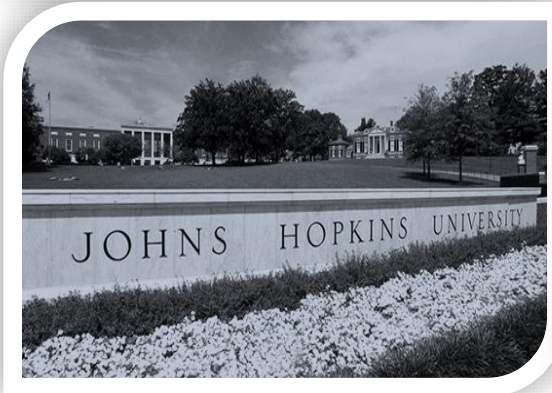
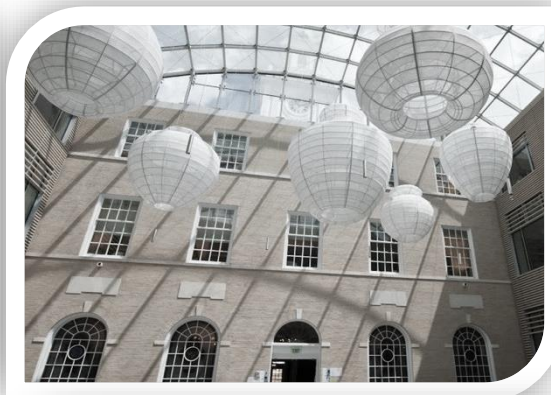


# GUIDE FOUR

## The Ongoing Application Process

Johns Hopkins University



Office of Pre-Professional Programs and Advising  
<http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/preprofadvising/>

## Preface

The guidelines presented in this document provide important details for Johns Hopkins undergraduates and alumni who are applying to allopathic (MD), osteopathic (DO), dental (DDS, DMD), or any other health professions program that utilizes the Committee Letter (CL) produced by the Johns Hopkins University Health Professions Committee. References to “medical school” in this Guide refer to allopathic (MD), osteopathic (DO), dental (DDS, DMD), and other health professions programs.

## Focus of Guide Four

**Guide Four: The Ongoing Application Process** addresses the questions and challenges commonly faced by applicants following submission of their primary medical or dental school application. The ongoing medical school application process is complicated and requires endurance, attention to detail, organization, and professionalism. In **Guide Four**, we have chosen to present information in a Q&A format, under specific categories. We hope this Guide answers many of your questions.

## Professionalism

It is critical that you remain professional throughout this process, particularly in how you approach, provide information to, and express appreciation for medical school admissions staff involved in the application process. Be mindful of your verbal and non-verbal communication, including eye contact, handshake, interview attire, and courtesy. Remember that you are representing yourself as well as Johns Hopkins University, and that professionalism is a key ingredient of a successful applicant and successful career!

## **Making Changes to My Application Status**

### **What if I decide to delay my application to a later cycle?**

Please send an email to [preprofessional@jhu.edu](mailto:preprofessional@jhu.edu) to formally notify us of your decision to postpone your application.

### **If I changed my fall course selections from what I originally indicated on my AMCAS application, do I need to notify the medical schools?**

No. This is not an issue. Typically, medical schools only pay attention to future coursework if the applicant is missing a premedical requirement or is enrolled in a masters or post-bac program.

### **How do I notify schools if I have changes to report after submitting my primary application?**

The AMCAS Applicant Guide outlines very specific directions for making an “Academic Change Request.” Please refer to the [AMCAS Postsubmission Actions website](#) to view other permitted changes, including updates to a future MCAT testing date, additional medical schools, and legal residence changes. If you wish to notify medical schools about a change that is not accepted by AMCAS, you will need to submit the information directly to medical schools.

### **What if my plans during my gap/bridge year were not finalized when I submitted my application? Should I send the med schools an update?**

Many schools will ask about your gap/bridge year in secondary applications. You can also discuss upcoming plans during an interview or in an “update letter” to be submitted later in the application cycle.

### **Do I have to do anything special to forward my MCAT scores to the med schools?**

No. MCAT scores are automatically uploaded to your AMCAS application and are available to all of your medical schools.

## **How Should I Approach Secondary Application Questions?**

### **How much time should I spend on secondary essays?**

Within reason, the secondary essays should be on par with the quality of your personal statement. You should rely on peers, family, or others you can trust to review your secondary essays. While many schools will ask similar questions in their secondary applications, do not make the mistake of racing through secondaries by using the “copy and paste” method. Tailor your essay answers to each school to show them you are serious about being a member of their incoming class. **Always proofread** to ensure you do not have spelling and grammar errors and that you do not mistakenly mention the wrong school in another school’s essay.

