

Alpert Medical School

Guidelines for Holistic Review of Admissions Candidates

Selection Principles

The mission of the Medical Admissions Committee is to annually recruit a class of highly qualified candidates committed to promoting the health of individuals and communities through medical training, research, and clinical excellence.

The admissions process is guided by a systematic review of applicants that considers four principal characteristics: academic achievement, evidence of leadership and excellence, maturity and self-awareness, and demonstrated service to one's community. These qualities are viewed within the context of the resources that are available to the applicant and the challenges that the candidate has overcome in the pursuit of a medical education. Evidence of motivation and commitment to medicine, personal integrity and compassion are also important considerations. Academic records, recommendations, essays and interview assessments are the primary measures used in the evaluation process.

Considerations for Holistic Evaluation of Candidates

The recruitment of a diverse class of medical students requires members of the Admissions Committee to assess accomplishments and personal qualities within the context of a candidate's background, life experiences, advantages and disadvantages. In addition to academic achievement, the factors that committee members are expected to consider in their evaluations are listed below.

- Demonstrated commitment to serving and/or advocating for a particular community or patient population.
- Articulation of experiences/competencies that may have been shaped by racial/ethnic/cultural factors;
- Paid employment before age 18 or employment during college, especially during the academic year. Students who have contributed to their family's support or who have had to work while attending college to defray educational expenses cannot be expected to participate in extracurricular activities to the same degree as applicants without such obligations.
- Experience working in diverse cultural environments, not limited to work abroad.
- Highest level of education, and occupations of parents. The lack of role models in the applicant's home and family, or the possibility that they may be the first in their family to achieve a college or professional degree, may limit their contact with people who can help them to navigate the challenges of professional education.
- Precollege educational environment. The quality of teachers, curriculum, and available resources varies widely across high school districts. Students who are economically disadvantaged may be more likely than other students to have graduated from low-performing, economically segregated high schools with limited availability of advanced level courses and enrichment opportunities. These factors may place them at an educational disadvantage in their college studies and in performance on standardized tests.
- Cultural barriers, such as:
 - Low expectation or value placed on educational achievement;
 - Primary language other than English or language other than English spoken at home;
 - Recent immigration to US, particularly where economic circumstances were negatively impacted.
- Geographical location where applicant was raised (e.g., size of city or town; residence in a health professional shortage area).
- Special family circumstances such as:
 - Economic, educational, ethnic or cultural, racial or medical adversity experienced by applicant or their family;
 - Early life challenges (single parent household; deceased parent(s); obligation to supervise or assist siblings or disabled relative).

Educational Benefits of a Diverse Community

Alpert Medical School is dedicated to the highest standards of excellence in education, research, and health care. We seek to graduate physicians who are broadly and liberally educated, and who view medicine as a socially responsible human service profession. Alpert graduates are scientifically well-educated and capable of approaching problems from a variety of perspectives. To further our mission, it is imperative to encourage the highest level of understanding the scientific, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of medical science and public health. Commitment to such excellence in education and scholarly inquiry is best achieved by enrolling a mix of students who represent different backgrounds, perspectives, and life influences, and who will contribute to and benefit from the learning of those around them.

The medical school has a longstanding history of valuing diversity in its broadest sense to include cultural life experiences, religion; age; disability; status as a veteran; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender expression; and political ideology. The medical school also deeply values socioeconomic diversity and thus considers admission of candidates without regard to their financial circumstances.

We believe that AMS graduates are best prepared for medical practice in a pluralistic society when they learn in an environment that is characterized by, and supportive of, diversity among its students, faculty and staff. A diverse academic medical community is a core institutional value for many reasons, including the following:

- The ability to understand and respect a patient's culture is a key element in the delivery of effective care to individual patients and in referrals to appropriate community resources.
- Interaction among students from demographically diverse backgrounds contributes to the breakdown of stereotypes and biases, and thus promotes enlightened and educationally valuable discussions in both formal and informal educational settings.
- A diverse student body prepares students for effective service and leadership roles within an increasingly heterogeneous patient population, workforce, and global community.
- Greater diversity among health care professionals has been shown to contribute to more equitable and effective care, especially for medically underserved populations.