

# Pre-Professional Health Application Information

For the 2009 Entering Class

Prepared by:

**Career Services**  
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<http://www.uvm.edu/career/premed>

November 29, 2007

This packet provides information for UVM undergraduate and post-bac students and alumni applying to professional schools in health sciences such as medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, and optometry for fall 2009 admission.

Most professional schools prefer/expect an evaluation of your candidacy by a faculty pre-health committee at your undergraduate or post-baccalaureate institution. This evaluation culminates in submission of a composite letter directly to your schools of interest. Our Career Services office will send your committee letter and other recommendations to the schools where you apply.

**To be eligible for a Committee evaluation and composite letter, you must open a pre-health file at Career Services by February 8, 2008 and submit a check for \$50.00.** The one-time fee will cover the processing and delivery of your materials to the schools. This is your first step in the application process which is outlined in the “Application Timeline for Premedical/Pre dental Students.” The application process begins approximately a year and a half before the expected date of matriculation. So, if you are applying to medical school for matriculation in August 2009, you need to open a pre-health file with our office by February 8, 2008.

**Participation in the Committee review requires a complete pre-health file**, containing a resume, a polished personal statement, an information sheet with picture, academic transcript(s) from all colleges attended, signed Buckley Amendment waiver form, signed Vice-President’s Report form, signed waivers, and three-four letters of recommendation (two required from science faculty). It is *your responsibility* to ensure that your file is complete by the **February 8, 2008 deadline**. Your references have until **April 11<sup>th</sup>** to submit letters to our office.

Two interviews will be required, one with a member of the faculty pre-health committee and one with the Pre-Health Advisor. To interview with the committee during the spring semester, you must have completed a **minimum** of 20 credit hours in the sciences at UVM by **May 2008**, and plan to complete all pre-health course work requirements by **August 2008**. **Ultimately at least 24 credit hours of relevant science course work must be completed at UVM.**

The American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) publishes the *Medical School Admission Requirements* (MSAR) guide yearly. This useful reference describes the application process to medical school and provides a one to two-page description of every U.S. and Canadian medical school. The 2009-2010 edition will be available in April at the UVM Bookstore, or at [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org). Likewise, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) publishes the *Official Guide to Dental Schools*. You can order this reference on-line at [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org). Copies of these guides can also be found in the Career Services library. Similar guides are available for osteopathic medical schools. Also think about chiropractic and podiatric careers.

I counsel, advise and answer your questions regarding the health science application process. Please call my office (656-3450) to set up an appointment, or email me at [Anne.Sullivan@uvm.edu](mailto:Anne.Sullivan@uvm.edu) with any questions. I am here for you and I look forward to working with you.

Anne Sullivan  
Pre-Health Advisor

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**\* Information you need to hand in on February 8, 2008**

## Should I Seek a Committee Evaluation Letter Now?

- ❑ Do I have an over-all cumulative GPA of 3.5 or preferably better and a science/math cumulative GPA of at least 3.50? The average overall GPA of an admitted student to allopathic medical school is about 3.65. The GPA's below these averages are considered *minimally* competitive, and I recommend further study to increase these averages before applying to professional schools. You are applying to science based graduate schools with an expectation of high quality academic work.
- ❑ Have I pursued at least one **meaningful and sustained** medically related experience and participated in undergraduate research where I showed **dedication and commitment** to test and affirm my career goal?
- ❑ Did I engage in extracurricular activities at UVM or another undergraduate school where I fully participated in the organization(s) and worked on developing interpersonal and leadership skills?
- ❑ Can I think of **three** relevant references who know me well enough to advocate for me as a professional school applicant with a strong letter to support my application? **Two letters must come from faculty members who taught you or worked with you in research in science** (i.e. biology, chemistry, physics, biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, etc.)
- ❑ Will I complete all of my pre-medical/dental course requirements by August 2008?
- ❑ Will I have completed at least 20 credits of relevant science coursework at UVM by May 2008?

In our experience, unless you meet these baseline eligibility criteria, you present as a weak candidate and your other strengths might be overshadowed. We encourage you to meet with your pre-health advisor to discuss your options and develop a plan to enhance your candidacy.

