

AACOMAS® Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Applying to AACOMAS®

Q: Can I choose to apply directly to an osteopathic medical school that participates in AACOMAS, rather than apply through AACOMAS?

A: No. Schools do not process your applications directly, unless you are in a special program, and were given specific instructions. Many schools do require secondary application materials, which you should send directly to the school. The school will send you instructions. UNTHSC applicants must apply through the TMDSAS Application Service.

Q: How can I find out the status of my application?

A: You can find the status through the AACOMAS online application status check. Log in to your account and click on the Application tab.

AACOMAS normally processes an application in three to four weeks from the time the application is complete. Your application is “complete” when AACOMAS has received all required transcripts and your application. Your application will be sent to your designated colleges shortly thereafter.

Q: I applied last year and am reapplying. Can you use my application or transcripts from last year?

A: Use your user name and password from your prior year’s application. You will be given the option to roll your data forward into a new application for 2012. Follow the instructions in the online application. Your browser must allow pop-ups.

Q: How do I apply for a fee waiver?

A: A limited number of fee waivers are available to those who apply early and qualify. See page 18 for more details on fee waivers. Specific instructions for applying for a fee waiver can be found at: www.aacom.org/infofor/applicants/pages/FeeWaiver.aspx.

Q: I am having trouble trying to figure out how to fill out the online application.

A: We would be happy to help. Please review all instructions. If your question is not answered in the instructions, please contact us at: aacomas@aacom.org. Indicate the nature of your question in the subject line of your message.

Q: I plan to enter medical school next fall. When should I apply and what are the deadlines?

A: You should apply approximately one year in advance. For the entering class of fall of a given year, AACOMAS will begin accepting applications in June of the prior year. Each of the colleges has its own deadlines for receipt of applications by AACOMAS. The earliest AACOMAS college deadline is December 1, 2011, for admission to the fall 2012 entering class. The colleges’ latest deadline typically is April 1. AACOMAS recommends that you apply early, at least six weeks prior to the college’s deadlines. Most of the colleges make admissions decisions on a rolling basis, meaning they review applications, conduct interviews and make admissions decisions throughout the admissions cycle. Interview slots and even classes may be filled if you apply too close to the deadline. Depending on the number of applications received and the time of year, it may take AACOMAS up to six weeks to process applications.

Q: I’m having my transcripts sent to your office. Do I really need to list each of my courses on my application?

A: Yes. For each course, you will provide some of the same information as is listed on your transcript. You also will list additional information that classifies the course by subject area. AACOMAS will check the information against your transcripts, and a copy of this course record will be forwarded as part of your application to your designated colleges. Failure to fully complete the course record may result in your application being returned to you or may delay the processing of your application.

Q: How long will it take for my application to be processed and sent to my designated schools?

A: Although the time frame varies, AACOMAS normally processes applications in three to four weeks. Missing transcripts and/or receipt of large volumes of materials by AACOMAS can affect this time frame. If you do not see transcripts posted to your account two weeks after they were sent, please contact AACOMAS to make sure that your materials have been received. You should allow four weeks after submitting your application and all transcripts are received for processing before contacting AACOMAS regarding the status of your application. Once your application status reflects that your materials have been processed and released to your designated schools, please allow at least 10 working days for your materials to reach and be processed by the schools.

Q: I’m having difficulty entering my personal statement—any suggestions?

A: You may want to create your personal statement in a separate text editing program (*Wordpad or MS Write; you should not use Microsoft Word because it adds formatting codes to your text*), then copy and paste the statement into your application.

Q: When can I submit my application? Can I submit it before you have received my transcripts and/or official MCAT scores?

A: You can **submit** your application from June 1, 2011 until the deadline for the schools to which you want to apply. You need not wait until your official transcripts and/or MCAT scores are received to submit your application to AACOMAS. You may start your application in May 2011.

Q: Can I get a refund if I miss a school’s deadline?

A: No. Once an application is submitted, processing of the application begins. No refunds of the application fee will be made.

Q: Do I have recommendation letters sent to you?

A: No. Recommendation letters should be sent directly to the schools to which you are applying or through one of the recommendation services such as VirtualEval or Interfolio.

Q: How do I send my official MCAT scores to AACOMAS?

A: MCAT scores must be sent electronically from MCAT in order to be considered official. You can log into your MCAT account via the MCAT Testing History (THx) System and have your scores released to AACOMAS. Scores are sent to AACOMAS using your eight digit AAMC/MCAT number as identification (This number generally begins with a 0 or 1.)

Q: When will my GPA be calculated?

A: Your GPA will not be calculated until after your application is verified (three to four weeks after the application completion date).

Admissions Process and Interviews

Q: How do I compare and choose the osteopathic medical colleges I want to apply to?

A: Please review the Individual College Descriptions section on pages 28-87 to find out more about each of the colleges.

Q: What GPA and MCAT scores will make me competitive enough to be accepted to an osteopathic medical school?

A: True to the profession's holistic philosophy, osteopathic colleges tend to make admission decisions by looking at the whole applicant, rather than focusing solely on GPA and MCAT scores. Some applicants have a lower than average MCAT score, but will still be admitted because of a well-demonstrated passion for helping patients through clinical service. Each osteopathic medical school will evaluate your application based on program-specific criteria. AACOMAS is not involved in setting these



criteria or in weighing your credentials. Contact your designated osteopathic medical school(s) directly if you have any questions.

