



University of the Virgin Islands School of Medicine

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Selection of the best medical students, much like the practice of medicine, is an art as much as a science. Outcome data is desirable to verify that current procedures are optimal. This publication provides information regarding the policies and procedures that guide the admissions process in attempting to select for admission those who are best qualified and best suited for the study of medicine.

A. Confidentiality of Information

All discussions and deliberations of the Admissions Committee are to be considered confidential. Committee actions, and the reasons for those actions, should not be discussed with anyone outside of the Committee.

It is the policy and practice of the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions that the entire application file is the sole property of the UVISOM and is not accessible to anyone other than the Admissions Office and the Medical School Admissions Committee (MSAC) members. Since admissions and application files are not educational records, the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) does not apply. Therefore an applicant does not have the right to inspect his or her file, or any part thereof, until that applicant matriculates into the M.D. Program as a student. Prior to matriculation, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will remove Office of Student Affairs and Admissions generated forms/worksheets such as Interview Evaluations, Admissions counseling and contact documents, MSAC voting and notes information, and other such documents or worksheets not directly provided by the applicant. Applicant information pertinent to the academic record will be provided to the UVISOM Registrar. Once applicants matriculate, their files will be subject to the FERPA guidelines. Documents to be provided to the Registrar include State Residency Affidavit, final transcript, and the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) summary page, the combined response form, and any other US citizenship or name change documentation, etc. Matriculated students will have access to everything in their academic records maintained in the UVISOM Registrar's Office.

At the completion of an interview; interviewers are requested to complete and return the Interview Evaluation for each applicant (Appendix) within 24 hours. Interviewers should be aware that all information provided in their assessment is privileged information that will not normally be shared with the applicant.

One further consideration in this respect is that it is possible that someday we will be involved in a lawsuit concerning an applicant. On the very rare occasion when an active admissions record is subpoenaed by the court, the confidentiality of MSAC members' writing will be compromised. Therefore, it is recommended that written comments be carefully considered and limited to matters that could be easily explained, supported, or defended in a court of law.

B. Application for Admissions

The only method by which students (excluding transfer applicants) may make application to the M.D. Program is through the on-line American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS).

1. Requirements for Admissions

The UVISOM has established certain academic prerequisite courses for admission. These requirements set forth the criteria, which must be met before an applicant can be admitted to the institution.

In order to be admitted, an applicant must have completed a minimum of 90 semester (135 quarter) hours of undergraduate course credit at an appropriately accredited college or university. In addition, the applicant must have completed the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) receiving a minimum score of 500, a minimum overall GPA of 3.3 and at least two semesters (or three quarters) of study in Physics with laboratory, two semesters (or three quarters) of study in General Biology (or Zoology), two semesters (or three quarters) of General Chemistry with laboratory, two semesters (or three quarters) of Organic Chemistry with laboratory, , two semesters (or three quarters) of Mathematics (to include the study of introductory calculus and statistics), and two semesters (or three quarters) of English (to include the study of English composition) .* UVISOM may offer provisional admittance to those students lacking a required course if the student satisfactorily completes the course the summer before the beginning of the first year of medical school, providing that all other requirements are met. In the case of a student offered provisional acceptance, the student must successfully complete the course and provide a final transcript prior to matriculation. It should be noted that we do not support or encourage an undergraduate college major in any area. Undergraduate majors in either the humanities or the sciences are equally acceptable. Those who do not pursue a science major are advised to complete as many basic science courses as possible to demonstrate science academic ability to an admissions committee.

*UVISOM will consider AP, IB, CAPE classes for which student received college credit to count as a course.

Recommended Courses:

- Behavioral Science – 1 semester (or 2 quarters)
- Biostatistics- 1 semester (or 2 quarters)
- Ethics - 1 semester (or 2 quarters)
- Foreign Language - 2 semesters (or three quarters)
- Genetics - 1 semester (or 2 quarters)
- Humanities - 2 semesters (or three quarters)
- Biochemistry - 1 semester (or 2 quarters)

2. State Residency Classification

In the initial screening of the application, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will take note of the residency entry within the AMCAS and Supplemental Applications. While the state of residency is indicated by the student in the AMCAS and Supplemental Applications, the UVISOM will determine state residency based upon the state Residency Affidavit which is submitted by the applicant after receiving an offer of acceptance.

