

PRE-MED 101: THE JOURNEY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

MARCH 2ND, 2021

TLE: Method Series | Diversity Pre-Med Panel

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OUTLINE

- Becoming a Doctor
 - What can a career in medicine look like?
 - What is the timeline?
- Applying to Medical School
 - What do medical schools look for?
 - What is the timeline for applying?
 - What are the major milestones?

BONUS TOPICS

1. [Medical School Prerequisites](#)
2. [Paying for Medical School](#)
3. [MD-PHD Programs](#)
4. [Gap Years](#)
5. [Personal Statement](#)
6. [MCAT](#)
7. [Recommendation Letters](#)
8. [AAMC Application Resources](#)
9. [Interviews](#)
10. [Harvard Medical School](#)

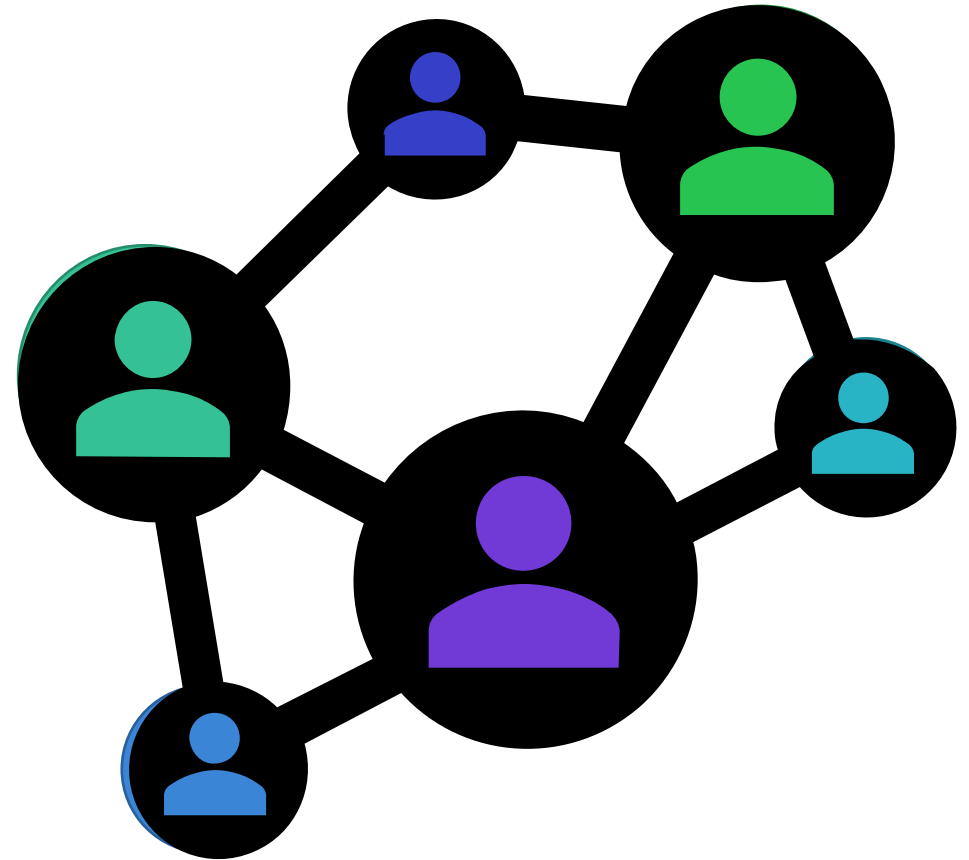


BECOMING A DOCTOR

CAREERS IN MEDICINE

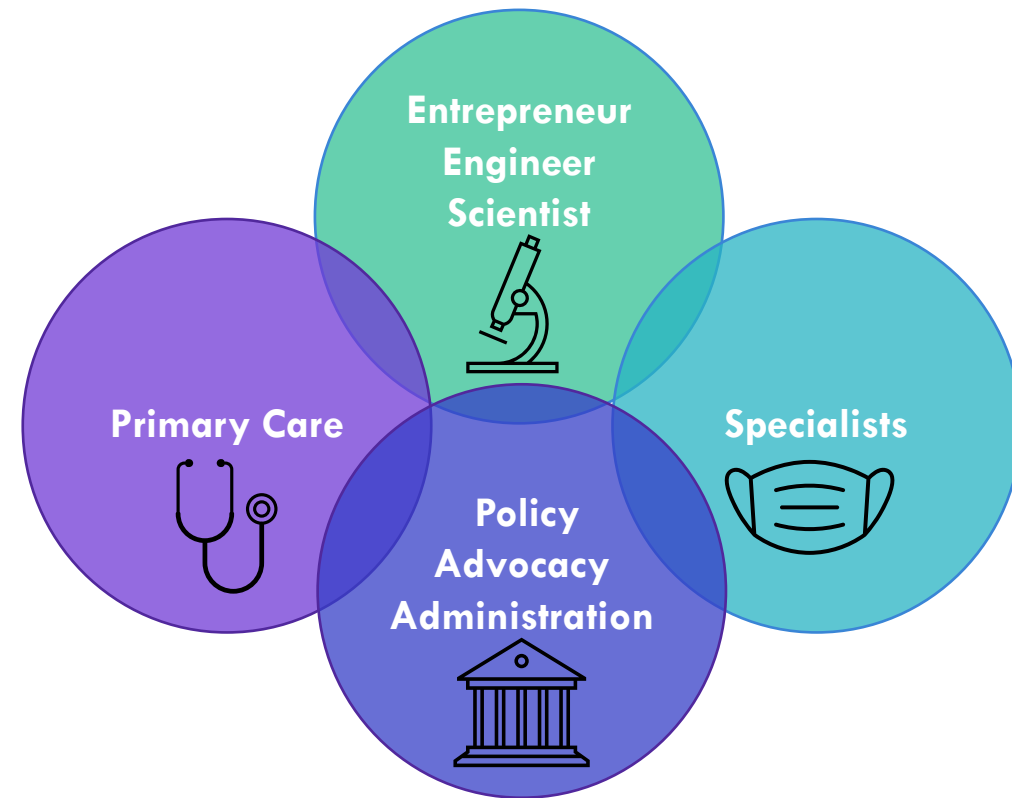
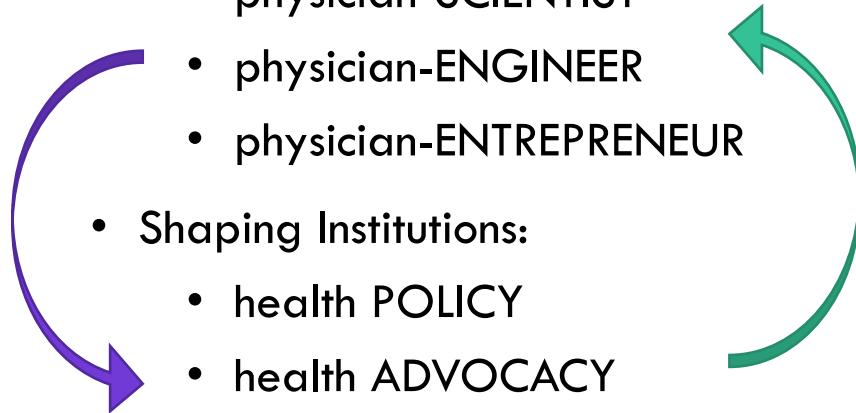
- Physician
- Nurse Practitioner
- Dentist
- Physical Therapist
- Dietitian
- Case Manager
- Psychologist
- Medical interpreter
- Audiologist
- Nursing
- Physician Assistant
- Pharmacists
- Occupation Therapist
- Nutritionist
- Social Workers
- Spiritual Care Provider
- Speech Language Pathology
- Genetic Counselor

AND MANY MORE!