### What if I want to apply without the faculty committee evaluation letter?

If you wish to submit your AMCAS application without the committee letter, a few of the medical and most dental schools will accept individual letters of recommendation in lieu of a Committee letter. Please consult with your pre-health advisor in Continuing Education if you are a post-baccalaureate student or with Anne Sullivan in Career Services if an undergraduate or an alum to determine how to best proceed.

You **must** open a letter file in Interfolio for your reference letters. We no longer handle these letters through our office. See the following site:

<http://www.uvm.edu/career/?Page=students/interfolio.htm>

# TIMETABLE FOR APPLICANTS

## November/December 2007

- Attend Information Session on application process
- Begin working on resume and personal statement for pre-health file.
- Make plans to take required professional schools tests, MCAT, DAT, etc. **Check registration dates!! Early registration will enhance your chance of a seat in your requested testing center.**  
[www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm)      <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp>

## January/February 2008

- Continue work on resume and personal statement... seek help at L/L Writing Center
- Begin asking references (at least two science faculty) to submit letters by the April 11 deadline.

## February 8, 2008

Deadline for opening pre-health file:

**The following materials must be submitted by 2/8/08 to complete your file:**

- Information sheet
- Resume –final form
- Personal Statement –final form
- Signed Buckley Amendment waiver form
- Signed waivers
- Signed Vice President’s Report Form – Career Services will send these to the Vice President for Student Affairs Office for you.
- Academic transcript(s) - Unofficial or photocopies are acceptable...include **all** undergraduate and post-graduate transcripts. **No Exceptions! So plan ahead.**
- Payment of the \$50.00 fee. Make check payable to UVM

## March 17 through May 2nd, 2008

- Make appointment (656-3450) **after spring break** for an interview with the Pre Health Advisor in Career Services.
- We will assign you **by mid-March** to a faculty member on the Pre-health Committee for your second interview. Contact this person to schedule the interview once you receive this information.

## April 11, 2008

- Your file must be complete by this date to be evaluated by the Committee. Make sure that all of your materials are in, including your three recommendation letters.

## May 2, 2008

- Deadline to have completed your interview with the Pre-health Advisor and your assigned Committee member.

## **May 2008 (cont.)**

- ❑ Begin working on the appropriate national application and/or request an application from schools that do not participate in the national application service.

### **American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) (Allopathic Medicine)**

<http://www.aamc.org/>

### **American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Services (AACOMAS)**

<http://www.aacom.org>

### **Association of American Dental Schools Application Services (AADSAS)**

<http://www.adea.org>

*The majority of U.S. Allopathic, Osteopathic and Dental Schools participate in a centralized application service. This means you file a single application that is then forwarded to the schools to which you want to apply. If you plan on applying to a school that does not participate in a centralized application service, then you must contact that school directly for an application.*

## **June through September 2008**

- ❑ File AMCAS, AACOMAS, or AADSAS, etc. application. File applications with non-AMCAS medical schools (deadlines vary).

Since most medical schools have rolling admissions, in general, **early submission of all application materials is advantageous.** Applying early in the application process can significantly increase your chances of acceptance.

- ❑ Request **official** transcripts to be sent to the centralized application service(s) and/or to individual schools that do not participate in the centralized application service.
- ❑ **CONSIDERING EARLY DECISION?** *This may be an option for students who are certain of their first choice medical school. For most medical schools offering an Early Decision Program (EDP), the application period is June 1 - August 1, with notification of acceptances announced by October*

*If you apply as an EDP candidate, you cannot apply to any other school until notified of a decision on your application.*

## **Fall 2008**

- ❑ Complete supplemental (secondary) applications. Turn these around within two weeks.
- ❑ Career Services will send your letters via Virtual Evals (VE) to the schools listed on your AMCAS application. Some schools do not use VE and we will mail these via USPS.

## **Fall 2008-Spring 2009**

- ❑ Attend on-site professional school interviews.