"Legal Residence" has many different definitions and connotations depending upon the use of the terminology. For most purposes, in order to be considered as a resident of the Virgin Islands, one must reside within the state for some specified period of time. When in question, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will consult the UVI General Counsel for final resolution regarding residency issues.

C. Advanced Standing (Transfer) Students

During the first few years we do not plan to solicit or accept transfer applicants. This information is included only for future policy reference purposes.

It is desirable that the UVISOM maintain a student enrollment at or about its maximum authorized size. Students occasionally withdraw from, or are dismissed from, the institution for various reasons. When this occurs, it is sometimes necessary to consider students for transfer. Due to the structure of the curriculum, it is most likely that students will be accepted into the third year only.

This process is very much like the process of selection of first-year students, but additional information is available, including the academic record of the student's medical school performance. The most common point at which transfers occur is between the second and third year of the medical curriculum. By this time, a student has completed their basic science requirements and is ready to begin the clinical phase of their education. It is an institutional requirement that, in order to be granted a degree from the UVISOM, a student must complete at a minimum the last two full years of work within the UVISOM M.D. program.

To be eligible for transfer, a student must meet all of the prerequisites of a first year student applying to our program, be a United States citizen, eligible resident alien, or asylee, be in good

academic standing (eligible to return) to their previous institution, and have completed a similar curriculum to allow direct transfer without supplementation. In addition, a student's previous enrollment must have been at an LCME or AOA accredited medical school; in most cases we will give priority to those who are attending an LCME accredited program.

The same attributes are sought in a transfer applicant as in a beginning student. The student must give the Committee indications of their ability to accomplish the academic requirements of the curriculum and must demonstrate appropriate attitudes and communication skills. In all instances, students must have demonstrated their academic competency. This is verified through medical school transcripts, a letter of good standing from their previous medical school's dean of students, a copy of their previous AMCAS application, previous MCAT scores, a current state residency affidavit, and a passing score on the USMLE STEP I Examination. Selection for admission with advanced standing is based on a competitive selection process among all transfer applicants.

1. Requests for transfer applications

Requests for transfer will be accepted via email or U.S. Postal Service after January 1st of the calendar year in which they desire to transfer, and must be completed, with the exception of final medical school transcripts and USMLE Step I scores, no later than March 15th of the same year.

2. Transfer Applicant Responsibilities

Prompt submission of all required documents is the responsibility of the applicant. No applicant will be given consideration until all application materials are on file. In this context, required documents and materials include: request for transfer letter/email detailing desire and reasons for transfer, transcripts, letters from current institution Dean of Students, MCAT score within the three years of their matriculation to their current medical program, understanding of technical standards for admission, and USMLE Step I scores.

3. Transfer Applicant STEP I Score

Students applying for acceptance as a third year medical student must have taken and successfully passed the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) STEP I before they can officially be accepted for enrollment. Qualified applicants, who would otherwise meet acceptance criteria, may be offered conditional acceptance, pending receipt of a passing score. The applicant's performance on the STEP I will be considered with respect to national normative data for the specific administration of the exam, as well as the performance of present UCF students on STEP I. Failure to pass the Step I on the first attempt will be cause for rescinding a conditional offer of acceptance.

4. Transfer Applicant Selection

Generally applications would be completed between January and March of the year that the applicant desired to transfer. During early April the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will convene a meeting with the Dean and the MSAC Chair to review and select a transfer applicant from the pool of completed transfer applications. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will send the acceptance letter to the transfer applicant requesting that they accept or decline our offer.

