



April 7, 2020

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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Dear Admissions Community,

For the past three weeks, we have been working with the AMCAS Advisory Committee and medical schools around the country to assess the issues and challenges resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that would impact the upcoming AMCAS 2021 application cycle (AY21 Cycle). As you know, these are unprecedented times that will require flexibility and adaptability by all stakeholders. We are providing an initial set of considerations for the upcoming 2021 application cycle and will share additional updates on any decisions in the coming weeks.

Below are considerations for the upcoming AY21 Cycle that have been developed with input from the AMCAS Advisory Committee:

AMCAS Operations – Under Evaluation

At this time, we anticipate **opening the application on May 4 for applicants** to begin their applications, and will determine the need for any changes on an ongoing basis. Information will be shared with applicants and pre-health advisors as soon as it is available and will be posted on the [AMCAS website](#) and provided within the [AMCAS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQs](#).

AMCAS is working with our stakeholders and partners to minimize operational challenges. We will communicate any delays in application processing and verification via updates on the [AMCAS website](#), and we will closely monitor applicant volume and provide updates to the admissions community after the cycle opening on May 4. Medical schools will be able to use the Overview Dashboard in [AMCAS for Schools](#) to see how their school and the national pool are trending.

MCAT Exam and Your Admissions Processes

As you may know, the March 27 and April MCAT administrations were cancelled globally due to the evolving health and safety threats of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

We know how disruptive these circumstances are for students, and we are committed to preserving the 2021 application cycle by ensuring everyone who wants to test in 2020 can do so. To immediately help affected examinees, we are offering flexible rescheduling options and have waived all rescheduling fees for all 2020 MCAT exam dates until further notice.

Our goal is to safely test students and support your medical schools' admissions processes. This work considers the rapidly changing situation and emphasizes fairness to examinees. We will be adding new test dates, and our first priority is to schedule them as early in the testing calendar as operationally possible. We will update you as soon as these dates are available to examinees. We are also exploring how and when to expedite score reporting, which will help

those students who must reschedule their exams later in the testing calendar due to cancellations.

The AAMC will keep the admissions community informed about future dates, expectations of score deliveries, and volume of applicants to help you prepare your approach to the upcoming cycle. Please look out for further updates in the coming weeks. As schools prepare for the upcoming cycle, we ask that you consider flexibility in the deadline for applicants to provide scores with their application.

Applicant Transcripts and Alternative Grading Policies

The AAMC is working closely with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) to understand challenges related to transcript delivery and updates to transcript grades such as pass/fail grades. At this time, we do not anticipate significant disruptions to transcript deliveries but will keep the admissions community updated if there are delays in application verification. AACRAO has developed a resource for undergraduate institutions to share about how they are approaching transcripts, including pass/fail grades. We will provide more information once it becomes available.

AMCAS is also developing a resource for medical schools to understand the potential impact of alternative grading policies on applicants' cumulative and Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math (BCPM) GPAs. The resource will provide a comparison of an applicant with letter grades against pass/fail grades so medical schools can understand what to look for and how the pass/fail grade may impact a GPA calculation. AMCAS will also host a webinar to walk through the potential impact for admissions officers. Please stay tuned for registration information for the webinar.

Letters of Recommendation

Prospective applicants and pre-health advisors have indicated that there may be challenges in securing letters of recommendations and committee letters to support an applicant's application. The AMCAS Advisory Committee encourages schools to take these challenges into consideration when reviewing applications this cycle.

AMCAS Experiences (Shadowing, Volunteer Work, etc.)

Prospective applicants and pre-health advisors have indicated challenges in completing experiences such as physician shadowing and volunteer work during this semester. The AMCAS Advisory Committee encourages schools to take these challenges into consideration when reviewing applications this cycle and screening for applicants.

Additional COVID-19 Related Questions in the AMCAS Application

The AMCAS Advisory Committee is recommending that an additional question about the impact of COVID-19 on applicants *is not added* to the AMCAS application. Schools that would like additional information are encouraged to ask for this in their secondary application. AMCAS is

working in partnership with the AMCAS Advisory Committee to create a resource with sample questions that medical schools can adapt for the upcoming cycle and beyond.

AMCAS will continue to work with the AMCAS Advisory Committee to monitor issues related to AMCAS and provide updates to medical schools, applicants, and pre-health advisors on an ongoing basis. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the AMCAS Medical School Relations team at schoolrel@aamc.org or 202-828-0635.

We look forward to working with you during this unprecedented time. Please stay safe and well.

Warm regards,
Patrick Fritz, Senior Director, AMCAS