## RESUME GUIDELINES

**NOTE:** This resume is for Committee use only; it will not be forwarded to the medical schools. Include the following information. **Please use resume format.** Depending on your experience, some topics may not apply.

- ❑ **Name**
- ❑ **Present Address, Phone number, and E-mail address**
- ❑ **College(s) Attended and Dates; include Honors**
- ❑ **Previous Employment Related to Medical/Dental Field**  
(position title, duties, employer, location, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **Volunteer Work Related to Medical/Dental Field**  
(position title, duties, institution or agency, location, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **Other Employment** (position title, duties, employer, location, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **Other Volunteer Work** (position title, duties, institution or agency, location, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **Research, Independent Studies, Projects**  
(title of project, description, supervisor, location, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **College Activities or Service** (describe duties or activities, institution, dates, hours per week)
- ❑ **Special Interests**
- ❑ **Academic Problems** (dates, explanations)
- ❑ **Felony/Criminal Convictions** (dates, explanations)
- ❑ **Campus Sanctions** – Behavioral or Academic (dates, explanations)
- ❑ **Indicate Summer and Fall 2008 schedule, if possible**

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

The Committee wants to know about **YOU** and your decision to apply to a doctoral program in the health professions. They will expect that you have prepared the statement with careful thought and attention to detail. Your sincerity and commitment will be assessed by the Committee by how you write this statement.

### **POTENTIAL TOPICS TO ADDRESS IN YOUR STATEMENT**

- Academic achievement – comment on the rigor of your academic program, your intellectual curiosity, love of learning, and independent scholarship.
- Motivation – factors contributing to your career choice and what you have done to test your commitment.
- Personal qualities – include leadership opportunities, contributions to community service, maturity and self knowledge.
- Are there any challenges or hardships that influenced your decision to pursue this career?
- You may want to discuss any significant fluctuations in your academic record.

### **NATIONAL APPLICATION PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES:**

*The Committee encourages you to use the format required by the appropriate national application service. This will allow the Committee to provide you with useful feedback and hopefully mean less work for you later in the application process.*

#### **American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS)**

Application requires that statement be no longer than 5,300 characters with spaces.

#### **American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Services (ACOMAS)**

Application requires that statement be no longer than 3,000 characters with spaces.

#### **Association of American Dental Schools Application Services (AADSAS)**

Application requires that statement be one page and no smaller than 10 point font.

### **RESOURCES FOR PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT**

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p\\_perstate.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_perstate.html)

Good resource, no cost, written for students, worth the time to look at.

<http://www.careercenter.umich.edu/students/healthmedlaw/med/mapersstmt.htm>

Excellent information and thought provoking questions to ask yourself

<http://www.studentdoctor.net/essays/index.asp>

See description above.

#### **UVM Career Services**

Once you have written your first draft, you may send a Word file attached to an e-mail and your pre-health advisor will edit and review. Close to the deadline we cannot guarantee timeliness. Start writing early!

#### **UVM Writing Center**

Once you have written your first draft, you can schedule an appointment (656-4075) to have your statement reviewed.

## ADVICE REGARDING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**Three letters are required.** You may have four letters. At minimum, science faculty must write two of these letters. A third non-science academic letter is appropriate. You might want a letter from a professor in your major if your major lies outside the sciences. You also might think about an undergraduate advisor/mentor if you received your baccalaureate degree from another institution. Some schools require this.

Faculty members who know you well through class work or advising are essential for meaningful and strong letters of recommendation. The ideal environment for interaction and best opportunity to get to know a faculty member casually and naturally is in a small group class or seminar, or by participation in departmental activities and projects (i.e. bag lunches, coffee hours, research projects). Effective letters indicate the context in which the evaluation is made, the duration of the faculty's acquaintance with you, and if possible, provide an assessment of you as a future medical/dental student and doctor/dentist. It proves very useful if the faculty member includes an evaluation of you compared with other students they have taught.