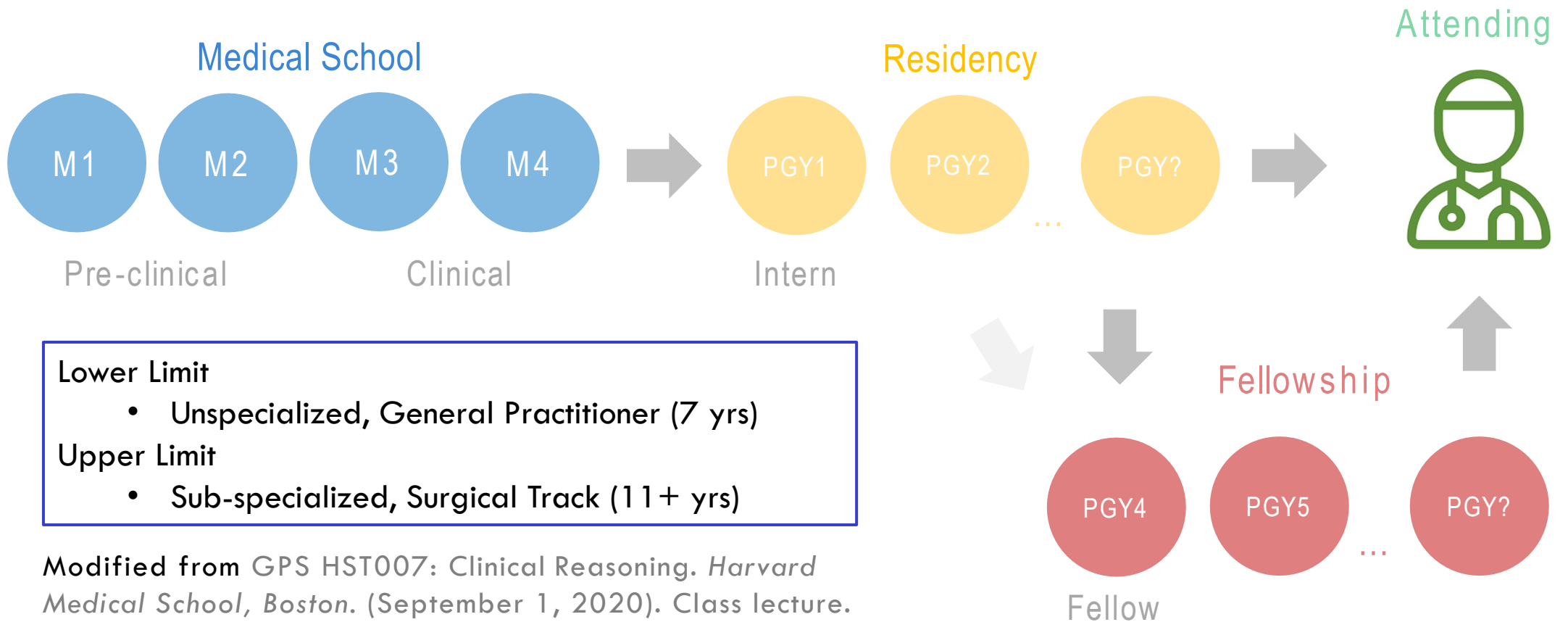
CAREERS OF A PHYSICIAN

- Broad vs Focused:
 - Primary Care Provider
 - Specialists
- Driving Innovation:
 - physician-SCIENTIST
 - physician-ENGINEER
 - physician-ENTREPRENEUR
- Shaping Institutions:
 - health POLICY
 - health ADVOCACY
 - health ADMINISTRATION

