

<b>Policy 1.1.3</b>
UAMS COM Undergraduate Medical Education
<b>Section</b>
Admissions
<b>Title</b>
<b>ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES</b>
<b>LCME Element(s)</b>
10.2 Final Authority of Admission Committee; 10.3 Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination
<b>Approved By</b>
Admissions Committee - 2023
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## ***Admissions Committee Policies and Guidelines***

### **University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine**

The final authority for selecting the entering freshman class rests with the College of Medicine Admissions Committee (*per LCME accreditation guidelines*). All information, both objective and subjective, is reviewed by the Admissions Committee in determining the relative strength of an applicant's qualifications. The number of places in the first-year class is limited and the committee is responsible for selecting, on a competitive basis from the total applicant group, those individuals best qualified. This document provides an overview of the College of Medicine admissions application process and the policies the Admissions Committee must adhere to when selecting the next generation of Arkansas physicians.

#### **ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE IMPACT on ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

- **Arkansas Code 6-64-405** provides an overview of the responsibilities of the College of Medicine Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee *“shall be composed of fifteen (15) members to be appointed by the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas . . . Six of the members shall be members of the faculty of the University of Arkansas College of Medicine. Eight of the members shall be appointed from each of the four congressional districts. One member shall be appointed from the state at large. The Board shall promulgate reasonable rules and regulations necessary to the fair and competitive selection of freshmen medical students with due consideration being given scholastic standings, recommendations of the premedical advisory committees of the various schools where the applicants pursue their premedical studies, their performance on the Medical College Admissions Test, and any other procedures that can be developed that would deal fairly with the applicant group as a whole.”*
- **Act 515 of 2013** modified the makeup of the Admissions Committee from the four congressional districts and allows for the majority of the Committee to be faculty. *“Eight of the members, at least four of whom shall have faculty appointments in the University of Arkansas College of Medicine, shall be appointed from each of the four congressional districts and shall be apportioned on the basis of two members from each congressional district”*. This change in legislation was necessary to comply with LCME accreditation standards.

- **Quorum:** The minimum number of Admissions Committee members necessary to constitute a quorum is eight (8) of the total fifteen (15) members. Faculty members must constitute the majority of voting members at all meetings.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Act 681 of 1981 states “*the selection of freshman medical students shall be accomplished competitively without any favoritism or discrimination on the basis of sex or race.*”
- **Rural Applicants:** Act 828 of 2003 allows additional consideration to be given to rural applicants from medically underserved areas to address health disparities.
- **Class Size:** Act 257 of 2012, Section 35, states “*the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences shall admit 150 freshman students in each fiscal year into the College of Medicine.*” The College of Medicine increased the freshman class size from 150 to 160 in 2006, to 174 in 2009, to 188 in 2022, and 175 in 2023.
- **Act 1403 of 2013**, the UAMS appropriations bill, struck any reference to the size of the class and the need to submit an annual report to the Arkansas Legislative Council listing the names of matriculants and their Congressional District or Arkansas resident status.
- **US citizens or legal Permanent Residents of the US:** An applicant must be a U.S. citizen or a legal Permanent Resident of the U.S. with the I-551 card (oftentimes called the Green Card) in his/her possession at the time of application.
- **Arkansas Residents** are given preference. All Arkansas residents are interviewed.
- **Non-Arkansas residents** may be considered for admission if they do not displace an otherwise equally qualified Arkansas resident.
  - Preference is given to non-Arkansas residents with “strong ties” to Arkansas. Typically, “strong ties” means the applicant has lived in Arkansas, attended school in Arkansas, paid Arkansas taxes, or has a close relative currently residing in Arkansas, etc. Non-Arkansas residents with “strong ties” to the state are perceived to be much more likely to practice medicine in Arkansas.
  - Non-Arkansas residents are invited for faculty interviews by invitation only.
  - Academic credentials should typically be better than the average Arkansan.
  - The MDPHd Committee may submit a recommendation to the Admissions Committee to invite non-Arkansas resident MDPHd applicants to be interviewed.
  - The Admissions Committee reviews non-Arkansas resident applications at its December meeting to determine who will be invited for interviews in January and reviewed in February.
- **The Congressional District Allocation of Enrollment Positions “70% Rule”:** Act 836 of 2007 modified the congressional district allotment of enrollment positions in the freshman class. 70% of the “first 150” freshmen enrollment positions (a minimum of 27) must be equally distributed among the four congressional districts. The remaining 30% may be from any congressional district or up to 15% of the first 150 positions may be non-Arkansas residents. Any additional positions above 150 will be granted to the *best qualified* applicants as determined by the Admissions Committee regardless of congressional district or legal state of residence.
- **Alternate List:** After the Admissions Committee determines which applicants will be accepted, the Committee places the next 40-50 highest-ranked applicants on the “Alternate List.” Should applicants accepted for admission choose to decline or defer their position in the freshman class, Alternates ranked on the Alternate List are offered positions in the entering freshman class. Act 1058 of 2007 impacts the admissions process by allowing

