

TIPS FOR COMPLETING AMCAS 2009

The following are just some of the more common issues applicants may encounter while completing the primary application for medical school, AMCAS 2009. For complete application instructions, please refer to the online help text within the application, or the 2009 Application Instruction Book available in PDF format at www.aamc.org/amcas.

AAMC ID

Issue: Matching official transcripts (OT's) with your application.

Tips: 1) Applicants should not send transcripts prior to the opening of the AMCAS application. For the 2009 entering year, the application will become available on or about May 6, 2008. 2) Once the application is open, complete the Identifying and Schools Attended sections of the application. You do not need to submit your application right away, but if you at least complete these two sections, AMCAS staff will know which transcripts to expect. 3) Applicants should submit a Transcript Request Form, available in the AMCAS application, to their registrar and request that this form be included along with the official transcript. This form contains important information such as; the AAMC ID, transcript-issuing institution, and other information that assists AMCAS in matching your official transcript to your application.

Work / Activities

Issue: Applicants create multiple entries for repeated experiences.

Tip: You may enter up to 15 experiences in your application. If you have similar experiences, awards, etc., enter them as one experience. For example, if you wish to indicate you have been on the dean's list more than once, you should only enter this once and use the description to clarify that you received this distinction on more than one occasion.

Personal Statement

Issue: Applicants experienced formatting issues when cutting & pasting essays from word processing software.

Tip: For the 2009 application year, you may be asked to provide up to three essays: Personal Comments Essay, MD/PHD Essay, and Significant Research Experience Essay, depending upon your choice of program type designation. We strongly recommend that applicants type their essays directly into the AMCAS application in order to avoid formatting issues. However, applicants who plan to cut & paste their essays into the application should use a text-only format, preferably in text-only word processing software, such as Microsoft Notepad or Word Pad. After cutting and pasting, review the essay again before submitting your application. If you notice any typos or formatting issues, you can edit your essay directly in the application. Applicants will not be able to edit an essay after submitting the application, under any circumstances.

Application Case Instructions

Issue: Applicants failing to follow application case instructions.

Example: Medical schools prefer reading, "I attended Dr. Mitchell's summer workshop in Nevada" to reading either:

"I ATTENDED DR. MITCHELL'S SUMMER WORKSHOP IN NEVADA" or
"i attended dr. mitchell's summer workshop in nevada"

Tip: Applicants should enter all text responses in the application just as they would like the medical schools to see them, avoiding the use of all CAPS or all lower case. Medical schools have indicated that they prefer to receive applications that evidence normal writing practices regarding case, punctuation, and grammar.

(After an application has been processed by AMCAS, limited changes are allowed, such as: preferred and permanent address change, email address update, and adding additional medical schools).

Post-Submission Changes

Issue: Applicants failing to submit their applications following a post-submission change.

Tip: Applicant should make certain to thoroughly review the changes made prior to submitting. If post-submission changes are needed, applicants must re-certify and re-submit their application after the change has been made.

Browser Requirements and Issues

Issue: Applicants not using recommended systems and browsers

Tip: AMCAS recommends that if applicants experience what appear to be browser-related issues (missing fields, etc.), they should change browser versions, or switch from Netscape to Internet Explorer if at all possible. **You may be locked out of the application altogether, if you do not use a supported browser.**

For **PC users**, AMCAS supports the following browser versions:

- Internet Explorer 7.0
- Internet Explorer 6.0
- Internet Explorer 5.5
- Netscape 7
- Firefox 1.02 Windows only
- Firefox 1.5 Windows only
- Firefox 2.0 Windows only

For **Mac users (OS 9 and X)**, AMCAS supports the following browser versions:

- Mozilla Firefox versions 1.0.2, 1.5, 2.0
- Internet Explorer 5.2
- Internet Explorer 5.1.7
- Netscape 7

AMCAS also recommends that users report such problems to AMCAS, as we are continuously monitoring ease of access and use for applicants. The majority of browser-related issues have been encountered in Netscape and Safari browsers.

AMCAS and Medical School E-Mail Notifications/Updates

Issue: Many applicants reported to AMCAS that they were not receiving AMCAS and school e-mail notifications/updates.

Many e-mail messages from AMCAS and medical schools are sent simultaneously to multiple applicants. Some e-mail providers use filters to ensure that users do not receive spam (junk e-mail). In some cases these filters can block emails from AMCAS, and/ or medical schools.

Tips: 1) The majority of providers that offer such filters; provide the user with the option to turn the filter on or off. Other providers make available to users a “junk mail file” that includes all messages that are sent to the user but identified as multiple-addressee e-mails. If a particular provider does not offer such options, we recommend that applicants either contact their provider to determine the best way to access such messages, or consider using an additional or replacement provider during your medical school admissions process. 2) Monitor the progress of your AMCAS application by frequently logging into the Main Menu. The application is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with the exception of short maintenance periods. And the application always displays your current status. Failure to receive e-mails, therefore, is no excuse for not knowing and understanding your application status and requirements.