A predicament that many students face is that their science courses were offered as large lecture classes. Don't immediately assume that it's impossible to get a recommendation from the instructor of a large class. Talk it over with the professor – s/he may know you better than you think. After talking with you about your application, motivation for medicine, and work in their class, a professor may feel able to write a letter for you. Perhaps you've come to know the teaching assistant in your lab section quite well and they could write a letter in conjunction with your professor

There are a couple of courtesies you should extend to those you ask for recommendations. One is to provide them with some written information about you - perhaps your personal statement, and your resume. You also may want to give them a copy of "Guidelines for Writing Recommendations." Most importantly, **THANK YOUR RECOMMENDERS.** Remember that these people are doing you a valuable favor. Certainly you will thank them in advance when you ask for the letter, but don't forget to follow up with a note of thanks once the recommendation has been written. Another courtesy is to let them know where you'll be going to medical school!

Letters of recommendation from medically-related volunteer supervisors or employers are the most helpful when they include descriptions of your duties, levels of initiative, capacity to assume responsibility, ability to work as a team member, and strengths and weaknesses.

You should avoid asking friends, your family, physicians, clergymen, politicians, etc. unless these people can comment on a working relationship they may have had with you, such as "the administration of a summer program for physically handicapped children."

If you would like to discuss strategies of recommendations and from whom you should request them, talk with the pre-health advisor at the Career Services or to your Post Bac advisor.

### **Format:**

Ask your recommenders to write letters **on their own stationery.** Letters of recommendation should be sent directly to Career Services by the persons writing them. Our address is:

Career Services – Pre-Health  
Attn: Shelley Marshall  
E Bldg Living/Learning  
633 Main Street  
Burlington, VT 05405

### **Timing:**

Please contact intended recommenders early in the semester to allow plenty of time for references to write, and send their letters to our office by the April 11<sup>th</sup> deadline. Ideally, your letters should arrive before your interviews. It is up to you to communicate this to your recommenders, and to follow up with Career Services to verify their receipt. **If you decide later in the process to obtain a letter from a DO, we need it by no later than September 1, 2008.**

# WRITING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDICAL & DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS

## General Guidelines

### Format

- Use departmental or organizational letterhead.
- The letter should be dated, but you do not need to address the letter to an individual or school. Instead, you can use a similar heading to the example cited below. The text of the letter would follow.

### Letter of Recommendation for Susan Smith

### Content

- It's most helpful if you include the context in which the evaluation is being made, and the duration of your acquaintance. Since the admission committee members at the medical schools do not know the applicants personally, they rely heavily on the comments from people who know them and are in a position to comment on their potential to complete the medical school curriculum and become a competent and caring member of the medical profession. Try to highlight the personal characteristics of the candidate which you personally appreciate in a doctor/dentist.
- It is also helpful to include an evaluation of the candidate as they compare to other individuals you have taught or supervised.
- Be sure to specify that you are making a recommendation for admission to medical or dental school.

### Submission

- **Letters are due by April 11, 2008.** The Pre-health Committee will **not** review candidates if their letters have not been submitted by this date.
- The candidate should indicate whether the letter is confidential or not. We can not accept confidential recommendations that are hand-delivered by students. **Please send your confidential letter directly to:**
  - Shelley Marshall
  - Career Services
  - Living/Learning, E Building
  - The University of Vermont
  - 633 Main Street
  - Burlington, VT 05405

### Questions/Concerns? Need additional input on content?

Please contact Pre-Health Advisor at Career Services ([Anne.Sullivan@uvm.edu](mailto:Anne.Sullivan@uvm.edu)) or 802-656-3450.

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROFESSIONAL HEALTH SCHOOL CANDIDATE**

Medical:       Allopathic (M.D.) \_\_\_\_           Osteopathic (D.O.)\_\_\_\_           Naturopathic (N.D.)\_\_\_\_  
Other:         Dentistry\_\_\_\_                   Optometry\_\_\_\_                   Pharmacy\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

UVM ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

send us a digital photo  
or have one taken at  
Career Services

Local Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

State of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_           First-Generation College Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate College/University: \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Baccalaureate Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Semester Completed at UVM: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of UVM science credits: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Date of Graduation or Certificate Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

**RECOMMENDATION LETTERS: *No more than 4 letters accepted***

List name, title, department, address, phone number (Include two science faculty)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**ADDITIONAL LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:**

\*\*\*\*\*

I have contacted the individuals listed above to write letters of recommendation in support of my candidacy. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure they are submitted by **April 11, 2008**.