D. The Application File

The major portion of the student applicant file is maintained on-line in the AMCAS system. AMCAS updates schools with information initiated by the student and, using official school transcripts, verifies the academic work of the student. The Office of Admissions will provide electronic files to the MSAC Members during the pre-Committee file review period. These files will be accessible via the Internet and will include the following information for each student being reviewed:

- AMCAS Application
- UVISOM Supplemental Application (not to be used in UVISOM inaugural year)
- Letters of Recommendation that may include:
 - Faculty Letters (3 minimum), or
 - 1 Pre-Professional Evaluation Package, and
 - Character Letters (1 minimum)
- Interview Evaluations (2)
- Other recommendations, transcripts or general correspondence as available

Important: All information in the applicant's file is privileged, confidential information. None of the data is to be shown to or discussed with the applicant or any non-MSAC member at any time. The Admissions Office will advise MSAC members of presentation assignments via email once files are ready for review.

Printing of applicants files by MSAC members is discouraged. If MSAC members do print files they must be protected from compromise and should be brought to the next MSAC meeting or the Admissions Office for proper disposal.

E. Preliminary Screening of Applicants

Applications are received electronically in the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions from the AMCAS during the designated application period. All applications received will be evaluated by Office of Student Affairs and Admissions to ensure that they are complete and meet minimum requirements established by the Admissions Committee. The Office of Student Affairs will communicate with applicants upon receipt of verified information from AMCAS and ensure that applicants receive access to the Supplemental Application.

Completed applications contain the following elements:

- Required Basic Application and Supplemental Application - Applicants to the UVISOM M.D. program will be required to complete an application through the online American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) and a UVISOM Supplemental Application form.
 - Supplemental Application: Upon receipt of a verified AMCAS Application the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions conducts a brief review to ensure that the application meets minimum academic requirements and other factors related to citizenship and academic coursework. Once satisfied that the application meets, or is likely to meet the stated requirements, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will send a link to the Supplemental Application via email.
- Four Recommendation Letters - Applicants must submit letters of recommendation from three faculty members (two science faculty, one non-science faculty). A composite pre-med letter from an advising office or pre-med committee may be substituted for the three faculty letters. For a non-traditional student who has an advanced degree or post-graduate employment, recommendations from the student's employment supervisors or graduate faculty mentors may be substituted for the faculty letters.
 - Each applicant must also submit one letter of recommendation provided by those who know the applicant and can provide information regarding the character of the applicant. Character-letters can be from work supervisors or peers, academic peers, those with whom he or she has volunteered or shadowed, clergy, neighbors, etc. Character-letters from family members or future spouses are not accepted. All letters of recommendation must be submitted via AMCAS.
- Quantitative Characteristics:
 - Minimum MCAT Score: 500
 - Minimum Overall GPA: 3.3
 - Applicants have completed all required prerequisite courses (or have been offered provisional admittance described above)
- Application Fee: TBD

When all components of a file have been received and noted as complete, the Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will review the file to ensure that the applicant meets, or will meet, all prerequisites for admission before matriculation. Those applications that do not meet minimum requirements will be identified for a final rejection review. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions and the Chair of the MSAC will review the file to ensure that UVISOM does not desire to interview any applicants designated for rejection. Upon completion of this final review, the file will be identified for rejection or interview consideration accordingly.

Deadline Extensions

Application deadlines may be extended for students who substantiate that a situation beyond their control prevented completion within the prescribed time frame. Requests for extensions should be referred to the Director of Student Affairs and Admissions.

F. Selection for Interview

The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will continually monitor the applications to identify those that have been recently completed. Once an application is complete, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will review the application to ensure that it meets the minimum academic criteria as set by the MSAC. Those not meeting the academic criteria or not offered provisional acceptance (for those who have completed all academic criteria except one required prerequisite class) will be sent a rejection letter after coordination with the MSAC Chair. The applications that meet or exceed the minimum requirements will be identified for a full review and evaluation by the Preliminary Review and Evaluation Panel (PREP). The review team will review applications based on the academic and extra-curricular criteria and determine their competitiveness for an interview based on the standard applicant interview rubric (Appendix). While GPA and MCAT scores are considered, equally important are qualities that show diversity, personal achievement, a motivation for the profession of medicine, and compassion for others. The UVISOM employs a holistic approach to reviewing applications. A holistic review includes a focus, not just on academic qualities, but considers an applicant's life experiences and personal attributes. Given the UVISOM mission "to educate students from the diverse communities of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the wider Caribbean and the continental US as physicians dedicated to the health and well-being of their communities", holistic review will particularly focus on student's background, personal statement and a dedication to the health of the Caribbean region.