alternates who sign an Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan/Scholarship Program contract to advance to the top of the Alternate List. Each alternate must be interviewed and approved by the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and Scholarship Board (Board) before they can be advanced on the Alternate List. Alternates approved by the Board, advanced on the Alternate List, and admitted to the UAMS College of Medicine do not have the option to defer admission. Alternates who gain admission to medical school through their rural practice contractual agreement must practice primary care medicine for a minimum of four years in a qualifying medically underserved rural community in Arkansas. For each calendar year of full-time practice in a qualifying rural community, one year of the loan obligation is forgiven until the entire loan is converted to a scholarship.

### **ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF APPLICANT FILES**

Each committee member reviews each applicant and gives a rating on a scale of 1.0 to 7.0, with 7.0 being the highest and 1.0 the lowest rating. The ratings of all 15 members are combined and averaged to determine the composite ranking for all applicants. Applicants with the highest composite ranking are admitted—after taking into consideration we are following the congressional district quotas and the limitation of non-Arkansas residents admitted.

### **AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service) Application**

Applicants apply to the UAMS College of Medicine by submitting the web based AMCAS application to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). AMCAS provides the Admissions Committee with a comprehensive report which includes the applicant's MCAT scores, cumulative and science GPA for undergraduate, graduate and/or post baccalaureate courses, volunteer or work-related experiences, honors and awards, extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation and the applicant's **personal comments** that gives the applicant the opportunity to describe his/her *motivation* to become a physician.

#### **Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT):**

The MCAT, a nationally standardized exam, has been a tool used by admissions committees since 1928 to help assess an applicant's preparation for medical school and predict an applicant's success in handling the rigors of the medical school curriculum. The MCAT changed in April 2015—the last major change prior to that date occurred in 1991. The next substantial change is not projected to occur until 2030. The College of Medicine admissions policy states an MCAT is valid for up to three years.

According to the AAMC, the new MCAT is designed to “keep pace with changes in the study of medicine”. The new MCAT 1) tests concepts recently rated by medical school faculty, residents and students as key to entering students' success, 2) shifts the focus from testing what the applicants know to how well they use what they know, 3) recognizes the heavy information-processing requirements of medical school and asks applicants to understand and critically analyze text, 4) reports more reliable scores and provides a broader view of an applicants' academic preparation, 5) asks applicants to think like scientists by reasoning about research designs and results and drawing conclusions from them, and 6) underscores the role that behavioral and sociocultural factors play in health and illness. Scaled scores on the MCAT multiple choice sections—Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems, Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems, Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills, and a brand-new section has been added, Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior—each section reported on a scale ranging from a low of 118 to a high of 132 with a mid-range of 125. The combined total score ranges from a low of 472 to a high of 528 with a mid-range Total Score of 500. The emphasis is on the center of the scale, i.e.,

500 Total Score. The average MCAT score for applicants accepted for admission to the 2023 entering freshman class was 507.

### **Grade Point Averages (GPA)**

1. Undergraduate cumulative and science GPA, and if applicable
2. Graduate School GPA, and if applicable
3. Post-baccalaureate courses GPA
4. Breakdown of GPA for BCPM: **B**iology, **C**hemistry, **P**hysics and **M**ath

### **Applicant's Personal Comments**

The applicant's personal comments describing his/her motivation to become a physician is a critical component of the applicant's admissions application. This is an opportunity for the applicant to clearly convey his/her *passion* for medicine and *compassion* for people.

### **Biographical / Academic Profile**

This is an overview of the applicant's credentials listing a breakdown of the applicant's GPA, MCAT scores, results of the premedical advisory committee's composite evaluation letter and College of Medicine faculty interviews.