Most candidates to an osteopathic medical school have a BS, with a health or life science focus. Equivalent experiences will also be considered for admission. While many applicants are attending medical school as recent college graduates, about 25 percent of the student body is considered nontraditional. These students include many people with previous careers, international health care experience and other diverse backgrounds.

Q: When and how will I be notified about interviews?

A: AACOMAS does not notify applicants of interviews. If you are selected for an interview by an osteopathic medical school, the school will contact you directly. This contact will happen sometime after your application has been submitted to schools. Please ensure that you can be reached using the information you provided. (This includes making sure your e-mail system is not blocking school responses.) For interview suggestions, review the section on page 24.

Q: I would like to talk with or shadow an osteopathic physician. How do I find one in my area?

A: Consult page 6 for information on finding physicians to shadow.

Q: Can I apply to both DO and MD schools?

A: Yes, you can apply to both osteopathic (DO) and allopathic (MD) schools at the same time. The application processes are similar, but independent. Please review the AACOMAS instructions beginning on page 18 carefully and make sure that you have completed each step. Don't forget to include the reasons that you want to study osteopathic medicine in your personal statement, and during your interview.

Q: I am a health professional who is certified or educated in the United States or abroad. How can I become a DO or certified to practice osteopathic medicine?

A: The American model of the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree differs from the diplomate of osteopathy degree offered in other countries. American DOs are trained as fully licensed physicians. Because of the rigor and uniqueness of the American model of osteopathic medical education, anyone wishing to practice medicine in the United States as a licensed osteopathic physician must graduate from

a U.S. osteopathic medical school that is accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA).

For more information, see Osteopathic Training for Health Professionals on page 16.

International Students

Q: What if I'm not a U.S. citizen?

A: Please select the most appropriate response from the citizenship drop-down box in the Biographical section of the AACOMAS application.

Q: Do osteopathic colleges accept international students?

A: The school(s) in which you are interested may accept international students, but as policies vary from school to school, see the table on page 14.

Transcripts

Q: Where should I have transcripts sent and are there forms that must accompany the transcripts?

A: A transcript request form is not required to be submitted with the transcript. However, a form is available for you to download from your AACOMAS application. Submit the form to the registrar and have them mail it along with your transcripts. Transcripts must be sent directly from the registrar's office. Transcripts from any other source are not accepted.

Please have the registrar's office mail an official transcript to:

AACOMAS
1900 L Street NW, Suite 603
Washington, DC 20036

Q: Are foreign transcripts required?

A: If you attended a study-abroad program sponsored by a U.S. institution, and all courses, hours and grades appear on the U.S. transcript, list the study-abroad courses in the same way as your other courses from that U.S. institution—do not list them separately under "Foreign College." If all courses do not appear on your

home institution transcript, are listed as transfer credit, appear without assigned grades, or if any other irregularity exists, please contact AACOMAS.

Canadian Transcripts: If the transcript from the Canadian university you attended shows grade conversion to a 4.0 grading scale and credit conversion to the semester system, and is written in English, then the transcript is required. If the transcript does not list grade and/or credit conversion and/or is not written in English, please refer to the instructions for Other Foreign Transcripts below. Grade 13 and Canadian college-level coursework normally is not included in GPA calculations, but if the transcript is provided it will be copied and forwarded to your designated colleges. All institutions attended must be listed in the "Colleges and Coursework" section.

Other Foreign Transcripts: Coursework taken at other foreign institutions must be evaluated for U.S. equivalence by one of the following evaluation services, and an official copy must be sent from the service directly to AACOMAS. You should also have a copy sent to you for completing the AACOMAS application. Request a course-by-course evaluation and list the courses, subject codes, semester hours, and grades on the AACOMAS Academic Record or Professional School Academic Record as per the instructions. Your application will not be complete without an official evaluation. Transfer credit appearing on U.S. institution transcripts, student copies of an evaluation or other foreign evaluations will not be accepted. You should contact one of the following:

World Education Services

P.O. Box 5087
New York, NY 10274-5087
(212) 966-6311
www.wes.org

Courier Address:

64 Beaver St, #146
New York, NY 10004

Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.

International Educational Consultants
7101 SW 102 Avenue
Miami, FL 33173
(305) 273-1616
www.jsilny.com

Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.

P.O. Box 514070
Milwaukee, WI 53203-3470
(414) 289-3400
www.ece.org

Courier Address:

101 W. Pleasant St. Suite 200
Milwaukee WI 53212-3963

International Education Research Foundation, Inc.

Post Office Box 3665
Culver City, CA 90231-3665
(310) 258-9451
www.ierf.org

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

Foreign Education Credential Services
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 520
Washington, DC 20036-1135
(202) 296-3359
www.aacrao.org/credential/individual.cfm

All institutions attended (including foreign institutions) must be listed on the application. If there are extenuating circumstances inhibiting this evaluation, you may request a waiver of the requirement of this evaluation. You may request a Transcript Exemption from the Institution Information page of the Colleges and Coursework section of the AACOMAS application. Also note that transfer credit awarded at U.S. institutions for foreign courses will not be added to your applicant profile. Failure to submit a foreign evaluation or letter requesting a waiver (which is duplicated to your schools) will result in your file being incomplete. Questions should be directed to AACOMAS.

Still have a question?

Please e-mail our AACOMAS Application Services Department to ask about applying to osteopathic medical schools at: aacomas@aacom.org