



RESEARCHING THE RIGHT MEDICAL SCHOOL

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So, you've decided you want to attend medical school. Believe it or not, making the career choice might actually have been the easier part. Determining the right institution to spend the next four years becoming a physician is not a simple task. There are plenty of criteria to consider - you might want your ideal school to have dual-degree programs or you're only looking at schools on the east coast. As a result, it can definitely be useful to have a list ready when thinking about what you want out of your medical school experience.

Because the medical school admissions landscape has become so competitive, a typical list includes 25-30 schools. Even when casting a wide net, there are a lot of programs to choose from as you find the right one. To help you narrow down your options, we have created a checklist that features different points of consideration when researching which medical school is right for you. As you start looking through the near-250 medical institutions that exist around the country, think about the following as you build your list:

	Consider location - would you prefer to only apply to schools located in a certain region?
	Take a look at your in-state school and think about whether the benefits appeal to you.
	Go over the median GPA and MCAT scores of admitted students at different programs and compare them to your numbers.
	Take a look at acceptance rates of different schools and compare selectivity levels.
	Think about your specific interest in medicine and research the unique offerings at each school for that field.
	Consider your ideal class size and how many students you want in your cohort.
	Explore the opportunities and stipends for research that are available.
	Compare the curricula at various schools.
	Read about the tuition and aid policies at different institutions if you'll be applying for financial aid.
	Note dual-degree options available if you're considering that track.
	Take a look at the depth of hands-on research opportunities at different institutions.

	Go through the community engagement opportunities available for students.
	Browse websites to check out the different student organizations.
	Take a look at the percentage of admitted students who have been published in journals.
	Think about whether there are enough opportunities for patient interaction in the early years.
	Browse the first-year syllabi at different schools and look for opportunities you can't wait to get started on once you're on campus.
	Check the grading system - is it pass/fail or numerical marks?
	Find out whether there are any clerkships available and where.
	Look at where current alums work and how they've benefited from their medical education.
	Read faculty bios and explore the mentorship opportunities.
	Look for more information on the affiliated hospitals and their available resources.
	Examine the data of where the students have been placed during residency matches.
	Make an initial list of reach, target, and safety schools based on all of these factors. Keep in mind that there really aren't any clear "safety" options, as all medical schools are highly competitive.
	Consider whether you want DO or Caribbean schools on your list alongside MD programs. Read up to familiarize yourself with the DO and Caribbean philosophies to consider whether they appeal to you.

You can go through the following databases of MD schools across the US: the [AAMC](#), directory which lists programs in alphabetical order (but you can also sort in order of MCAT score, GPA, and application deadline), or the [ABMS Directory](#), which lists schools by state. Use these resources to narrow down your list, pay careful attention to any course offering, faculty listing, or on-campus resource that stands out to you. Hopefully, you'll be able to create a list full of schools where you will have a fulfilling medical education.