### **Socio-Economic Status (SES) Index**

AAMC Goal: To establish summary measures of an applicant's socio-economic status that will enable medical schools to clearly understand the nature and extent of SES diversity among our medical student applicants and meet the necessary challenge of expanding the definition of diversity to socio-economic status to meet the needs of holistic review. The AMCAS designation of "EO1" indicates the applicant is a "first-generation" applicant to receive a college degree.

## **PREMEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITE LETTER POLICY**

If it has been two years or less since an applicant last attended or graduated from a college, he/she must request a letter from the school's Premedical Advisory Committee (mandatory). However, if it has been more than two years, or if the college does not have a Premedical Advisory Committee, the applicant must request three faculty members to submit letters of recommendation. In addition (optional), the applicant may include three "personal" letters of recommendation in his/her file, letters that attest to the student's performance outside the classroom, i.e., integrity, empathy, work ethic, leadership abilities, team player, distance traveled, etc. from individuals who know the applicant well.

## **ONLINE SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION**

The applicant's file will also include the online Supplemental Application completed and submitted by each applicant. This application includes specific requests for information and serves as a checklist to ensure the applicant has completed all pre-matriculation requirements. The College of Medicine Curriculum Committee, which oversees the Academic Standards Committee, has determined there is a core group of courses each applicant must take (or are in the process of taking) prior to matriculation. The applicant must list these courses on the online Supplemental Application.

### **Graduate or Professional Degree Program**

If an applicant is enrolled in a Graduate and/or Professional Degree Program at the time he/she submits the AMCAS application, the applicant must have a letter in file from his/her Program Director/Major Advisor giving the Admissions Committee permission to review his/her application. The applicant must complete the Graduate and/or Professional Degree program before the applicant can matriculate or the Committee may rescind an offer of acceptance or

require the applicant (Arkansas residents only) to defer and complete the degree requirements before matriculation to medical school.

### **Criminal Background Check and Supplemental Application Certifications**

All conditionally accepted applicants and alternate-listed applicants must consent to, submit to, and successfully complete a criminal background check (CBC) through the AMCAS-facilitated CBC vendor as a condition of matriculation to the College of Medicine. Failure to do so will constitute failure to meet the pre-matriculation requirements and will result in the withdrawal of a conditionally accepted offer. In addition, applicants must certify on the Supplemental Application 1) if they are currently under indictment for or have ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a felony or misdemeanor other than a minor traffic violation, 2) if they have been the recipient of any action by a college, university or professional school for unacceptable academic performance or a violation of an institutional code of conduct, 3) or if any certifying agency/licensing agency, authority or board has initiated sanctions or disciplinary action including, but not limited to probation, suspension, withdrawal, or denial, because of conduct, professional performance or substance abuse, and 4) if they have ever filed for bankruptcy or defaulted on a student loan.

### **Community and Volunteer Service and Involvement / Healthcare Experience:**

The AMCAS application provides the applicant with the opportunity to communicate his/her involvement in community service or volunteerism, work experiences, honors, and awards. We place a great deal of emphasis on ethics, empathy, professionalism, and service as visible evidence of character traits essential to becoming a caring and compassionate physician. Work or volunteer experience in a healthcare setting and/or exposure to patient care are viewed essential to one's exploration and motivation to pursue a career in medicine. Successful applicants must not only have a *passion* for medicine but *compassion* for people.

## **FACULTY INTERVIEWS**

Members of the UAMS College of Medicine faculty interview each Arkansas resident applicant. The Admissions Committee will review applications from non-Arkansas residents at its December meeting to determine who will be invited for interviews in January. Prior to COVID-19, team interviews (two faculty members interview an applicant at the same time) were conducted on interview days (designated Saturdays from October to January) when applicants came to UAMS for an orientation program, faculty interview, and a campus tour led by medical students. However, because of the COVID-19 virus, all interviews for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 admissions cycle were "virtual". *A decision regarding virtual interviews for the 2024 admissions cycle is yet to be determined.* Each member of the interview team will continue to submit an individual evaluation for review by the Admissions Committee. Faculty interviews are "blind"—the interviewers do not know the applicant's MCAT or GPA, etc. Some interview teams will include a senior medical student. When a student matriculates, faculty evaluations are destroyed and not transferred to the student's educational record.