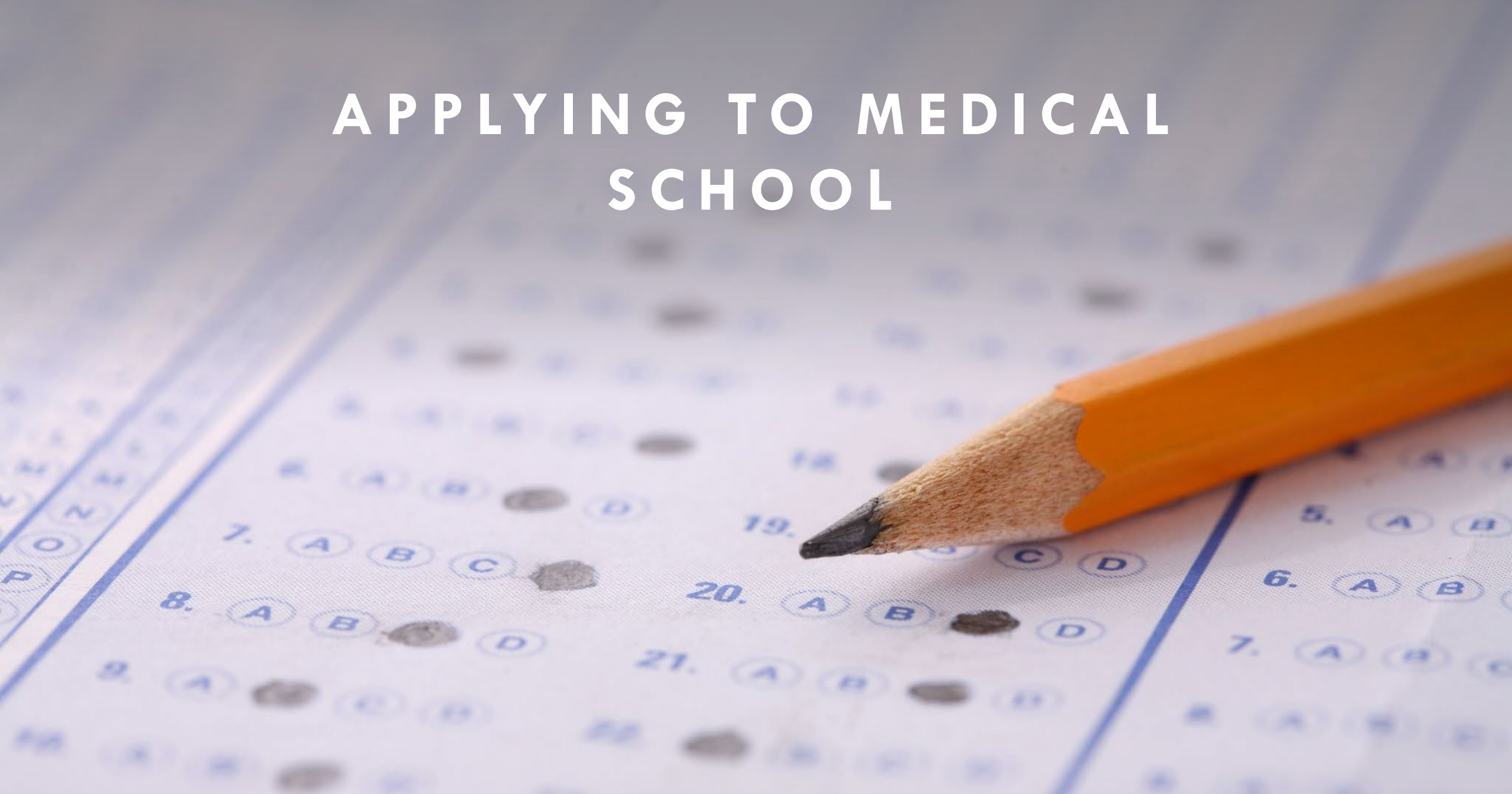


AND MANY MORE!!!