The PREP will categorize applicants into one of three categories: 1) exceptional applicant, interview as soon as possible; 2) student meets requirements and may be interviewed if possible or; 3) not competitive for an interview, reject the applicant. Those in the "Category 1" are not ranked, but have an opportunity to progress to the interviewing stage of the admissions process. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will compile and maintain a list of applicant files that have completed PREP review. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will regularly review the PREP listing and compose interview groups based on available candidates. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions has the responsibility to construct groups that represent all of the qualities, skills, and commitments that are desired the UVISOM classroom and community.

The PREP is composed of three MSAC members who will serve for the entire application cycle to ensure consistency. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide administrative support to PREP. PREP members must be available to review files often during the July to January review season to ensure that the interview pool contains the best applicants at the earliest possible time. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will administrate the PREP process and ensure that the best applicants are invited for an interview. Invitations are sent to candidates via e-mail by the Director of Admissions.

G. Invitation for Interview

Interviews are by invitation only. When applicants are selected for an interview, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will contact each applicant by email to determine a specific date for the student's visit. The invitation will be confirmed by the Admissions Office via email. This email will include the date of interview visit as well as information regarding how to get to the office, parking, and options for accommodations. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will be as flexible as possible when scheduling applicants for an interview date.

As soon as possible after the interview has been confirmed, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will begin to prepare all of the pertinent information for the MSAC electronic review system. Information will include all application data from AMCAS and the Supplemental Application, letters of recommendation, interview evaluations, and other information contained in the applicant's current application file.

H. The Interview

Students selected for interviews will be asked to come to campus for a series of two interviews conducted by faculty (once there are UVISOM matriculated senior students they may participate in interviews).

The interview process will be semi-blinded whereby the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide the interviewer access to some of the application information prior to the interview. The data provided will include the interviewee's name and other information, such as their "Personal Statement" and the "Experience" sections of the AMCAS application as well as the Supplemental Application Form. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide secure access to these files via an Internet website, to facilitate interviewer review of the application materials prior to the interview. Each interviewer will be provided with scripted interview questions for each applicant. Each applicant will receive two separate, one-on-one interviews during their visit. Interviews are intended to be for 30 minutes in duration and at least one of the two interviews will be conducted by a faculty member. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions is responsible for coordinating the interview schedule and assigning scripted interview questions for each individual interview session.

At the end of the scripted interview form, interviewers are provided an area to provide an overall rating as well as a narrative explaining their experience with the applicant. The final narrative should include comments that would help the Admissions Committee understand perceived strengths and weaknesses as well as an interviewer recommendation regarding admissions and justify the final rating. All interviewers should know that all applicants who are interviewed meet the minimum academic requirements for entry into the program. As such, interviewers consider each interviewee to be a "3" (solid medical school applicant) and that ratings be moved up or down the scale based on each specific interview.

All interviewers must submit the completed Interview Evaluation Form electronically within 24 hours of the interview. When all interview summaries are received, the application file will be considered complete and will be placed on the next MSAC agenda for admissions-consideration. Normally files will be placed on the agenda only after all interview summaries are in the applicant's file.

I. Preparation for File Presentation

The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will inform all MSAC members when completed files are ready for their pre-meeting review at the secure committee Web site. Once files are ready for review, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will create a three-member MSAC Review Team (RT) to independently review all of the applicants that have been assigned.

To assist the RT, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will email a template for each applicant that will be assigned for review by the RT. Upon completion of their review, each RT member should return the completed review template to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions via email.