## **ARKANSAS RESIDENT STATUS / NON ARKANSAS RESIDENTS**

Arkansas law mandates that preference be given to Arkansas residents. Applicants who identify their legal state of residence as Arkansas on the AMCAS application will be sent an *Arkansas Resident Status Initial Classification form*. The Office of Admissions will use the information submitted by the applicant on this form to verify Arkansas residency and verify one's congressional district. Seventy percent of the first 150 allocated positions in the freshman class must be equally distributed among the four federal congressional districts. Applicants who designate a state other than Arkansas on their AMCAS application as of December 1 of the admissions cycle will be classified as non-Arkansas residents for the entire admissions cycle. No exceptions. Non-Arkansas residents who have "strong ties" to Arkansas are

instructed to submit a letter advocating their ties to the state. Those determined to have established “strong ties” will be given preference over non-Arkansas residents who have no ties to Arkansas. Typically, “strong ties” means the applicant has lived in Arkansas, attends school in the state, has close relatives living in Arkansas, or other information clearly demonstrating the applicant has roots in the state. The goal of determining if a non-Arkansas resident has deep roots in the state is to assess the likelihood, although there are no guarantees, the applicant may someday practice medicine in Arkansas. By law, up to 15% of the first 150 allocated positions (22) may be awarded to non-Arkansas residents. The number of positions available in the freshman class more than 150 may be awarded to those determined to be “best qualified” regardless of Arkansas resident or congressional district status. Class size for the freshman class remains at 174. Applicants who falsify information submitted in their application about establishing Arkansas residency and/or congressional district, or applications with conflicting information, will be brought to the attention of the Admissions Committee.

### **NON-ARKANSAS BORDER STATE TUITION POLICY**

The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees adopted the following resolution at its May 24-25, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting: *“Whereas, the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas asserts its singular focus on student success as evidenced by student retention and graduation, therefore, be it resolved . . . that the proposed tuition and fees for the 2023-2024 fiscal year for the University of Arkansas campuses are hereby adopted and approved. You may proceed to implement this action.”*

*“The **College of Medicine** is not requesting an increase in base tuition for FY 23-24 . . . Given the concerns about increasing student debt, our goal is to return to the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile among US public schools or at least to the regional mean/medium. Starting FY 23-24, tuition will be charged at the in-state resident rate for the College of Medicine for the following border states: LA, MO, MS, OK, TN, TX. This will increase our ability to attract high caliber students from bordering states which will enrich the program, elevate our rankings, and increase the likelihood that we are attracting students who will stay in the area.”*

### **PERMANENT RESIDENCY STATUS**

An applicant must be a United States citizen or a Permanent Resident of the US. A Permanent Resident must document his/her residency status (i.e., I-551 card), sometimes referred to as the “green card”. The application will not be forwarded to the Admissions Committee for review until the required documentation is received.

### **ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

State law mandates the minimum number of Admissions Committee members necessary to constitute a quorum is eight (8) of the total fifteen (15) members. Faculty members must constitute the majority of voting members at all meetings. In keeping with LCME accreditation standards, each committee member must sign a “Conflict of Interest” form *stating “I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I have no known conflicts of interest in serving on the UAMS College of Medicine Admissions Committee. In addition, I further certify that if I become aware of a personal conflict of interest concerning an applicant during the admissions process, I will recuse myself from discussions concerning the applicant and will not vote on the applicant’s admissions status.”* To underscore the underlying principle that the final authority for selecting the entering freshman class rests with the College of Medicine Admissions Committee, every effort is made to ensure that no admissions decisions are influenced by political or financial factors.

The Admissions Committee meets one day in both December and January and for a weeklong “retreat” in early February. At both the December and January meetings, the Committee reviews a limited number of Arkansas resident applicants for possible “early acceptance”. At the December meeting, the Committee also screens all non-Arkansas resident applicants to determine who will be invited for faculty interviews in January and be considered in February for possible admission.

The primary work of the Admissions Committee is conducted at its week-long “retreat” in early February. Each of the fifteen committee members reviews each of the 375-430 applications. After considering all facets of the application discussed in this document, each committee member rates each applicant on a scale of 1.0 to 7.0, with 1.0 being low and 7.0 being high. All 15 committee member ratings are totaled and then divided by 15 to arrive at a composite ranking of all applicant scores. Following the conclusion of the retreat on Thursday, the Admissions Committee meets with the Dean on Friday to finalize the Acceptance List, the Alternate List, and determines the maximum number of non-Arkansas residents who may be admitted. At this meeting, the Assistant Dean of Admissions provides reports to the Admissions Committee to ensure the final decisions reached by the Admissions Committee comply with Arkansas legislative mandates, i.e., congressional district quotas and limits on the number of non-Arkansas residents who may matriculate.

