

# *The **MD/PhD** Path: How do I get there?*

L@s Ganas Fall Workshop  
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# A BIT ABOUT ME

I am a **7th year MD/PhD student** at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine. My research focus was **diabetic wound healing + NRF2**.

I came to med school after finishing my undergrad at Harvard University, where I studied **Human Developmental and Regenerative Biology** and did research on limb regeneration in salamanders.

I am a **peer educator**, an aspiring activist, a foodie, and an **incredibly enthusiastic resource for YOU!**

# ALL ROADS START SOMEWHERE...

- Small Town Public School
- Immigrant Parents
- **GIANT FISH...**
- *tiiiiiiiny pond*

## Early Days

- "All It Takes Is One"
- Learning Challenges
- Diabetic Wound Healing Research
- **PHD COMPLETE! Almost there...**

## MED SCHOOL

## COLLEGE

- Biology @ Harvard
- Joined a Lab
- *tiiiiiiiiiiiny fish....* **GIANT POND**
- DISCOVERED MD/PHDs

*Med School :*

# WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

- **M.D.** Programs
    - ◆ “Allopathic” Medicine
  - **D.O.** Programs
    - ◆ “Osteopathic” Medicine
  - **Dual-Degree** Programs
    - ◆ **MD/PhD**
    - ◆ MD/MBA
    - ◆ MD/MPH
    - ◆ MD/JD
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# MD/PhD vs. MSTP: What's the Difference?

- MD/PhD = **any** combined MD and PhD degree program
- More than 90 [existing programs](#)
- Funding is institutional and can vary (some not fully funded)
- ~650 - 700 students accepted per year across all programs
- MSTP = Medical Scientist Training Program
- Funded by the NIH: [Ruth L. Kirschstein Institutional Predoctoral Training Grant](#)
- Only [~50 programs](#) (~1000 students)
- Programs are fully funded (MD and PhD are paid, + stipend)

## WHAT'S THE **SAME**?

Dual-degree (MD and PhD), Application Requirements and Process, Timeline, Interviews, Career Options

# WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO APPLY ?

[Go to: **AAMC.ORG**]

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## → **Pre-Requisite Courses** *(May Vary by Institution)*

- ◆ Two semesters each of: general biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, with lab
- ◆ At least one advanced bio course
- ◆ Some require: sociology, psychology, biostatistics, and more!

## → **MCAT Score (Medical College Admissions Test)**

- ◆ Must be less than 3 years old

## → Many now require **CASPer (Non-Academic Personal Skills Test)**

## → **Personal Statement**

## → **Additional essays: Research Experience, and Why MD/PhD**

## → **Letters of Recommendation (Committee), Resume, Transcripts**

## → **Completed application: AMCAS for MD and MD/PhD, TMDSAS for TX**

# UNDERSTANDING THE AMCAS

- ❑ AMCAS = American Medical College Application Service
- ❑ Opens on **May 1st**
- ❑ Submission begins on **June 1st**
- ❑ **If applying MD/PhD, you can elect to be considered for MD only!**
- ❑ Consists of two main parts: **PRIMARY** and **SECONDARY** applications
  - ❑ PRIMARY applications go in first and are sent directly to the schools you select
  - ❑ Then, MOST schools will request the SECONDARY before interviews
- ❑ **COST: \$170 + \$40 per PRIMARY + ~\$100 per SECONDARY**
- ❑ After secondaries, **INTERVIEWS** are offered
- ❑ Generally, admissions are **ROLLING** after interviews

**NOTE FOR TEXAS:** There is a SEPARATE system, the TMDSAS (Texas Medical and Dental School Application Service)! It works exactly the same way, but is only for TX schools...





MCAT SCORE  
and GPA

LETTERS  
OF REC

**CRITICAL** COMPONENTS

PERSONAL  
STATEMENT

RESEARCH

# LET'S TALK

# NUMBERS

## ❑ MCAT (472 - 528)

- ❑ DO APPLICANT AVG: 502
- ❑ **DO ADMITTED AVG: 504**
- ❑ MD APPLICANT AVG: 506
- ❑ **MD ADMITTED AVG: 511**
- ❑ MD/PhD APPLICANT AVG: 511
- ❑ **MD/PhD ADMITTED AVG: 516**

## ❑ GPA (0.0 - 4.0)

- ❑ DO APPLICANT AVG: 3.43
- ❑ **DO ADMITTED AVG: 3.54**
- ❑ MD APPLICANT AVG: 3.58
- ❑ **MD ADMITTED AVG: 3.73**
- ❑ MD/PhD APPLICANT AVG: 3.67
- ❑ **MD/PhD ADMITTED AVG: 3.8**

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**GPA: 3.5**  
**MCAT: 29 (506)**

***And I made it!!***

**YOU**

**SCORE**

# MOST IMPORTANT: EMPHASIZE WHO YOU ARE!

## ☐ Letters:

- ☐ Ask people who **KNOW YOU WELL**
- ☐ Provide a **detailed** document to help them write
- ☐ **BE SPECIFIC** about what you want to highlight

## ☐ Personal Statements/Essays:

- ☐ Write what **you want them to know**, NOT what you think they want to read
- ☐ This is your only chance to show what sets you apart!!

## ☐ Resume:

- ☐ HIGHLIGHT your **SKILLS and EXPERIENCE**
- ☐ Posters, Clinical Skills, Presentation, Scientific Background, and more!
- ☐ **YOU AND YOUR EXPERIENCES ARE VALUABLE ASSETS!**

# PRO TIP:

*If asked...*

*Common Question:*  
“If you had to  
**choose**, which would  
you pick?”

**SAY RESEARCH!!!!**

(Why?)

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LAB WORK

PUBLICATIONS

POSTERS

PRESENTATIONS

**RESEARCH MATTERS MOST!!!**

THESIS?

REVIEWS

ABSTRACTS

?????

# THE BIG QUESTION:

**WHY** DO **YOU** WANT  
TO BECOME **A PHYSICIAN-**  
**SCIENTIST?**

# Once You're There: Some Important Advice!

## ☐ *Managing Med School*

- ☐ Think long-term: focus on what will **still be important** in the long run! Think **HIGH YIELD** and **RELEVANT FOR RESIDENCY+**
- ☐ Don't compare yourself to others! Focus on **you!**

## ☐ *Rotations and Lab Choice:*

- ☐ Focus on the **MENTOR**, not the subject!!
- ☐ Choose someone you admire, respect, and **get along with**
- ☐ Get input from current students
- ☐ Prioritize your **desires across the board** (work-life balance, science, colleagues, goals, etc.)
- ☐ **SOMETHING YOU LOVE SHOULDN'T MAKE YOU MISERABLE! :)**



**ONCE  
YOU'RE  
DONE...  
CAREER  
PATH?**

- **Residency + Fellowship**
  - ◆ Research Residencies (PSTPs + more!)
- Clinical Practice
  - ◆ **Academic Medicine**
  - ◆ Private Practice
- **Academic Research**
  - ◆ Universities
  - ◆ Research Institutes (NIH)
- Pharmaceuticals and Biotech
- Public Health
- Policy Work
- Advocacy
- *and so much more...!*
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THERE IS NO “ONE” PERFECT PATH

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE FUTURE,  
NO MATTER WHERE THEY START



**ASK ME ANYTHING,  
ANY TIME!**

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