I have read this information packet and understand my responsibilities as a participant in the Pre-health Committee evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*Return this form with your file materials to Career Services by **February 8, 2008**.

**WAIVER OR RETENTION OF RIGHTS FORM**

The majority of students waive their right to review letters of recommendation through the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, which is outlined below. (We cannot advise you as to your decision about waiving your right of access to your letters). Read the Buckley Amendment carefully so you can make your own informed decision.

**\*\*NOTE:** If you choose to sign this waiver, we **cannot** accept recommendations hand-delivered by students.

**CONSIDERATION RE: BUCKLEY AMENDMENT OF 1974**

**WHAT IS THE BUCKLEY AMENDMENT?**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, provides students at institutions of higher learning with the right of access to virtually all important records contained in their files. This includes the right to see recommendations that faculty members may write, provided recommendations were placed in the file prior to January 1, 1975. The Act further protects the confidentiality of records by requiring that UVM, upon sending records to another school, requires the receiving school to maintain this confidentiality.

A student has the right to waive his/her right of access to confidential recommendations supporting his/her application to any school, college, university, or place of employment. The choice of whether or not to waive your right to see letters of recommendation is an important one, which you should make only after considering your rights fully. A copy of the complete act and proposed regulations are available for you to read in its entirety in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

**Further Comments:**

You are obligated to inform faculty members from whom you are soliciting letters of recommendation whether or not you want access to his/her letter, or whether confidentiality will be guaranteed. All letters forwarded to medical schools will specify whether or not the contents were held under the terms of confidentiality, or whether the student had access to them.

If you choose to waive your right under the Buckley Amendment, please sign multiple copies of these waivers found at the end of this packet. These will be attached to your letters of recommendation for schools that do not participate in Virtual Evals (ie, University at Buffalo, University of California, San Francisco, off-shore schools, etc.)

Please give the matter serious thought before signing either of the statements below. Feel free to discuss the matter with the Pre-Health Advisor at Career Services or your academic advisor before making your decision.

\*\*\*\*\*

**SIGN ONLY ONE**

(Please do not detach the following from this sheet)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby voluntarily waive my right under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to review letters of recommendation which I wish forwarded to medical schools.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to exercise my right under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to review my letters of recommendation which I wish forwarded to medical schools.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO THE MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

(Please sign and date all five waivers)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby voluntarily waive my right to review or inspect the attached letters of recommendation, written at my request. I understand that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 generally affords students the right to inspect and review their official records, but I agree to waive such rights with regard to application to medical school.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby voluntarily waive my right to review or inspect the attached letters of recommendation, written at my request. I understand that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 generally affords students the right to inspect and review their official records, but I agree to waive such rights with regard to application to medical school.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**The University of Vermont**

Pre-Health Committee  
Career Services, 633 Main Street  
Living/Learning, E Building  
Burlington, VT 05405

**DIVISION OF STUDENT & CAMPUS LIFE  
DEAN OF STUDENTS REPORT**

Concerning \_\_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_  
(last) (first) (middle)

UVM ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

In regard to personal qualifications for medical/dental school and the practice of medicine/dentistry:

**STATEMENT OF STUDENT:** I hereby give the Center for Student Ethics & Standards at the University of Vermont permission to release any information in my judicial file to the Pre-Health Committee of the University of Vermont (UVM). I understand that this information will be forwarded, along with my Committee Evaluation, to the medical/dental schools where I apply. I understand that if I have been suspended, dismissed/expelled, have any disciplinary charges pending, or have had any disciplinary action taken against me the Dean of Students or designee will so inform the Pre-Health Committee, and it, in turn, will so inform the medical/dental schools to which I have applied.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS, DIVISION OF STUDENT & CAMPUS LIFE:** Your comments will be forwarded to the medical/dental schools to which this student applies. The importance of this form, both to the student and to the reputation of UVM cannot be over-emphasized. We would like to have this form back in our office by no later than **May 2, 2008**. Thank you for your assistance.

