

Dear UWSOM Admissions community stakeholders,

The past year has challenged all of us in our personal, professional and academic lives. Medical school admissions was not immune to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the events bringing stronger voice to the pervasiveness of systemic racism, inequity and violence across our country. The Admissions Team and the Executive Committee on Admissions worked very hard to pivot the admissions process at UWSOM in response to these challenges in the past season and we are proud of how we were able to adapt and flex to meet the needs of our applicants, committee members, and the School of Medicine in this time of uncertainty. As we head into the next cycle of admissions, while the world has better understanding of COVID-19 and there are efforts in many places to dismantle racism and focus more on equity, uncertainties still exist and we have identified some benefits to the changes we made. I would like to share with you how UWSOM will be approaching the 2022 admissions cycle. As it was for 2021, these decisions were guided by the following principles:

- Safety of applicants as well as committee members, students, staff and faculty
- Equity and fairness of the process
- Consistency across all our regional sites

As we have been doing, we will continue to post any changes to our website:

<https://www.uwmedicine.org/school-of-medicine/admissions/covid-19-response>

It takes a community to train a physician. We continue to receive and listen to feedback from our UWSOM/WWAMI community and applicants. Our plans for the upcoming Fall 2022 admissions cycle were made with their thoughtful input in mind.

For the Fall 2022 admissions cycle, applicants can expect:

- Optional MCAT for first time test takers this cycle
- Waiver of secondary application fee
- Virtual interviews
- Continued commitment to holistic review

MCAT Test in 2021

For the 2021 admissions cycle, applicants were faced with taking the MCAT exam during the height of the pandemic in order to meet medical school deadlines and admissions requirements. With our guiding principles in mind, we made the decision to waive this requirement at the UWSOM, allowing applicants to make their own determination of whether taking the MCAT was in their best interest given the uncertainty and potential risks during that time. We received applications from many competitive candidates and will matriculate students who successfully gained admissions without taking the MCAT. Our committee was very careful to utilize the principles of holistic review

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to ensure the preparedness and abilities of these candidates. With this success, and the ongoing uncertainty of COVID-19 in our communities, the UWSOM admissions committee agreed again to waive the MCAT requirement for first-time test takers. This means we will accept and consider applications without an MCAT score. It should be noted that if an applicant has an MCAT score, or pending MCAT score, it will be considered by the Admissions Committee.

While it has been recognized previously that the MCAT has inherent imperfections and bias, [there is evidence that the MCAT can predict students' performance in medical school and on United States Medical Licensing Step exams](#). It also provides an additional data point to evaluate an applicant's academic ability beyond just their GPA and academic trajectory. Applicants are strongly encouraged to realistically evaluate their readiness and academic performance within the context of their application and ensure they have demonstrated they will be able to handle the rigors of medical school curriculum as well as required licensure exams throughout their academic and professional careers when deciding to apply without an MCAT. In the 2022 cycle, applicants will be required to declare their intent to waive the MCAT when we receive their application.

Secondary Application Fee Waiver

For the Fall 2021 application cycle, the \$35 secondary application fee was waived for all MD applicants in response to the recognition that COVID-19 has financially impacted many applicants and their families due to loss of income and/or medical expenses.

We will once again waive the secondary application fee for the 2022 cycle. It is our hope that suspending the secondary application fee will alleviate some of the burdensome cost of applying.

AAMC also expanded the [Fee Assistance Program \(FAP\)](#) to help applicants financially impacted by COVID-19. Please see the [FAP webpage](#) for more information about applying. FAP Applicants will also have their [Casper](#) fee waived.

Interviews for the Fall 2022 Application Cycle

The UWSOM will once again host virtual interviews for the Fall 2022 application cycle. All applicants interviewing for the MD program can expect a virtual interview.

While we recognize that virtual interviews do not afford the same interactions or experiences as in-person interviews, we have concluded that there are advantages to a virtual process and given that the COVID-19 pandemic persists, the committee felt it was appropriate to continue with this option for 2022. We received feedback from interviewees and interviewers that were pleased with the experience and did feel they were adequately evaluated/able to evaluate. Virtual interviews also allow applicants to interview from their location of choice, which reduces the typical financial and time costs incurred by traveling to interview. Additionally, the safety of the applicants and the interviewers is ensured by eliminating the need for participants to gather in an enclosed space.

Interviews will be live, via a Zoom platform, and continue in the 3-person panel interview format.

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Commitment to Holistic Review

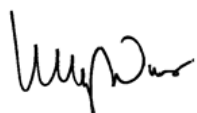
The pandemic has resulted in many lost opportunities such as cancelled clinical and service experiences for applicants. Additionally, we recognize that applicants faced and may still be facing:

- Financial stress
- Food insecurity
- Less than ideal study from home situations/Housing Insecurity
- Family members dependent on them for income or assistance
- No or limited Wi-Fi
- Lack of appropriate technology and support to complete Coursework
- Loss of Loved ones and lack of closure due to social distancing
- Mental health issues and stress (*Source: 2021 AMCAS Cycle Opening Webinar 5/14/2020*)

The Admissions Committee will continue to use holistic review to consider applicants' potential through the context of their lived experiences. In addition, value has always been placed on the insight and reflection that applicants gain from their experiences rather than the number of hours. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, UWSOM was working in conjunction with several western region medical schools to de-emphasize shadowing as a specific requirement for acceptance and this qualitative evaluation will continue in future cycles.

As the world is ever-changing, so too is the process of medical school admissions and the UWSOM is committed to safety, equity, and consistency in the evaluation of medical school applicants. We will continue to monitor impacts and outcomes of COVID-19 and adapt our processes as needed. We value transparency in our process and strive to inform and advise premedical students, applicants, advisors and other members of the admissions community of our changes in a timely and thorough manner. We truly appreciate all of those involved and vested in the admissions process for UWSOM and look forward to another successful admissions cycle for the entering class of 2022.

Respectfully,



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Associate Dean for Admissions
Chair, Committee on Admissions

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