

Dear Prospective Reapplicant,

To apply to medical, dental, or veterinary school and not gain admission is bound to be a great disappointment after all the effort you have applied to your studies and fieldwork, not to mention to the application process itself. Though no one will feel it as keenly as you do, you may be sure that your advisor and the Premedical Committee share your disappointment in the outcome. We also continue to have faith in your potential to gain admission to study in the professional field of your choice. It will, however, take some careful thought and further hard work on your part to do so.

Incidentally, you are not alone as a (prospective) reapplicant. Every year, there are a few General Studies undergraduate and Postbaccalaureate Premedical applicants who, despite their qualifications, are unsuccessful. There is no one reason why this happens. Sometimes an applicant's grade point average or standardized test score is low. Or the cumulative grade point average may be adequate, but the transcript reveals a downward trend over time. Sometimes, the applicant's record is fine, but the application was compromised by being submitted late. Sometimes applicants have not clearly explained their motivations for a health care career in their personal statements. Or perhaps there is insufficient experience outside the classroom to lend credibility to their avowals of interest in the designated profession. Similarly, a lack of knowledge about issues in health care may suggest to an admissions committee the applicant's lack of deep interest in the profession itself. Furthermore, while some applicants may have proven their scientific acumen, they may have done little to demonstrate their interest in and receptivity to other people—especially people unlike themselves—and their capacity to communicate empathy to persons who are suffering or in need. Sometimes an applicant comes across poorly in interviews. Some applicants may have been unrealistic in the number or the choice of schools to which to apply. Occasionally an application may fail because of a combination of these and other reasons. Every now and then, there may be no readily discernible reason for the lack of acceptances, other than that the application process is extremely competitive (in a recent application year, less than 60% of all first-time applicants nationwide matriculated at a medical school). Indeed, as the ratio of applications to openings in an incoming class continues to grow each year, the stigma of being a reapplicant has diminished. It is our experience generally that well-prepared, thoughtful applicants who submit their reapplications in a timely way have reasonably good success in gaining admission to a school in the field of their interest.

The important thing is to conduct a thorough and honest assessment of yourself as an applicant, rather than to become ensnared in doubts about yourself. The purpose of the reapplicant's tool kit is to guide your thinking about a reapplication.

Reapplication is not to be undertaken lightly. It is too costly and time-consuming for that. Any student contemplating a reapplication ought to do a little reality testing. Is a reapplication worth the additional time? Is it worth the additional expense? Will reapplying interfere with other life plans or personal relationships? Are you still as certain of the rightness of fit between you and a career in your chosen field as you were when you first applied? Have you reckoned with the possibility that you might reapply and still not gain admission? Is this the right time to reapply?

It is our recommendation that you not reapply until you are confident that you have addressed any weaknesses in your initial application. When you reapply, you want to come across as “new and improved,” rather than as the same applicant one year older. Do not assume that reapplying immediately is in your interest. Mere persistence gains you nothing here and might cost you a lot.

When you reapply, admissions committees will look for evidence of positive change and growth. If they do not find it, they may quickly write you off. The viability of a *second* reapplication (even one with a markedly improved record) is far more marginal than a first.

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The questions we posed above provide the basis for the on-line supplementary Application for Committee Support. While some of the questions on the supplementary application require cut-and-dried responses (and, to that extent, seem easy), others will ask you to think long and hard. All this supplementary information will help the Premedical Committee as it looks to renew its support of your application. We hope that writing out your answers will be as useful to you in the pursuit of your goals as it will be to us in supporting you. We recommend you consult with your advisor as you continue to develop your plans and we wish you every success in realizing them.

Sincerely,

The Premedical Committee

## COMMITTEE APPLICATION: INSTRUCTIONS FOR REAPPLICANTS

### Complete the online Internal Application for Committee Support:

<https://gs.columbia.edu/content/forms-and-guides>

When you complete the online Internal Application for Committee Support, you will be prompted to upload the following documents:

1. **Resume.** Attach a current resume.
2. **Reapplicant questionnaire:** Please respond to the following seven questions. Your answers should be double-spaced and saved in a single paginated document including your name in the header. Your responses to these questions need not be longer than one page with the exception of “Prior Application Year,” which should be at least two pages in length, but no more than three pages long (total of 8 or 9 pages). Please use the bold-faced prompt headings below as the titles to your responses.
  - **Schools:** When you chose the schools to which you applied previously, what reference materials, other resources, or personal contacts did you rely on? Apart from the outcome of the application, do you feel it was a good list? How might you alter it as a reapplicant with an eye toward improving your chances of admission?
  - **Interviews:** If you were invited for interviews during your previous application year, can you provide any specific recollections about individual interviews? Were there interviews that went well? Were there interviews that did not go so well? Be specific.
  - **Trouble-shooting:** Try to look at your previous application (transcripts, common application, and secondary applications) objectively or through the eyes of an admissions officer: are there any problem areas or red flags in your record? If so, what are they? Did you address them in your applications? How?
  - **Prior Application Year:** What did you do during your application year? Please bring us up to date on your life since your prior application to medical school. We would like to hear about any further studies you have undertaken, jobs, health care positions (paid or volunteer), laboratory experiences, travel, life changes and rites of passage (e.g., marriage, birth of a child), and publications. If you have completed further course work outside the School of General Studies, whether or not it was in a degree program, you must have transcripts mailed to the GS/Postbac Premed Program Office.
  - **What’s different:** How are you a different applicant this year from last year? How have your experiences since your previous application helped to make you a stronger and better applicant? What red flags in your previous application have you addressed and how have you done so?
  - **Target profession:** Are you reapplying to programs in the same health profession or a different one? What is your rationale for your choice?
  - **Timing:** Why do you feel this is the proper time to reapply? What are the advantages of reapplying now? What might be the disadvantages?

## COMMITTEE APPLICATION TIMELINE

Provided that you have submitted all of your materials by June 30 and have taken the necessary standardized test by June 19, 2021, the Premedical Committee will have your committee packet prepared for medical schools by August 15. (Reapplicants who have submitted materials by the end of June, but take standardized tests after June 19, but before August 1 will have their letters out by September 1.) If you have not submitted your common application by September 1, you will not be eligible for a committee letter for 2022 admission.

**Note:** If you need to retake the MCAT, please consult the following link for test administration dates and registration periods: <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/>. (For the DAT, see: <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>; for the GRE, see: <http://www.ets.org/gre>.) We recommend that you try to retake standardized tests as early as you can, assuming you have had sufficient time to study.

### **SPRING AND SUMMER 2021**

- Review the Application Guidelines for premeds seeking fall 2020 admission to medical school: <https://gs.columbia.edu/content/forms-and-guides>

### **MAY 2021**

- Have a set of transcripts sent to you so that you can complete the common application.
- Request transcripts from all institutions you attended to be sent to the common application service. Transcript requests for AMCAS should be made using the AMCAS transcript request form. Your Columbia transcript can be ordered online.
- Begin to fill out your common application.
- If applying with committee support, please select the letter type “Committee Letter” in the Letters of Evaluation section; entitle this “Columbia University Premedical Committee Letter” and name your premedical advisor as the primary author. The Committee Letter will encompass not only the letter written by the Premedical Committee, but also a selection of the individual letters of recommendation on file in the Premedical Office. Please do not select “Letter Packet” or “Individual Letter.”

### **JUNE 2021**

- Consult with the Writing Consultant about your personal statement.
- Complete your common application and file electronically
- To insure submission of your committee letter by August 15, 2021, you must take the necessary standardized test by June 19, 2021, and your Prehealth Portfolio must contain the following by June 30:**
  - The on-line supplemental committee application including all uploaded documents.
  - Verification of volunteer, clinical, and/or research work.
  - Additional letters of recommendation accompanied by the individual recommendation letter waiver forms. Referees may submit letters through the online internal application system, by e-mail (scanned letters, along with the waiver form, to [gs-letters@columbia.edu](mailto:gs-letters@columbia.edu)), or by US Mail. Please do not bring or mail us these letters. We won’t accept them. They must come directly from their authors.
- A screenshot of your MCAT registration confirmation (showing the date, time, and address of your MCAT exam).
- A copy of the common application you have submitted electronically to the appropriate application service. The only common application we will accept is a current one that has already been submitted to the application service.
- All applicable materials listed above, including the common application, should be submitted by June 30. Reapplicants who are unable to submit them by that date must e-mail [gspostbac@columbia.edu](mailto:gspostbac@columbia.edu) to notify us of the delay.
- Reapplicants who have submitted the required materials by June 30 and have taken the appropriate admissions exam (MCAT, DAT, or GRE) by June 19 will have their committee letters send by August 15. Those who take the exam after June 19, but before August 1 will have their letters out by September 1, 2021.

**FALL 2021 AND SPRING 2022** [*Postbacs only*]: Reapplicants will be registered for “maintenance of status,” unless they are otherwise enrolled in courses at Columbia; however, they will not incur the maintenance of status fee for the reapplication year.