Are any disciplinary actions **pending** regarding the applicant? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Has the applicant ever been the recipient of judicial action for a violation of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities or other university policies? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Has the applicant been the recipient of judicial action for a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Has the applicant ever been suspended, dismissed or expelled? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If the answer to any of the above questions is "yes," please explain. (If necessary, please continue on reverse side).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PREPARING FOR YOUR UVM PRE-MEDICAL COMMITTEE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

We encourage you to approach your interview with the members of the UVM Pre-Health Committee just as seriously as you would your interview with a medical/dental admissions committee. This includes arriving on time, dressing appropriately, and anticipating and preparing for insightful and provocative questions.

The following resources will be helpful for your UVM Pre-Medical and Admissions Committee interviews:

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/pminterviewquestions.pdf>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology site

[http://www.colorado.edu/aac/PreMed\\_interviewquestions.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/aac/PreMed_interviewquestions.pdf)

University of Colorado site

<http://www.studentdoctor.net>

On the left hand side of the page you can click on either "Medical School Interview Feedback" or "Dental School Interview Feedback". Click on "Read Interview Experiences". You will now be able to see feedback from applicants who have applied to schools across the country. This is a fine site for hearing back from people who have actually gone through the interview process..just make sure to "give back" and post your interview experiences :-)

### ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- **BE YOURSELF.** Sounds kind of silly and obvious, but a lot of candidates get scared that their "true" self is not good enough and try to act "smarter, better, more experienced" than they really are. Schools will quickly see through this.
- **BACK IT UP.** Try to give examples to support your responses. If the question is, "What do you have to offer our school?".... don't just say, "I'm a hard worker. I really care about people. I have a genuine interest and aptitude in the sciences. I get along with all types of people and I have a lot of experience working in a hospital." A better response would be to just pick one or two qualities that you think make you unique and then explain how you developed these qualities and give an example that demonstrates a time when you have exemplified these experiences.
- **BECOME AN EXPERT ON YOURSELF.** If a school asks, "What's the biggest personal challenge you ever faced?" You don't want to say, "Uh....that's a good question....hmm...the biggest challenge I've ever faced....gosh, that's a tough one...well, I guess...." You need to walk into that interview having done some **MAJOR** self-analysis: What various life experiences shaped you and how you interact with people? Explain how your challenges and triumphs helped you learn? What specifically attracts you to medicine vs. the thousands of other careers that are out there? What personal characteristics make you certain you want a career as a physician/dentist? You should practice by clearly and thoughtfully answering all of the questions listed on these websites.

- **START READING!!** Candidates are often asked questions pertaining to current health care and scientific research issues. Remember, schools are looking for lifelong learners. Would you want a physician or dentist who is aware of current scientific breakthroughs and treatments? At a minimum read the science and medicine sections of magazines such as Time or Newsweek and/or daily newspapers.
- Are you hungry for more? Go to the library and read the Journal of the American Medical Association or other medical journals that catch your attention. Dental applicants can do the same or visit <http://www.priory.com/dent.html> for current articles. Go to the library or bookstores and check out a book written by a medical student or physician that explains what it means to “walk in their shoes.” I am happy to give suggestions, but there are many good books out there, just pick one that captures your interest. These sites list some books you might enjoy.
- <http://yale.edu/career/students/gradprof/media/readinglist.pdf>
- <http://hpap.syr.edu/book.htm>
- Other sources of information: CNN.com, MSNBC.com, etc. have a health information page as part of their website. Watch the local evening news. Stations often have a nightly “health information” segment.
- **DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER:** You might get a question in your interview about a topic and you are clueless; that's okay, you are not a healthcare provider yet. If this happens tell the interviewer you are unfamiliar with the topic they are asking about and let them A) explain it to you further and then engage in a stimulating conversation that allows you to learn more about a new subject or B) indicate that you are not familiar with that particular subject area but you have done extensive reading on XYZ subject and ask if would they be interested in knowing more about that?