MEDICAL TRAINING

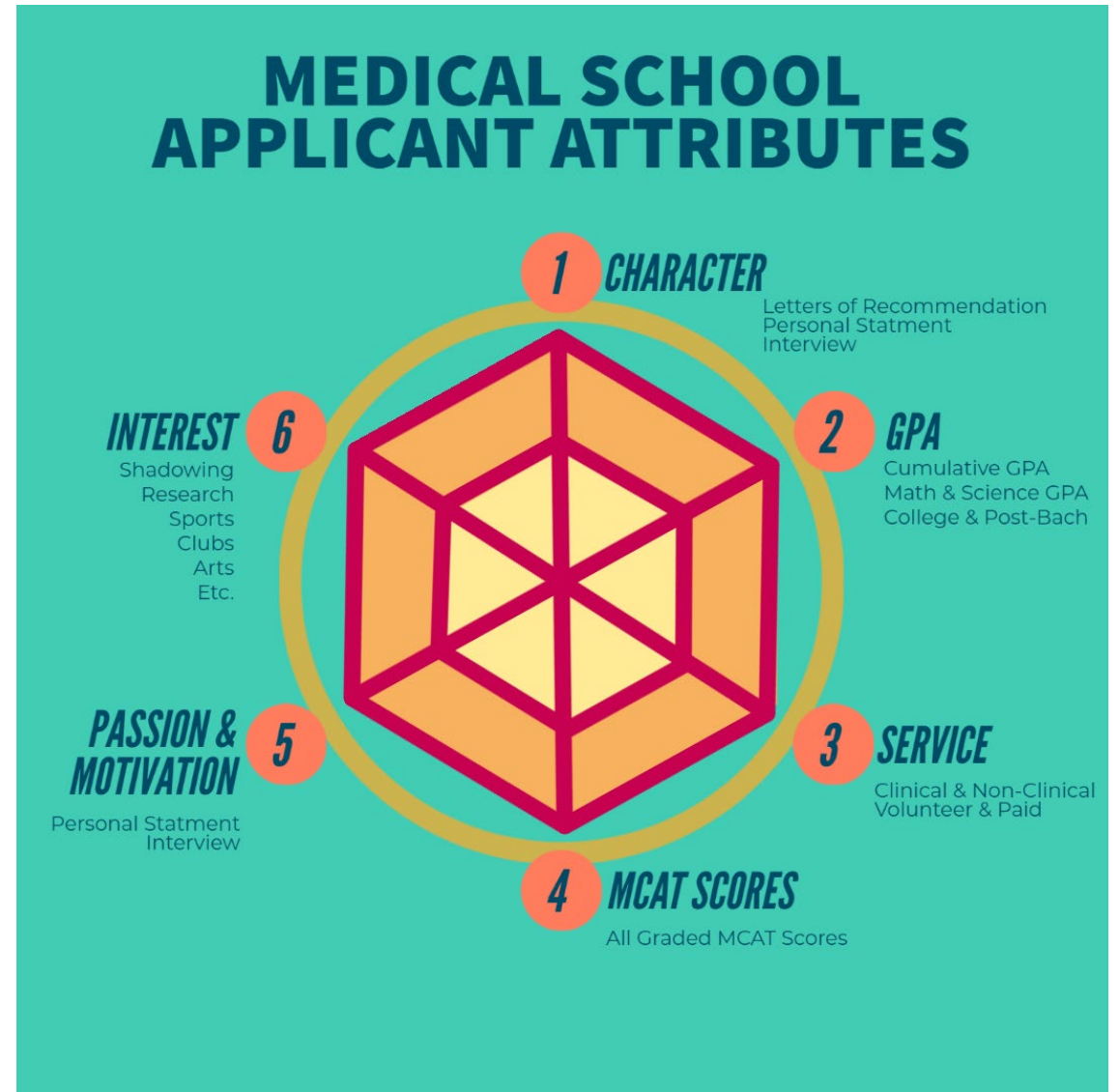


APPLYING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL



HOLISTIC REVIEW

- The goal is to become a **well-rounded** applicant
- Do your best to shine in every attribute with the understanding that:
 - A single attribute will not guarantee you acceptance to a medical school
 - A single shortcoming will not prevent you from getting accepted