### How should I approach answering secondary applications with optional essays?

In general, it is best to answer every essay question, if possible.

- In terms of questions regarding “Why [that particular school],” it is very important that you research the institution and be able to identify aspects of the culture, curriculum, etc., that are particularly well-suited to your interests and goals.
- The “diversity” question requires careful consideration. Although you may not consider yourself “diverse” based on race or ethnicity, it is important that you acknowledge an appreciation for the importance of diversity and what you’ve learned from exposure to diverse cultures, experiences, etc.
- Finally, you have great latitude in answering open-ended “additional comments.” Beyond all you have shared elsewhere in your application, you must dig deep to share other aspects of your background, interests, life goals, etc., that you are comfortable sharing. But if you truly have nothing additional to share, don’t try to make something up that doesn’t exist.

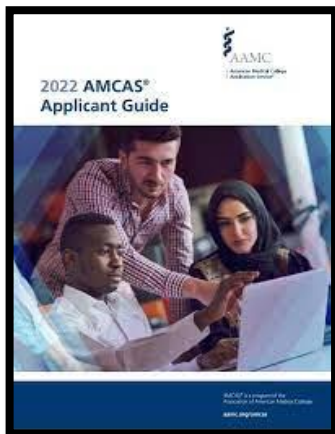
## Ongoing Contact with Schools

### Do my senior year grades matter if I apply as a junior?

Yes! Grades always “matter.” If you do not receive an interview invitation by December, you’ll want to submit/upload unofficial mid-year transcripts to the medical schools to demonstrate your continued academic success. In addition, once accepted, some schools may also want final transcripts before you matriculate.

### What should I do if a school asks me to complete a “Dean’s Form”?

Typically, Dean’s Forms are sent to verify the academic and/or behavioral standing of an applicant. If you receive a “Dean’s Form” that requires “Certification by Current Dean of Students or Comparable Administrative Official” to verify academic and/or behavioral standing, please contact the JHU Student Conduct Office for assistance, [studentconduct@jhu.edu](mailto:studentconduct@jhu.edu)



### Can I have a letter of evaluation uploaded at a later point in the process?

The Pre-Professional Office uploads your Committee Letter and individual letters of evaluation to your designated health profession programs **once** in a given cycle. Additional letters must be submitted through the AMCAS Letter Service (or other primary application service). Our office does **not** upload additional letters that are not indicated to be a part of your committee packet. If you would like an additional letter uploaded to either all of your schools, a subset, or a single school, you will request the letter through the **AMCAS Letter Service**. This is fully explained in the AMCAS Applicant Guide.

**If I request an additional letter of evaluation *after* my Committee Letter is uploaded, will it hold up the processing of my application?**

If you request additional letters to be uploaded through the AMCAS Letter Service and medical schools have not yet reviewed your application, the schools will wait for those letters to be uploaded and, therefore, may postpone the review of your application. It is advised that you submit an additional letter **later** in the process, perhaps if you are not getting interview invitations or are waitlisted at a school.

**What if I decide to apply to additional medical/dental schools?**

This is not a problem.

- If you wish to add more schools to your application, please follow the instructions outlined through AMCAS, AACOMAS, TMDSAS, or AADSAS.
- There is **NO NEED** to notify the Pre-Professional Office that you are applying to additional medical schools.

**I interviewed at a medical school without rolling admissions that does not announce acceptances until March. Is there anything I can do to improve my chances?**

It is reasonable to send a letter of interest that indicates your continued interest in the school and why you are a “good fit” for them. However, **do not do this if the school clearly instructs applicants not to send updates, additional information, or additional recommendation letters.**

**If a school told me that I would hear within four weeks and it is now six weeks since I interviewed, what should I do?**

Be patient. Sometimes schools do not meet their stated timeline for notifying an applicant for various reasons. The fact you have not heard does **not** necessarily mean bad news. It is fairly common that applicants are put in the position of having to wait during this very arduous process.

**Is it appropriate to notify another medical school in a city you have been invited to interview that you will be in the area interviewing?**

In general, it only makes sense to make this request if you will be traveling an unusually long distance, like across the country; however, schools will vary in their response. Make it clear that you are grateful for their consideration and the opportunity to interview whenever the opportunity may occur. It cannot hurt your candidacy to make the request. It is best to make the request by email.

