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You've worked throughout your pre-med years and clinical extracurriculars. You've perhaps even narrowed down your school list and taken the MCAT. However, you're well aware that the medical school landscape is getting more and more competitive every year—in fact, applications to medical school were at an all-time high during the last admissions cycle. So you're asking yourself whether or not this is the year you apply.

To guide you through the different elements of the medical school admissions process, we've provided a checklist with the factors you have to consider to weigh whether or not this is the year you take the plunge.

	Have you completed the prerequisite coursework? Usually, medical schools require 1 year of general biology with lab, 1 year of general chemistry with lab, 1 year of physics, 1 year of organic chemistry with lab. Additional prerequisites are likely to include at least 1-2 semesters of English, math (usually calculus), and sometimes statistics.
	Is your GPA high enough to match the medians of accepted students at top schools?
	Have you taken the MCAT?
	How good is your MCAT score? The median MCAT score at many top schools is above 511, with some of them at 520.
	Have you pursued extracurriculars related to medicine?
	Do you have shadowing experience under your belt?
	Have you volunteered at settings that line up with your interests within medicine?
	Have you worked with patients?
	Do you have research experience?
	Are your extracurriculars unique enough to set you apart from other candidates or are they common activities?

	Have you spoken to your letter of recommendation writers?
	Have you created a school list that's long enough? Because there are technically no safeties when it comes to medical school, you must apply to around 25-30 medical programs.
	Would you be happy if you were admitted to any of the schools on your list?
	Do you have money saved up to pay for four years of medical school? If not, have you looked into scholarships?
	Do you know what your personal statement will be about?
	Does your personal statement appropriately convey your unique passion for medicine and why you're a suitable fit to become a doctor?

Ultimately, admission into medical school is by no means a guarantee. Any medical school is extremely difficult to be admitted to—so, as you think about the different components upon asking yourself if this is the year you apply. Remember that you'll have to put your absolute best foot forward. As the AMCAS opening date approaches, be sure to have weighed all your options. But also remember to go easy on yourself—if you aren't successful this year, there's always the next cycle. Good luck!