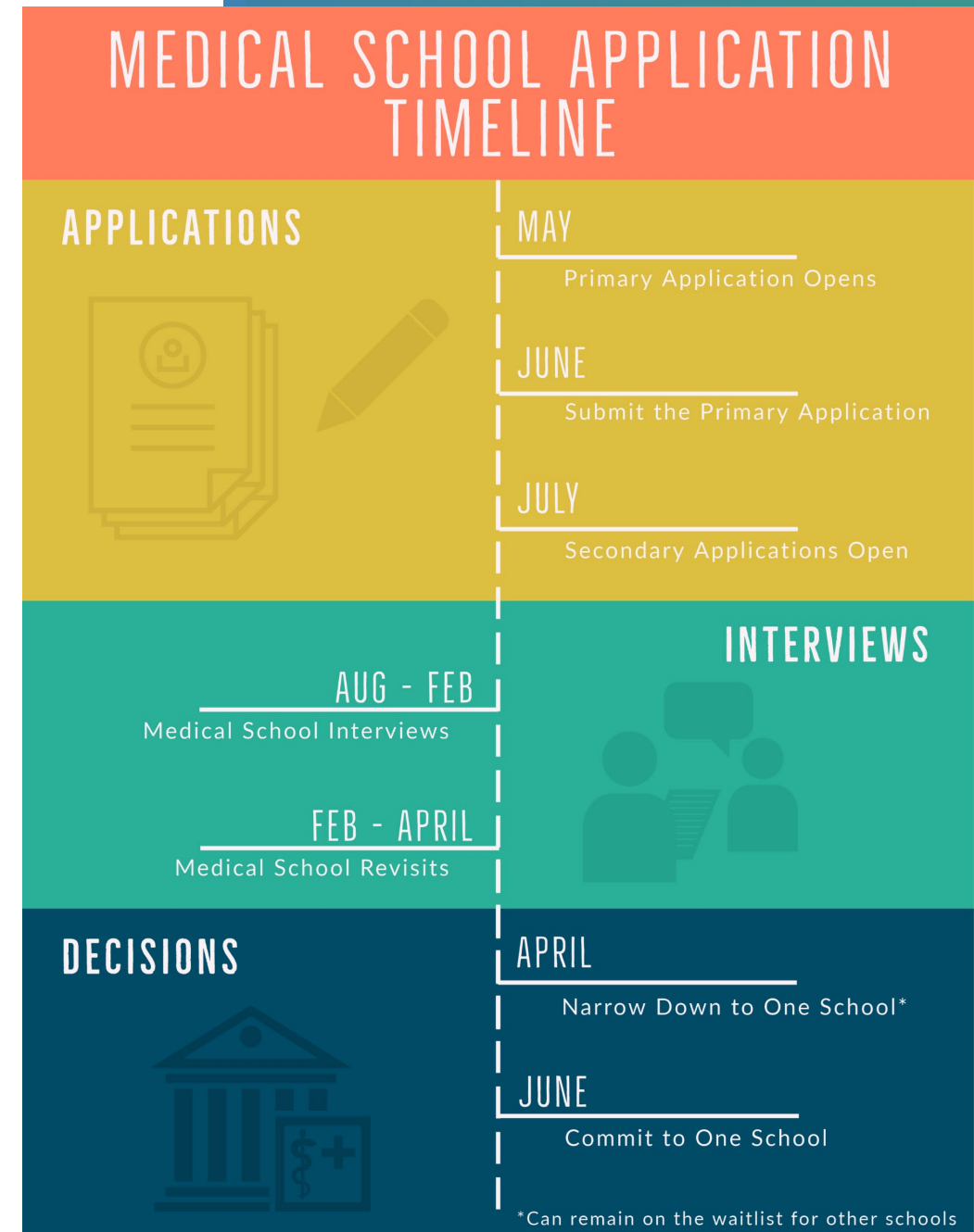
THE PROCESS

Applying to medical school is a **year-long** endeavor

- **Applications** open in the *spring*
- **Interviews** start in the *fall*
- **Decisions** are made by the following *spring*
- **Matriculation** begins the following *fall*

Consult AAMC's website for actual dates and deadlines:

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/>



MAJOR MILESTONES BEFORE STARTING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Completing most of the medical school prerequisite courses
- Finishing all requirements for the committee letter (@ Cornell [HCEC](#))
- Taking the MCAT exam
- Attaining Recommendation Letters
- Drafting a Personal Statement



STAGE SPECIFIC ADVICE

- **Freshmen/Sophomore year**
 - Develop a plan to complete all your pre-medical requirements
- **Junior year**
 - Determine whether you want to apply straight through or take a gap year
 - Straight through = applying in spring of junior year
- **Senior/Gap years**
 - If applying straight through, you'll be interviewing for medical schools throughout fall of senior year
 - If taking a gap year, start applying for job/research/post-bach positions

GENERAL ADVICE

- Do well in school
- Seek out opportunities to develop your skills and perspectives (e.g. travel, work, research, volunteer, shadow)
- Be true to yourself and spend your time judiciously
 - Get fully engaged in your passions
 - Don't waste time on things you don't enjoy
- Plan ahead and give yourself time

BONUS TOPICS

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MEDICAL SCHOOL PREREQUISITES

Required	Suggested
Biology (1 yr including lab experience)	Behavioral Science e.g. psychology, sociology, etc.
Chemistry: Inorganic, Organic, Biochemistry, lab (2yrs)	
Biochemistry (1 semester)	
Physics (1 yr)	Physics lab
Math: Calculus & Statistics (1 semester each)	Biostatistics
Writing (1 yr)	

- Every medical school sets its own requirements. These are general guidelines, but please look up schools individually before applying
- Contact your university's pre-health office to determine which courses at your school satisfy these requirements
- Most medical schools require college-level classes to satisfy these prerequisites i.e. you can use AP credits to skip the first sequences of Bio, Math, or Physics, but you cannot use them to satisfy your prerequisites
- Medical schools have become more flexible in determining what classes can be used to fulfill requirements. It is always safest to complete the basic courses, but don't be afraid to advocate for yourself to get a course counted