Application Student Help Instructions

Issue: Applicants disregard the application help instructions

Tip: AMCAS requires that all applicants read through the entire Student Help Instructions located within the application. These instructions contain a wealth of useful information that will assist you with any questions you may have while filling out the application. Failure to read this information may cause errors, verification correction marks, as well as application delays. It is the applicant’s responsibility to make sure that the application contains accurate information. In addition, AMCAS provides other useful information on the Web at www.aamc.org/amcas.

Transcript Requirements

Issue: Applicants failing to submit all required transcripts for schools attended to AMCAS.

Tip: AMCAS requires that applicants submit official transcripts from all U.S. and Canadian post-secondary institutions, regardless of which school(s) accepted this credit. For example, if you take a summer course at a community college, and transfer the work to your primary/home institution, AMCAS requires BOTH official transcripts (from the community college and from your regular year college) even if this is true regardless of whether or not the community college course work also appears on your home institution transcript.

Official Transcript (OT) Grades/AMCAS Grades

Issue: Applicants leave all transcript grade fields blank.

Tip: Applicants should list all official transcript grades exactly as they appear on the issuing institution transcript. Applicants who receive grades, but do not enter them will receive a verification symbol of “X” beside each course, indicating that an AMCAS change has been made to that field. AMCAS will return your application to you for failure to provide all required grades, as outlined in the help text and instruction book. Having the application returned may cause missed deadlines.

Note: AMCAS requires applicants report all original grades for repeated coursework, regardless of whether or not grades have been removed from the official transcript.

Study Abroad and Foreign Coursework

Issue: Applicants who attended a study abroad or attended a foreign institution.

Tip:

1.) If applying through AMCAS, and the program was sponsored by a U.S. or Canadian Institution, the applicant should:

- List the U.S. or Canadian Institution sponsoring the study abroad program, and on whose official transcript the coursework will appear
- Applicant should have the sponsoring institution send an official transcript to AMCAS

2.) If the program was not sponsored by a U.S. or Canadian Institution, but the credits were transferred to a U.S. or Canadian Institution, the applicant should:

- List the U.S. or Canadian Institution that the credit will be transferred to
- List the foreign school under the “schools attended” section of the application;
 - a) Indicate that AMCAS does not require a transcript
 - b) Select an exception reason of “Foreign College - Independent attendance - credits transferred to a U.S. or Canadian institution.”
 - c) Indicate that credit was transferred to another institution
 - d) Select the U.S. or Canadian Institution sponsoring the study abroad program from the pre-populated drop down menu
 - e) Enter all required course data under the name of the foreign school, but as it appears on the transcript on which the transferred credits appear.
- Applicant should have U.S. or Canadian institution in which the credit was transferred to send an official transcript to AMCAS

3.) If the program was not sponsored by a U.S. or Canadian Institution, and the credits were not transferred to a U.S. or Canadian Institution, the applicant should:

- List the foreign school under the “schools attended” section of the application;
 - a) Indicate that AMCAS does not require a transcript
 - b) Select an exception reason of “Foreign College - Independent attendance - no credits transferred to a U.S. or Canadian institution.”
 - c) Indicate that credit was not transferred to another institution
- Enter all required course data, except credit hours attempted, as taken at the foreign school

Note that if the courses do not appear on a U.S. or Canadian Institution official transcript, such coursework, although visible to the medical schools, will not be verified by AMCAS and will not be included in the AMCAS GPA.

*This list is not all-inclusive please see the AMCAS Instructional Manual for additional instructions

Program Type Designations

Issue: Applicants who wish to designate both Regular and Combined Graduate/Medical Degree Programs for a single institution.

Tip: Applicants cannot designate multiple program types for a single medical school in the AMCAS application. Provided that the program deadline has not passed, applicants may change application types after submission. Applicants should notify the individual medical school of this change. Applicants who wish to apply to multiple programs at a single school should contact the medical school directly for recommendations as to how to complete the AMCAS application.

Application Monitoring

Issue: Students fail to monitor their application status.

Tip: AMCAS will make every attempt to process your application in a timely manner. However, applicants are responsible for the regular monitoring of the application status, from the time of submission up until the designated medical schools receive the application. It is important for you to verify that AMCAS received your application, official transcripts, and documentation.

Applicants are responsible for notifying AMCAS of any designated medical schools that have not received application materials within 2 to 4 weeks after the data AMCAS processing is complete.

Medical School Admission Requirements and Restrictions

Issue: Adhering to medical school admissions requirements.

Tip: Applicants should review the admission requirements for each school they are applying to prior to the certifying and submitting the AMCAS application. It is important to make sure that admissions requirements are met for all of your designated medical schools. If you are unsure of the admissions requirements for a particular medical school, please contact the admissions office, or refer to the Medical Schools Admissions Requirements (MSAR) guide. The MSAR can be purchased online at:

<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/msar.htm>.

Note: The individual medical schools set Admissions requirements and restrictions. Failing to meet admissions requirements may cause your application to be rejected. AMCAS does not provide refunds of its application fees based on the medical schools' admissions decisions.