-resources>

Applicants should indicate which of the three colors they currently identify with for each qualitative and quantitative description. You should check one column for each row of descriptions, which may mean you have a combination of checked boxes across multiple colors. For example, you may agree that you are “Aware of patient needs and roles of various clinicians” in the green light area of Clinical Experience: Shadowing, however, if you only have 10 hours of shadowing complete at this time, you will fall under the red light area that denotes “None, less than 20 hours” as the range of experience. You will then need to address this in the Description/Justification/Comments area for each. Keep in mind that you cannot “double count” any activities/hours on AMCAS, so use this as an opportunity to reflect and prepare.

Applicants should also complete the Description/Justification/Comments area for each section. This is where you will provide quantitative evidence (such as your GPA or numbers of hours) as well as qualitative evidence (such as reflecting on what you have learned). This rubric is available to give applicants a realistic understanding of where they stand in the different portions of their application. The level of introspection expected of each applicant while completing the rubric will be most beneficial and constructive when the applicant is honest with their current standing in these areas.

“Am I ready to apply?” “Am I competitive?” “What should I focus on between now and my application?” This rubric empowers you to make these decisions because it is adapted from those used by medical school admissions offices and designed for you to be honest about your current preparation and where you will be by the time you apply (June 2025 for fall 2026). Each applicant will need to determine whether their academic and experiential preparation is competitive for admission. While we support all applicants in their pursuit of their academic and career goals, we are also mindful of the rigor required and strive to communicate that so applicants may make informed decisions about their application timeline. The more honest you are with yourself, the more prepared you can be for the highly competitive application process.

Each component of holistic review is presented with a traffic light approach.

- **Red light:** Stop. There are very few (if any) applicants who succeed in gaining admission at this level. Think about whether you will actually be able to change this before you apply (June is only about 6 months away) or whether you need more time. Note that if you have multiple red lights, you are unlikely to be offered admission.
- **Yellow light:** Just like when driving, this may mean proceed with caution or hurry up. Think about whether you will be able to change this before you apply (within the next 6 months) and/or really focus your energy and efforts to make changes in this specific area. Note that if you have multiple yellow lights, this may not be achievable by June.
- **Green light:** Just like when driving, this means keep going. As you have heard many times, this is not a checklist. This does not mean you have completed your journey, but it means you are on the right path.

If you are not confident you have all the academic and experiential preparation to be competitive for admission to your chosen health profession schools, we recommend you consider delaying your application to a subsequent application cycle to allow for more extended exploration of your health care profession of interest.

1. ACADEMIC RECORD

RED	YELLOW	GREEN	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA?
☐ Expresses aversion to science and/or has not taken all pre-reqs ☐ Multiple Ws or multiple semesters with a less than full-time academic load ☐ Multiple pre-reqs taken at another college for no apparent reason ☐ Science grades C/D/F and inability to raise them ☐ Cumulative GPA*: 3.45 or lower (MD) 3.24 or lower (DO and Dental) ☐ BCPM*: (no tool in LOCUS to determine, must calculate on your own) 3.34 or lower (MD) 3.20 or lower (DO and Dental)	☐ Completed pre-reqs and expresses academic or scientific curiosity ☐ Basic curriculum, no upper level courses or semesters with more than 15 credit hours ☐ Multiple (3+) pre-reqs taken at another college (with the exception of transfer students) ☐ Grades improve over time (all As and Bs junior and senior year) ☐ Science grades of As and Bs ☐ Cumulative GPA: 3.46 to 3.69 (MD) 3.25 to 3.54 (DO and Dental) ☐ BCPM: (no tool in LOCUS to determine, must calculate on your own) 3.34 to 3.64 (MD) 3.20 to 3.45 (DO and Dental)	☐ Shows considerable intellectual curiosity as well as a focused, integrated academic plan ☐ Challenging curriculum; multiple semesters of 15-18+ credit hours; completed Honors program ☐ Several science courses beyond the minimal pre-reqs with good grades ☐ A grades predominate ☐ Phi Beta Kappa/Alpha Sigma Nu ☐ Cumulative GPA: 3.70 or higher (MD) 3.55 or higher (DO and Dental) ☐ BCPM: (no tool in LOCUS to determine, must calculate on your own) 3.65 or higher (MD) 3.46 or higher (DO and Dental)	☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:

* If either GPA is below 3.0, applicant will need significant further coursework to raise GPAs to be considered for admission at any health professions school; applicant should explore advice from AAMC at <https://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/article/7-post-bacc-benefits/> and the searchable database of post-bac programs at <https://apps.aamc.org/postbac/#/index>

Description/Justification/Comments:

2. MCAT

RED ☐ Timeline: results June 2025 or later ☐ Timeline: not adequate preparation and study time (not balanced with other commitments); all pre-req courses not completed prior to exam ☐ Results: 501 or lower (MD) 496 or lower (DO)	YELLOW ☐ Timeline: results April-May 2025 ☐ Timeline: planned MCAT specific study and practice preparation schedule; pre-req courses completed in weeks prior to exam ☐ Results: 501 to 508 (MD) 497 to 502 (DO)	GREEN ☐ Timeline: has results now or will by mid-April 2025 ☐ Timeline: completed or planned at least 3 months (300 hours) in MCAT specific preparation balancing content review and practice exams; all pre-req courses completed prior to scheduled MCAT exam date ☐ Results: 509 or higher (MD) 503 or higher (DO)	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA? ☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:
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Description/Justification/Comments:

3. CLINICAL EXPERIENCE (SHADOWING)

RED ☐ None, less than 20 hours ☐ Only through a parent/ relative (regardless of number of hours)	YELLOW ☐ Occasional for 20-50 hours in one or two specialties; 50 hours of high school and/or virtual with no in person shadowing ☐ Only one semester or in year of application (since January, not academic year)	GREEN ☐ Sustained for 50 hours or more in person and in multiple specialties ☐ Aware of patient needs and roles of various clinicians	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA? ☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:
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Description/Justification/Comments:

4. CLINICAL EXPERIENCE (PATIENT ENGAGEMENT)

NOTE: Clinical experiences may be volunteer or paid positions providing patient care (such as medical assistant, CNA, EMT, etc.).

RED	YELLOW	GREEN	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA?
☐ None, less than 100 hours or during high school or only/mostly virtual ☐ Descriptions of patient experiences focus on tasks/lack of reflection (stocking supplies, help desk, playing music in lobby) ☐ Superficial look at physicians and life ☐ Cannot describe reason for choosing medicine ☐ Unrealistic expectations of a medical career (aka hero in a white coat)	☐ At least 100 hrs in active, meaningful experiences, mostly one-on-one with patients or people with health needs, but only one semester or in year of application (since January, not academic year) ☐ Aware of patient needs ☐ Aware of physician competencies ☐ Articulates reason for choosing medicine ☐ Generally realistic expectations of a medical career	☐ At least 200 hrs in active, meaningful, sustained, in-person experiences; primarily one-on-one with patients or people with health needs; experiences in challenging areas (hospice, as EMT); sustained for at least a full academic year ☐ Eloquent about patient needs ☐ Eloquent about physician competencies ☐ Eloquent about choice of medicine ☐ Detailed, thoughtful and realistic expectations	☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:

Description/Justification/Comments:

5. RESEARCH EXPERIENCE (NOTE: optional but beneficial for most applicants; required for specific schools/programs and MD/PhD)

NOTE: Research can be in any academic field. Independent research involves your own hypothesis and/or contribution to the knowledge. Assisting others without expansion and/or presenting literature-review-type findings is not considered independent research.

RED ☐ Research only within Labs associated with courses ☐ Cannot describe research in detail or answer questions	YELLOW ☐ Only one year or one summer of research ☐ Participation, but no/little independent contribution ☐ Can describe project ☐ Individual or group poster presentation at undergraduate, summer program, or department forum	GREEN ☐ More than one year of independent research ☐ Can describe research in great detail, knows applications, contributed creatively to the project ☐ Received funding from school/department/other ☐ Peer-reviewed and/or published papers; presentations at local/national level	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA? ☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:
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Description/Justification/Comments:

6. ALTRUISM/COMMUNITY SERVICE

NOTES: Altruism and being “dedicated to service” or “service-oriented” needs to be demonstrated in actions. Some places, like nursing homes, Ronald McDonald House, and similar should be well-defined to see whether tasks and reflections lean towards Clinical or Community Service in your narrative (or seek advice on where it might be more beneficial).

RED ☐ Passive participation such as fund-raising or through fraternity or sorority ☐ Occasional service, but short-term or limited (e.g., Habitat for Humanity a few times) ☐ Only in high school	YELLOW ☐ Several service activities ☐ At least one activity sustained for more than a full academic year ☐ Only through insular community (even with good reflection); i.e. only in service to others like you (such as students at your own school) ☐ Can describe empathy and compassion	GREEN ☐ Long term commitments greater than 2 years ☐ Service settings are with populations different from your background ☐ Displays strong empathy, compassion ☐ Describes activities and contributions in detail; reflections connect to narrative	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA? ☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:
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Description/Justification/Comments:

7. LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK (ACTIVITIES)

NOTES: Leadership and teamwork can be demonstrated in a wide range of activities from clubs on campus to paid jobs and other commitments off-campus. Generally, medical and dental schools would rather see a few, long-term experiences, especially that have led to leadership roles, rather than many, brief, general membership experiences.

RED ☐ No evidence of teamwork or minimal evidence of teamwork ☐ No leadership or short term only or less meaningful positions like Greek rush, planned one event ☐ Dislikes working in teams	YELLOW ☐ Some teamwork experiences; not much reflection ☐ At least one leadership position/held a title/started a new organization, but did not get beyond recognition to meaningful activity ☐ Superficial mention of teamwork/lack of reflection ☐ Lists tasks and concentrates on outcomes like dollar amounts	GREEN ☐ Good teamwork experiences ☐ At least one leadership position in a meaningful role, such as a supervisor at work or TA (good reflection) ☐ Can discuss why teams are important ☐ Demonstrates competencies, not just tasks (great communicator; problem solver; dispute resolution; etc.) involved in being a leader	WHAT IS YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT ASSESSMENT FOR THIS AREA? ☐ RED ☐ YELLOW ☐ GREEN 3 COMPETENCIES YOU DEMONSTRATE:
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Description/Justification/Comments:

OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND NEXT STEPS

Based on this assessment, what is your plan for next semester? What is your plan for next year? What areas and/or competencies do you need to develop? Where will you focus your time and attention? Have you asked yourself why you are applying now and/or what would be different if you had another year to prepare?