CHOOSING A SCHOOL

The AMCAS, AADSAS and AACOMAS online applications require you to submit a list of schools which will receive your application. As with everything in the process, this requires a great deal of thought.

The appropriate choice of schools varies from student to student. It is the choice of schools, not the number of schools that counts. Remember that the online services charge a fee according to the number of schools you select. Draw up a list of 20-30 possible schools and bring it in to the Pre-health advisor for discussion. Below are some criteria that should be considered in the selection of a medical school:

CLASS SIZE

This is a matter of personal preference.

RESIDENCE RESTRICTIONS

Most public schools sharply limit the number of out-of-state students they will accept. Unless a student has truly an outstanding record, it is often a waste of time to apply to most public schools out of one’s own home state. Carefully examine the information on selection factors in each school’s section of the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR). Also, consult the schools’ websites.

COSTS

Private schools tend to be small and more expensive. You will be able to finance your medical education by university loans and scholarships or government financial aid programs. For further information, consult the MSAR or Admissions Requirements, United States and Canadian Dental Schools (ARUCDS).

QUALITY

The quality of the education obtained is largely up to the individual student. The “best” school for one student may well be quite different from the “best” for another, according to their own interests and career aspirations.

CURRICULA AND GRADES

The AAMC Curriculum Directory describes the curriculum and grading system at each school. [http://services.aamc.org/curridir/start.cfm](http://services.aamc.org/curridir/start.cfm).

Age
See information in the MSAR or ARUCDS and the selection factor section of each school’s description.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Students who are not permanent residents of the United States will have an extremely difficult to virtually impossible time securing an acceptance at an American medical school. Preference in admissions is given to United States citizens and to permanent residents. United States government funding is only available to these two groups. If you are accepted as an international student to an American medical school, the school will expect you to have tuition for all four years of your medical education held in an escrow account in a bank before permitting you to matriculate.

MINORITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED APPLICANTS

See MSAR or ARUCDS and consult with an advisor.

CLINICAL FACILITIES

Some people feel that the greater the number of beds and patients, then the better the clinical instruction. Others argue that the number of patients is irrelevant since the patients are carefully selected for teaching. You should be aware of the clinical facilities available at each school.

CLINICAL VS. RESEARCH FOCUS

The notion that one interested in research should attend a “research oriented” school and that one interested in clinical medicine should attend a “clinical” school breaks down since many schools offer excellent training in both areas.

RESIDENT PLACEMENT

This information is made available by schools on their websites and is often seen as an indication of how competitive a given medical school is. Some schools are noted for their strong specialties, i.e., neurology at Columbia, Orthopedics at Cornell, etc.