

# MASTERING MEDICAL SCHOOL ESSAYS

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MOON PREP

PERSONAL  
STATEMENTS,  
SECONDARIES, AND  
MORE



MOON PREP



# PERSONAL STATEMENT

## When should I start my personal statement?

- At least 6 months before the application cycle to ensure adequate time to write and revise drafts

## How long should my personal statement be?

- AMCAS and AACOMAS: 5300 characters, including spaces
- TMDSAS: 5000 characters, including spaces
- \*Breaks in between paragraphs count as 2 characters!

## What should I include in my personal statement?

- Determine what characteristics you want to highlight to medical schools. Check the AAMC Core Competencies to see what traits are valued as a medical student
- Discuss your journey into medicine and how you developed this interest
- Show, Don't Tell: Use a series of stories to demonstrate these characteristics.
- Discuss the significance of your stories:
  - What did you learn?
  - Why are these lessons important?
  - How will you apply these lessons in medical school and/or in your career as a physician?

## Should I talk about academic struggles?

- Yes, it is advised to discuss any unusually low grades or MCAT scores. Discuss if there were any life events that attributed to your academically struggles. Some examples include:
  - Mental health
  - Severe health issues in you or your family
  - Working full time
- More importantly, discuss what you did to overcome these struggles, and how you will prevent them from recurring in medical school.

## Who should revise my personal statement?

- Professional editor (like our Moon Prep essay coaches!)
- Mentors
- Trusted friends and family
- Carefully select who you want to review your application, as multiple people can have differing opinions on how to change your personal statement



# ACTIVITIES LIST

## How many activities can I list?

- AMCAS: 15 total activities, although you don't need to fill all 15 activities
- AACOMAS and TMDSAS: Unlimited
- Be sure to include 1-2 hobbies at the end

## How long should the description be?

- AMCAS: 700 characters each, including spaces
- AACOMAS: 600 characters each, including spaces
- TMDSAS: 300 characters

## What should I include in the description?

- Think of these as mini essays. Most students will write about what they did in each activity. To help your application stand out, include a story and discuss the significance of the activity

## What are most meaningful essays?

- In addition to your activity description, you will be allowed to further discuss 3 most meaning activities. Highlight why these activities have contributed to your personal growth. These do not all have to be medically related.
- AMCAS: 1325 characters, including spaces
- AACOMAS: No most meaningful designations
- TMDSAS: 500 characters, including spaces

## Do I need a supervisors contact information?

- Yes, you will need to submit either a phone number or email address. Don't worry, medical schools usually are too busy to confirm them!

## How do I combine my experiences?

- Shadowing: Most shadowing experiences are pretty similar. It is generally recommended to combine these experiences together
- Publications: For multiple publications, list a link to your Google Scholar profile with all of your publications.



# IMPACTFUL EXPERIENCES ESSAY

## What is the Impactful Experiences essay?

- Beginning with the 2023-2024 cycle, AMCAS changed their Disadvantaged Essay to the Other Impact Experiences essays. This change is intended to capture lived experiences that align with the schools' missions and served communities.
- This change is only pertinent to the AMCAS application.

## How long should is this essay?

- AMCAS: 1325 characters

## I don't consider myself disadvantaged. Should I still write the Impactful Experiences essay?

- Yes! This change is to help admission officers with a more holistic review. This gives them a chance to understand hardships or obstacles that you have overcome, and how these experiences have shaped you.

## What should I write about?

- Consider challenges you have overcome related to your family background, financial background, community setting, educational experiences, or other life circumstances. This may also be a great place to talk about poor grades or standardized testing.

## How should I write this section?

- Like most sections in your application, use a narrative style format to convey your story.
- Refrain from repeating stories already discussed in your personal statement. However, you may consider giving more context as it relates to your background.

## Where can I find more information about this?

- <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/14261/download>



## SECONDARY ESSAYS

**Cost:** Average cost is \$100 per school. Ask schools about fee waivers even if you don't qualify for assistance.

### When should I start my secondaries?

- As soon as you have completed your primary application, start pre-writing your secondary essays. Each medical school can require 1-6 secondary essays.

### How quickly do I need to submit my secondaries?

- We recommend submitting secondaries under 1 week but as quickly as possible. When you submit them within a short timeframe, it shows medical schools that you're interested in their program.

### When will I receive the secondary essays ?

- You should expect secondaries after your primary application has been verified and forwarded to the schools. Some schools will automatically send every applicant a secondary application, while other schools will only send a secondary application after initial screening. Be sure to check your email and spam folders frequently!

### What kind of questions should I expect?

- How will you contribute to our school's diversity?
- Why our school?
- Tell us about a challenge and how you overcome it.
- How do you envision your career as a doctor?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- Anything else you would like us to know?
- Why DO? (for DO schools only)

### How do I format my secondaries?

- Like the personal statement, it is recommended to use personal stories to show the admissions office your attributes. Use stories that highlight different characteristics than those you have already discussed in your personal statement and activities section. This is also where you can show how your values align with the school's mission or vision.

### Many schools ask similar questions. Can I reuse my secondary essays?

- Absolutely, but be sure to check that the essay is within the appropriate character limit.