**What does it mean to be “on hold” prior to being invited for an interview?**

This typically means that the admissions committee wants to review more candidates before they make further admissions decisions. By late February/early March, most “on hold” applicants have either been invited for interviews or rejected.

## **Sending Letters of Interest/Update/Intent**

### **When is it appropriate to send a letter of interest?**

A letter of interest is most appropriate to send if you are on a waitlist **following an interview**. It may also be appropriate if you have received an official notification from a school (i.e., you are notified your application is “on hold.”) In writing this letter, it is most important to reiterate and/or elaborate why you believe you are a good fit for a given school and how you will contribute to the incoming class if you are accepted. Don’t forget to include your AAMC, AACOMAS, TMDSAS or AADSAS ID number in your correspondence. Follow the instructions the school provides to add additional materials to your file. Some schools say they discourage the submission of additional information and, if so, please honor that request. Any letter you send should be concise, focused, and no more than a few paragraphs.

### **What about updating schools on new activities, undertakings, and/or accomplishments?**

Only send updates if you have true updates to share. Examples include transcripts (new grades), new job, publications, etc. However, do not force yourself to stretch or contrive an update if you don’t have one. Sometimes, it may be appropriate to update a school on a new activity or accomplishment within a letter of interest. Updates are helpful as long as the schools accept them and you have something noteworthy to share. Any letter you send should be concise, focused, and no more than a few paragraphs.

### **When is it appropriate to send a “letter of intent?”**

Generally speaking, we only recommend sending a “letter of intent” if you are on the waitlist of your **top choice school**. The intent letter is **only** appropriate if you truly intend to matriculate to that school, so you must be **sure** of your intentions. The letter is **not** appropriate to send to schools where you have not received an interview invitation.

## **Plan vs. Commit to Enroll**

**AMCAS has established Application and Acceptance Protocols that outline deadlines, policies, and responsibilities. Here are the important dates and terms to know:**

**April 15:** Applicants who have been accepted to multiple schools are expected to narrow their acceptances to three (3) by this date. Applicants may remain on waitlists; you are not yet required to narrow your choice to one school, and you may stay on multiple waitlists.

**April 30:** This is the last date that an admitted student may hold multiple acceptances. Admitted students have two options at this point:

- Plan to Enroll: must move to holding just one admissions offer but students may still remain on waitlists

- **Commit to Enroll:** Student confirms they will attend a given medical school and removes self from any other waitlists

**Specific guidelines are provided by each medical school; please be mindful of their deadlines and policies.**

### **Will I be notified of financial aid packages by April 30?**

It is the responsibility of medical schools to provide financial aid information to accepted applicants in a timely fashion. Since applicants holding multiple acceptances must narrow down their options to a single school by April 30, medical schools typically provide financial information to accepted applicants well in advance of this date.

## **On the Waitlist?**

### **What does it mean to be on a waitlist following an interview?**

Being waitlisted typically occurs following an interview and simply means the medical school hasn't yet accepted you, but it is also not a rejection. In other words, the school didn't say no to your application, but they didn't say yes, either. Notification of a waitlist status is a good time to send a follow-up letter of interest to express your continued interest in the school. Being on the waitlist means that you have a chance of being accepted and you should not lose hope! You can stay on waitlists well into summer, even if you're accepted to other schools.



### **How do schools use their waitlists?**

Medical schools use waitlists to ensure that their incoming class is full by the beginning of their academic year. Since a certain percentage of applicants will choose other schools, medical schools routinely accept more students than the number of seats available in a class. If a higher number of students decline admission than the medical school anticipated, seats will open up and schools will accept applicants from the waitlist. The number of waitlisted students who are accepted varies greatly from year to year and school to school.

### **If I am on a waitlist, when might I be admitted?**

You will only be admitted when a seat opens up. This typically can happen any time between May and the start of fall semester classes (around August). Most schools report that they accept the highest number of waitlisted students during May and June, but sometimes spots will become available the week or even the day before the program begins. **You cannot accept an offer of admission from another school after you have started orientation at a school.**

**Are waitlists ranked? Will a school tell me what number I am on their waitlist?**

Some schools rank their waitlist and others do not. It is most important to remember that if you have been waitlisted, you have been deemed qualified for admission. When accepted applicants withdraw from an incoming class, the medical school will look to admit waitlisted candidates who would best balance the composition of the class.