Except for the small number of Arkansas resident applicants who are offered early acceptances in December and January, letters are mailed to all applicants by the end of February advising them as to whether they have been accepted for admission, placed on the Alternate List, or not accepted for admission. As necessary, the Admissions Committee may subsequently meet to review applicants who failed to meet the pre-matriculation requirements. Based on a case-by-case review by the Committee, the offer of acceptance may be rescinded, or the applicant may be required to defer for one year to complete all pre-matriculation requirements.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST and NON DISCLOSURE POLICY**

In keeping with the LCME accreditation Conflict of Interest and Non-disclosure in Admissions requirement, the Admissions Committee approved the following policy on March 15, 2023 and required attestation each admissions cycle.

<b>POLICY TITLE:</b> Conflict of interest and non-disclosure in admissions
<b>APPROVED BY:</b> Admissions committee
<b>VERSION HISTORY:</b> Partial 2010, this version March 15, 2023

This policy is to define and establish guidelines for conflicts of interest (COI) and disclosure of private information within the UAMS College of Medicine admissions process.

The policy applies to all persons who are involved in or contribute to the evaluation of an applicant as well as those involved in making decisions about admission into the UAMS College of Medicine, including:

- Admissions committee members
- Admissions interviewers, both faculty and medical students

#### Conflict of interest

If at any point in the admissions process, a COI arises with an applicant, the individual must:

- Disclose the COI to the Assistant Dean for Admissions

- Recuse themselves from any further review, rating, discussion or vote on that applicant.
- If an individual who serves on the admissions committee or as an interviewer has a child or spouse who is an applicant, that individual should not serve in that role during the entire admissions cycle.

Failure to disclose the COI and to recuse will result in removal from the admissions committee or service as an interviewer.

A COI occurs when an individual involved in the admissions process as noted above has one of the following situations regarding an applicant:

- Is a close family member or personal friend of an applicant. Close family member means parent, sibling, spouse, grandparents, aunt/uncle, or cousins, including in-law and step relationships. A close friend means a person that has a relationship with the admissions committee member or interviewer as to cause the perception of a COI.
- Has a healthcare relationship with an applicant or their close relatives, such as providing healthcare services.
- Has a financial relationship/interest in the applicant or a close relative of an applicant.
- Has served as an advisor/mentor/counselor or employer/supervisor for an applicant.
- Has a political relationship with the applicant or an applicant's close relative.
- Stands to benefit in some manner from the success or failure of the applicant.

#### Disclosure of private information

Those involved in the admissions process will have access to student educational records. It is expected that all those involved in the admissions process will not disclose applicant information unless there is a legitimate educational/admissions reason to do so. Those persons involved in admissions will return all applicant materials to the admissions office when they have finished their role in the admissions process; or in the case of digital materials, will permanently delete them.

Disclosures occur when the individual involved in the admissions process:

- Uses or shares applicant private information in ways that are beyond what is necessary to perform their role in the admissions process.
- Discusses or discloses private applicant information to others outside the admissions process except as might be required to meet legal or institutional requirements.
- Fails to maintain and secure private applicant information or fails to return documents, reports, notes, or other materials with applicant information to the admissions office when the participation in the admissions process has ended.

Violations of the non-disclosure requirements of this policy will result in removal from any role in the admissions process for the College of Medicine.

The individuals identified in this policy above who have a role in the admissions process will all complete an annual attestation that they have received and will comply with this policy.

**ATTESTATION AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED BY ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
AS WELL AS FACULTY AND SENIOR MEDICAL STUDENT INTERVIEWERS**



### **Admissions Committee members**

“I hereby certify that I will comply with the COM Admissions COI policy. I hereby certify that I have no known conflicts of interest in serving on the UAMS COM Admissions Committee. In addition, I further certify that if I become aware of a personal conflict of interest concerning an applicant during the admissions process, I will recuse myself from discussions concerning the applicant and will not vote on the applicant’s admissions status.”

### **Admissions Interviewers**

“I hereby certify that I will comply with the COM Admissions COI policy. I have no known COIs with those I am assigned to interview. If I become aware of a conflict, I will ask the admissions office staff for a reassignment of interviewers”.

Document revised by Tom G. South, Assistant Dean, Medical Student Admissions, 7-6-23