



Reapplying to Medical School (or Dental, PA, etc.)

Presented by the San Francisco State University
Pre-Health Professions Post-Bac Program

Meeting plan



Intro to
reapplication



Self-reflection



Common app
mistakes (and how
to fix them)



Reapplicant
experience



Q&A

Health professional school reapplicants

- Not getting accepted can be discouraging, but it doesn't need to be the end of your journey.
- **You are not alone** - only about 40% of applicants are accepted into medical school (MD and DO) or dental school each year.
- **At what point in the application cycle should you consider yourself a reapplicant?** By the middle of spring, if you don't have interviews or an offer of admission, there is a good chance you need to begin preparing to apply in a future cycle.

Health professional school reapplicants

- **Should you reapply?** How much do you want this? The road to becoming a health professional is long and challenging; it takes time, resources and sacrifice. If your answer is a definite yes, then prepare to be a strong reapplicant!
- **When should you reapply?** Should you apply in the next available cycle or take more time to improve your application before reapplying?

Start with self-reflection

- Be honest with yourself. What do you think were the salient weaknesses in your application?
- Common issues:
 - Low GPA and/or missing prerequisites
 - Low MCAT/DAT etc.
 - Lackluster personal statement
 - Applied late and/or turned in secondaries late
 - Applied to few schools or the wrong list of schools
 - Low number of clinical and/or volunteering hours
 - Poor interview performance

Enhancing your academic record

- What are some GPA red flags?
 - Solid GPA in early years, followed by noticeable downward trend in recent years.
 - Erratic or low GPA without a significant sustained upward trend in later years.
- How to repair a low GPA:
 - **Post-Bac Program** (formal or informal) - directly improves undergrad GPA. Formal programs include advising, application support and a cohort support system.
 - **Grad School** (i.e., masters in biology) - won't change undergraduate GPA, but can demonstrate commitment in an academic setting.
 - **Special Master's Program** - shows readiness for the challenging med school curriculum.

Enhancing your academic record

- How long will it take to fix a low GPA?
 - It depends on your current unit count and GPA. We shared a spreadsheet that allows you to input the units and GPAs listed on your prior verified application and calculate the number of future courses needed to raise your GPA.
- There may be a benefit from trying something new.
 - If you have been doing a DIY informal post-bac, try a formal post-bac.
 - If you have already completed a formal post-bac, try an informal post-bac or special master's.

Retaking the MCAT or DAT

- Common preparation mistakes
 - Taking the test before you are sufficiently prepared
 - Insufficient time devoted to the development of reading speed, concentration, reasoning skills and stamina
 - Insufficient exposure to MCAT passages
 - Not taking enough full-length practice tests under realistic test conditions
 - Preparing without structure

Retaking the MCAT or DAT

- If you need to retake it, how will you improve your score?
 - Make a weekly study schedule
 - Mimic the timing of the MCAT: study in 95 min blocks, without distractions
 - Mimic the timing of the DAT: study in 45, 60 and 90 min blocks, without distractions
 - MCAT: practice CARS every study day
 - Practice with multiple passages (MCAT) or questions (DAT) every study day
 - Schedule and take many full length practice tests
 - Spend extra time on weak areas to try to get a balanced score
 - Enroll in a prep course if needed

Rewriting your personal statement

- Did you write a compelling personal statement?
 - Was it easy to read?
 - Was it directly focused on you and your journey?
 - Did it present you in a positive way?
 - Did it leave the reader feeling that you would be delightful to get to know or work closely with?
 - Did it demonstrate your commitment to medicine with appropriate personal experiences?

Rewriting your personal statement

- How can you improve your personal statement?
 - First decide the questions you want your statement to answer.
 - Turn a difficult question into easier ones and answer them in a straightforward and simple way.
 - Before: why do I want to become a doctor?
 - After: at what moment did I decide to seriously pursue medicine? What did I do next that strengthened this desire?
 - Avoid listing characteristics or accomplishments. Instead, look for ways to explain using personal stories (demonstrate instead of state).
 - Make sure the statement is easy to read, with paragraphs that flow smoothly from one to the next.
 - Avoid speaking negatively about the healthcare system.

Your future application timeline

- Some students will be ready to apply in the next cycle, while others will need to take more time to become a competitive applicant.
- When it comes time for your next application, try to submit early in the cycle. After all, you have been through the process before.
- Were you overwhelmed by the volume of secondary applications in a prior cycle, leading you to turn them in late? You can, and should, pre-write many secondaries so that you can turn them in quickly. This shows schools that you are interested in them.

Choosing your list of Schools

- Consider reapplying to some schools, but also but include a new set of schools (note that you aren't technically a reapplicant at a new school).
- For pre-meds: apply to both MD and DO schools! There is rarely, if ever, a good reason to pass on DO schools.
- Focus on the schools closest to your GPA and MCAT/DAT ranges.
- For Californians: there are great programs all over the country!
- Read mission statements and attend info sessions to see if you are a good fit.
- Make sure to meet all application requirements.

Do you have enough clinical hours?

- Do your experiences and activities (outside the classroom) demonstrate your dedication to the field?
- For most health professions, the number of clinical hours needed is modest, but pre-PA students need many hours (1000+) that involve direct patient care. As a reapplicant, you have been given more time to accumulate clinical experience.
- Other types of professional and volunteer experiences can also be influential, especially if they are significant, sustained, and help you develop skills useful in your desired health profession.

Preparing for interviews

- If you had interviews, were you prepared?
 - Did you practice answering questions "in front of the mirror"?
 - Did you engage in mock interviews with faculty, supervisors or friends?
 - Did you carefully research the types of interviews (one-on-one traditional, panel, MMI)?
 - How did you interact with others on the interview days?

Preparing for interviews

- How will you prepare for future interviews?
 - Record yourself answering many practice interview questions.
 - Create a repository of personal stories and experiences that can be used showcase a skill, attribute or value (identify the values corresponding to each story).
 - Enroll in an academic program that provides application support.
 - Work with a professional interview prep coach.



The reapplicant experience



Q & A