PAYING FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL

- Loans (need-based, low-interest loans with deferred interest)
- Scholarships & Grants (merit & need-based)
- Stipends (need-based)
- Health Professions Scholarship Program (Army, Airforce, Navy, Marines)
- National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program
- State-funded loan forgiveness programs
- NIH-funded Medical Scientist Training Program

MD-PHD PROGRAMS

- **Investment**

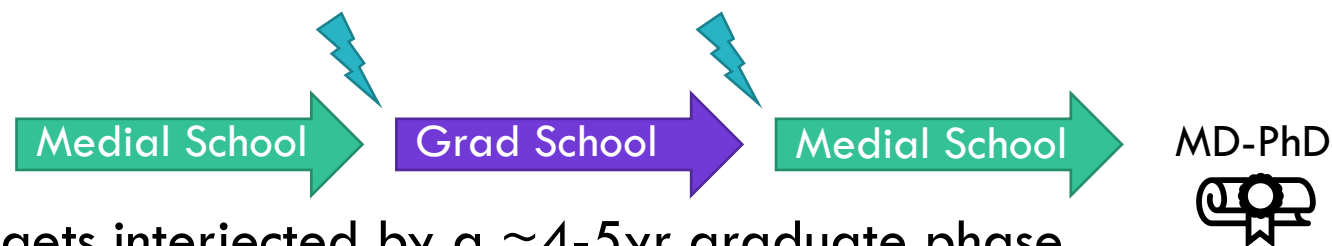
- Need sustained research experience (>1 year) to apply
- Commitment to complete a PhD program (4-5 years average)

- **Funding**

- Complete funding for medical and graduate school
- Stipend to cover cost of living

- **Timeline**

- 4-year medical program that gets interjected by a ~4-5yr graduate phase
- Total program takes about 8-9yrs



CAN I DO RESEARCH WITH JUST AN MD?

Absolutely! But if you already know that research will be a major facet of your career, consider that:

- the scientific training must come from somewhere
 - MDs who want to pursue high-level research will still need to complete several years of research training (e.g. post-doc)
- MDPHD programs offer lots of structure, support, and perks
 - The MDPHD office will match you with mentors and work to keep your degree program on a timely track
 - MDPHD programs typically offer lots of enriching experiences like conferences and career seminars

GAP YEARS

Taking a gap year is a personal decision.

You don't need to if you don't want to but know that it is an option.

Reasons to take a gap year

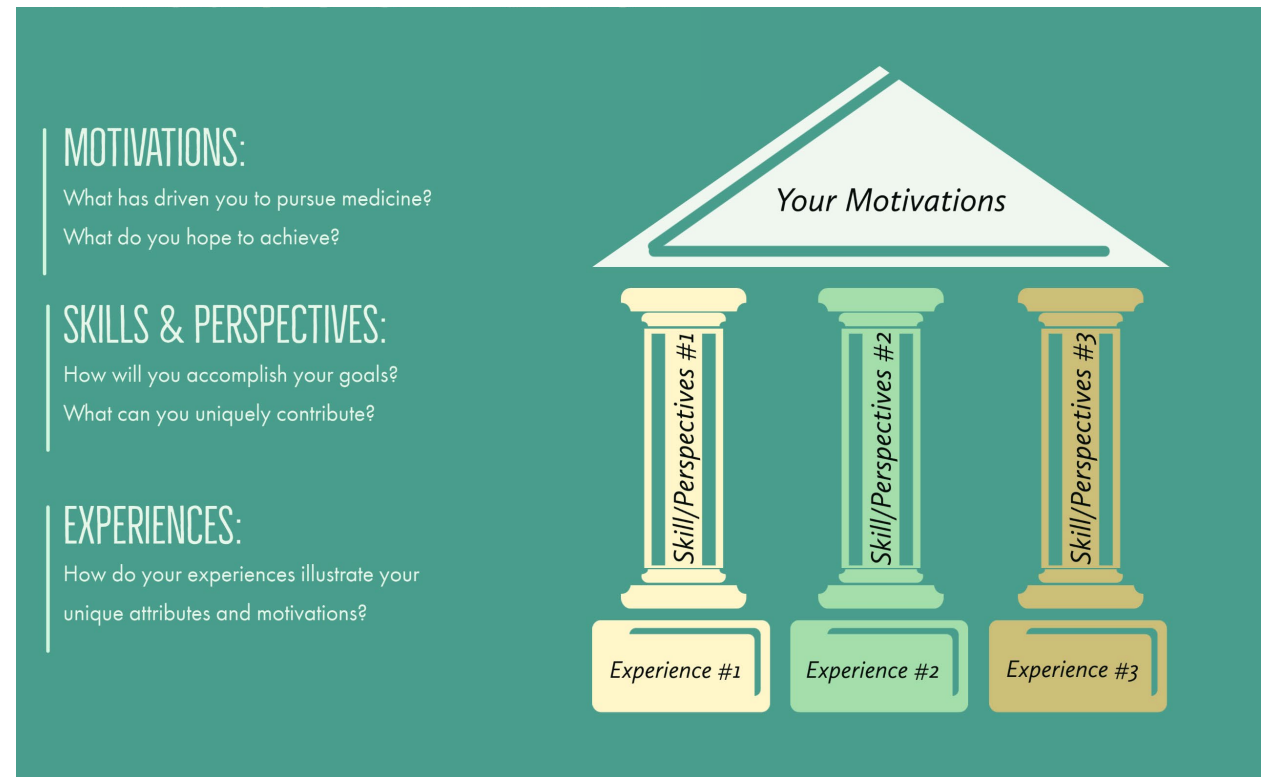
- Relax before medical school
- Gain more experience: research, clinical work, advocacy, etc.
- Explore other professions
- Earn another degree (e.g. Masters)
- Improve your GPA with post-bach programs

PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Don't be basic
- Show, don't tell
- Speak to your own experiences
- Be the center of your story
- Get your first draft done early and then edit, edit, edit!

Same rules can be applied to secondary essays. Past essay prompts can be found here:

<https://www.prospectedoctor.com/harvard-medical-school-secondary/>



MCAT TIPS

- Schedule your exam date early
- Give yourself enough time to study
- Broadly review content first and then burrow deep into weak spots
- Study how to take the test: question banks, timed reading, practice exams etc.
- Take AAMC practice exams leading up to the actual test date, good metric for how you will do on test day
- Prepare for the exam as if you were only going to take it once (but know that you can take it again)

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

- How many?
 - 3-5 letters
 - Some schools will require at least 3 letters (committee letters count)
 - Some schools will *allow* up to 5 letters (sometimes more)
- Who to ask?
 - Senior individuals with whom you have worked directly: instructors, advisors, mentors, supervisors
 - People who can speak to your:
 - Leadership and character
 - Intellectual curiosity and analytical skills
 - Commitment to service
 - Ability to excel in school


APPLICATION RESOURCES

- AAMC Fee Assistance Program <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/fee-assistance-program/>
- AAMC Application Guide <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/applying-medical-school/>

INTERVIEWS

- Think of stories/experiences that highlight your character and practice answering common interview questions:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iWWoo7LXDF9cDX12jKqPym_yjJlj62YGwPhxIDKftp4/edit?usp=sharing

- Dress comfortably
- Ask lots of questions and write down the answers!
- Talk to current students
- Be your most authentic self 

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

– MD TRACKS –

TRAINING THE CLINICAL LEADERS, RESEARCHERS, &
INNOVATORS OF TOMORROW

PATHWAYS

VS

HST

COMPOSITION

~ 135 MD STUDENTS
CLASSES TAKEN WITH
DMD STUDENTS
ATTEND MOST CLASSES WITH
~25% OF THE COHORT

~30 MD STUDENTS
CLASSES TAKEN WITH
PHD STUDENTS
ATTEND ALL CLASSES WITH
100% OF THE COHORT

CURRICULUM

1 YR PRE-CLERKSHIP
BLOCK SCHEDULING
LONGITUDINAL CLINICAL
EXPERIENCES

1.5 YR PRE-CLERKSHIP
SEMESTER SCHEDULING
LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH
EXPERIENCES

TEACHING MODALITIES

FLIPPED CLASSROOM,
CASE-BASED COLLABORATIVE
LEARNING, & FREQUENT EXAMS

DIDACTIC LECTURES,
PROBLEM SETS, &
FINAL EXAMS

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SCHOLARLY PROJECT

RESEARCH THESIS