J. File Presentation and Voting

The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will ensure that applicant files are available at each meeting. Generally this will be via electronic projection of the AMCAS Summary page for each applicant during the presentation. Upon completion of each presentation, MSAC members will discuss the applicant's file and their perception of the applicant's capability for successful completion of the program. Upon completion of discussion, each voting member will score the applicant on a secret ballot. Like the interview rating scale, each applicant presented should be considered as a "3" (solid medical school applicant) and that ratings be moved up or down the scale based on all information presented. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions tabulates the scores at the meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide the Chair of the MSAC with the final score. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will maintain the individual voting totals and any Presenter Forms in the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions. The Presenter Forms will be used as a source document by the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions or MSAC Chair for future advising of that applicant if necessary. The Presenter Forms will be kept as part of the student's non-academic file upon matriculation to maintain the confidentiality of the presenter and presentation.

The Admissions Committee as a whole has the final say as to who gets accepted to UVISOM.

K. Dissemination of MSAC Decisions to Applicants

The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will advise applicants of the MSAC decision as soon as possible after the conclusion of the meeting. The Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will contact each applicant after the meeting via email to advise him/her of his/her status. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide written notification to each student who has been accepted or rejected. Each of the applicants whom the Admissions Committee placed on a cumulative wait list will be inserted in the list based on his/her final total score.

The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will maintain the wait list and will maintain a full class by admitting wait-listed applicants from the top portion of the list as openings become available. The Office

will also coordinate with the Chair of the MSAC when it is time to send rejection letters to those who are on the list but are not likely to be offered acceptance.

L. Offers of Acceptance

The process of offering acceptances is continuous throughout the year. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has established Traffic Rules, which state that no school should make any offer of acceptance (other than to Early Decision Applicant) prior to October 15th. Per the AAMC guidelines, once the October 15 date has passed, we are free to offer acceptances to Regular MD applicants. Also consistent with AAMC guidelines, UVISOM must report a full class by March 30th of each admission year. MSAC members are obligated not to discuss any specifics regarding Committee decision with any applicant. Inquiries along these lines should be referred to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions or the Chair of the MSAC.

M. Accommodation for Disability

On occasion, an applicant to the UVISOM identifies a disability that may impact their ability to meet the Technical Standards for Admission, Progression and Graduation from the UVISOM. The fact that an applicant has a disability cannot be considered in any way when making the decision to accept the applicant. The Admissions Office will provide each accepted applicant with a chance to review the Technical Standards via the website and respond via the Composite Acceptance Response Form whether he or she is requesting accommodation. When an accepted applicant returns the response form indicating that he or she will require an accommodation, the Director of Student Affairs and Admissions will provide the response form to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions will initiate contact with the accepted applicant to begin the negotiation process for an accommodation. If, after negotiation, an accommodation cannot be provided the offer of acceptance will be rescinded by the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.

N. Characteristics of Accepted Applicants

Many factors will be considered to provide the Admissions Committee with an opportunity to interview a diverse group of applicants who will allow the UVISOM student body matriculated class to have a wide array of experience. In addition to evidence supporting academic success of the applicant, our selection criteria also include community service, examples of leadership, diversity of background, and suitability for our community of students. Several informational components are combined to make this evaluation (following list based on the AAMC 15 Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students):

- **Service Orientation:** Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society; locally, nationally, and globally.
- **Social Skills:** Demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and

behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.

- Cultural Competence: Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Teamwork: Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information, and knowledge with others, and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.
- Oral Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.
- Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.
- Reliability and Dependability: Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.
- Resilience and Adaptability: Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.
- Capacity for Improvement: Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.
- Critical Thinking: Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- Quantitative Reasoning: Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.
- Scientific Inquiry: Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.
- Written Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences.
- Living Systems: Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.
- Human Behavior: Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

While many factors will be considered, it will not be necessary for all applicants selected for an interview to have every characteristic noted.

O. Conflicts of Interest in Admissions Process

Outside influences are not considered during deliberations on admissions, and extraneous materials are not made part of an applicant's file. Political and financial factors are not considered in the admissions process. No financial data is made available to the committee, and letters of support from individuals not associated with an applicant's college, lab, or volunteer activity are not considered in the selection process.

Additionally, interview team members are advised on a list of questions that should not be asked during the interview to prevent decisions based on political or financial factors.

Finally, if a committee member has a close personal relationship with the student, that committee member may not do the file presentation or vote on offering admission for that student nor make any attempt to sway the decisions of committee members regarding this student.