**How should I respond to a waitlist notification?**

This is an excellent opportunity to express your strong interest in the school. Send a letter to the school that restates your strong interest in their programs, expresses appreciation for your ongoing consideration, and highlights the unique contribution you would make to the incoming class. The letter should be concise, focused, and no more than a few paragraphs. If you are accepted off a waitlist and choose to attend, it is assumed you will notify any other schools where you are waitlisted that you have accepted an offer of admission from another school.

## **Getting Accepted**



**I just received an acceptance letter. What do I do?**

Congratulations! Your first step is to celebrate your success! If you receive and hold multiple acceptances, you have until April 30 to narrow them down to one school; after that point, you are in danger of having offers rescinded. Once you decide on your school, follow their instructions about submitting a deposit and any other steps they require to hold your seat. Also, continue to investigate ways to fund your medical school education.

**Are there advantages to interviewing at schools after I've been admitted to my top choice?**

No. If you continue to interview after being admitted to your top school, you are taking up valuable interview slots for candidates who may be interested in and seriously considering that medical school. If you have been admitted to a school and you plan to enroll, you have an ethical obligation to notify the remaining schools that you have accepted an invitation to attend elsewhere.

**I am thinking about deferring admission for a year. Can I do that?**

Each medical school has its own deferral policy. Some will only allow students to defer if they have received a significant opportunity, whereas others will allow you to defer no questions asked. Check with the individual medical school regarding their policy. In general, however, it is not advised to apply to medical or dental school if your intention is to defer your admission.



**What do I do about schools that require a deposit? Will I get that money back if I choose not to matriculate?**

Most MD schools have deposits of \$100 or greater. The deposits are usually refundable before April 30 or will be applied toward your tuition if you ultimately attend the school. For many DO schools, the deposits are between \$500 and \$1,500 and are typically not refundable.

**What if I am accepted but my preference is to attend a school where I am waitlisted?**

You can stay on a school's waitlist up to the point when classes start. But in the meantime, you should give a deposit to a school where you have been accepted. At some point in late spring or early summer, you should move forward with plans to attend the school where you have been accepted because you will need time to find a roommate, secure housing, etc.

## **It Seems Like I Won't be Accepted. Now What?**

**If I am not successful in gaining acceptance, should I make alternative plans for next year and/or consider reapplying?**

This is a difficult decision that involves weighing how long to remain available for a medical school to accept you, versus making alternative plans for the fall and beyond. Reapplying right away is not always the best strategy. You want to make sure that your application is as strong as possible, which may mean you need to address areas of weakness in your background before applying again (such as a lack of clinical experiences or community service opportunities). Your second application should feature new and different experiences. These can range from additional coursework to volunteer work to research and more. Developing a new personal statement is also necessary as it helps demonstrate the additional experience and maturity you have gained since the last time you applied. While waiting before applying again may be frustrating, it often means the difference between being accepted and being unsuccessful for a second time. Commit to spending the time between applications to become the most competitive candidate possible and speak with a Pre-Professional Advisor about your plans for moving forward.

## **Miscellaneous Questions**

**When medical school deans hold information sessions at Johns Hopkins, is it appropriate to introduce myself and let them know I have applied/will apply?**

Sure! If the medical school to which you are applying is on campus, you should introduce yourself after the information session, particularly if you have been invited to or attended an interview. It shows an added level of interest in the school and allows you to network with the admissions office.

**What if a medical school asks for my first semester grades to be uncovered?**

Most schools accept the Johns Hopkins covered grade policy (which now only applies to alumni). If, by chance, a school makes a specific request for your grades to be uncovered, we are able to accommodate the request. The requesting school must send an official letter (email is fine) stating that you are precluded from consideration or your candidacy is critically harmed because the first semester grades are covered. Please contact [preprofessional@jhu.edu](mailto:preprofessional@jhu.edu) in this situation; do not contact the Registrar's Office about uncovering first semester grades.

**When is the appropriate time to meet with the Pre-Professional staff if I'm not hearing from the medical schools where I applied?**

You are advised to keep in touch with the Pre-Professional Office throughout the process; however, if you have not received interviews by January, you should contact an advisor. Likewise, if you are on waitlists or are on-hold in May, you should speak to an advisor.

**In Closing**

Navigating your way through pre-health requirements is a challenge that takes careful planning and great patience. It is important to note that the process requires precision, adaptability, and flexibility. Each student's academic path is unique and you should take into account your science acumen, academic performance, co-curricular activities, and operate on a timeline that makes sense given your level of preparedness. We encourage you to seek input from Pre-Professional Advisors to devise a plan that is appropriate for your academic and professional goals.