

**University of New Mexico School of Medicine  
Applicant Admissions Assessment**

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous Applications:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Does the applicant have strong ties to the state of New Mexico and is the applicant familiar with the most important health issues in our state?**

The UNM School of Medicine is a public institution supported in part by state funds for the purpose of improving the health of the citizens of New Mexico. Thus, the Committee on Admissions places a high importance on the length and strength of the ties of the applicant to New Mexico. **The School of Medicine requires that all applicants for its regular admissions process be residents of the State of New Mexico at the time of application.** Preference is given to applicants who have maintained a long-term presence within the state, except for the specific purpose of matriculation at an accredited undergraduate educational institution or because of military service. Applicants who remain outside the state after finishing their undergraduate studies may lose their residency status.

The School of Medicine will consider a limited number of highly qualified non-residents, who clearly demonstrate ties to New Mexico, for admission only during the Early Decision Process (EDP). These ties to New Mexico may include previous residency, the presence of immediate family members in the state, or present employment within the state. The School of Medicine has also entered into agreements with the states of Montana and Wyoming -which do not have a medical school but that do have health professional schools not in New Mexico - to consider a limited number of their most highly qualified students for admission if they also consider applicants from our state for their programs (WICHE Agreement). These non-resident applicants are considered only during the EDP admission process. Out-of-state applicants who are not admitted in the EDP admissions process are ineligible for the Regular Admissions Process.

Applicants normally become familiar with the health care issues of New Mexico through clinical experiences and community volunteer work. In addition, the State Department of Health has a website where applicants can learn in greater detail about health care issues in New Mexico ([www.health.st.nm.us/](http://www.health.st.nm.us/)).

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**Assessment and Recommendations:**

## 2. Does the applicant have a strong academic background in the natural and social sciences and the humanities?

The Committee on Admissions uses undergraduate and post-graduate overall grade point averages and grades in specific prerequisite courses to assess the academic preparation of the applicant. Much of modern medicine is based on scientific discovery. Successful physicians must understand the scientific foundations of medical practice, and must be able to carry out life-long, independent learning in the sciences to remain up-to-date in their practice. The social sciences provide the applicant with a view of how society works and a context for dealing with behavior and population health issues. The humanities provide an insight into human expression and provide examples of effective communication between individuals as well as societies. Thus, the Committee on Admissions looks for well rounded academic performance. The academic performance is also an indicator of how well applicants balance their time for study with other aspects of their life that are of competing importance, and it is a good indicator of how well an applicant can make difficult decisions. The Committee on Admissions looks particularly carefully at the performance in the medical school prerequisite courses. Students must obtain a C or better in all prerequisite courses (equivalent to 2.0 grade points); the grade of C- is unacceptable.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Biology - Semester 1	_____
Biology - Semester 2	_____
Chemistry - Semester 1	_____
Chemistry - Semester 2	_____
Organic Chemistry - Semester 1	_____
Organic Chemistry - Semester 2	_____
Physics - Semester 1	_____
Physics - Semester 2	_____
Biochemistry	_____

For the class matriculating in Fall 2005, the average overall undergraduate grade point average (G.P.A.) was 3.6. Applicants who have G.P.A.s significantly less than this value may wish to take upper division undergraduate or beginning graduate courses in biology or biochemistry to increase their academic profile. A list of suggest courses offered at the University of New Mexico is provided below. Students whose undergraduate G.P.A.s fall below the 3.0 minimum for application can apply after taking 6-8 advanced biology or biochemistry courses as a non-degree or graduate student and maintaining a 3.5 G.P.A.

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Biology 201 Molecular Biology	Biology 351/352L Microbiology Biology
Biology 202 Genetics	416/416L Histology Biology 428 Human
Biology 237 & 238 Anat & Phys I/II	Heredity Biology 435/435L Animal Phys
Biology 239 Microbiology	Biology 444 Genomic Analysis
Biology 412 Developmental Biology	Biochemistry 445 Int. Biochem
Biology 456 Immunology	Biochemistry 446 Int. Biochem II
Biology 429 Molecular Cell Biol	Biology 447 Prosection Biochemistry
Biology 450 Virology	463/464 Bioch. Disease Biomed 507
Biomed 509 Neuroscience	Adv Mol Biol Biomed 508 Adv Cell Biol
Biology 203L Ecology and Evolution	
Biology 204L Plant/Animal Form and Function	

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### Assessment and Recommendations:

### 3. Can the applicant achieve a good score on a large, high-stakes examination?

The Committee on Admissions uses the score on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) as an indicator of whether an applicant can learn a large body of technical information and successfully apply that information under the stress of an examination. While the Committee recognizes that there is a limit to the predictive power of the MCAT in assessing the quality of a future physician's practice, the score on this exam has been shown to be a strong predictor of whether an applicant will be able to successfully pass the national licensure board exams required to be certified to practice. **For the class matriculating in 2005, the average MCAT score was 28.4.** Although the minimum MCAT score to be considered for admission is 22, applicants are strongly encouraged to consider retaking the MCAT if their score is less than 26; the higher the score, the greater the credit given by the Committee. Currently, the Committee on Admissions looks at the best MCAT score on a single test.

<b><u>MCAT Section</u></b>	<b><u>Best Set of Scores</u></b>
Verbal Reasoning	_____
Physical Sciences	_____
Biological Sciences	_____
Essay	_____

#### **Total Score:**

The University of New Mexico School of Medicine recommends that applicants who do not regularly perform well on standardized tests strongly consider taking an MCAT review course. It is important to remember that such review courses are not a substitute for college courses, and are specifically geared towards a concentrated review of material and test-taking strategies. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to take the MCAT only after completing all of the prerequisite courses.**

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#### **Assessment and Recommendations:**

#### **4. Does the applicant have a strong commitment to his/her community and to society?**

The Committee on Admissions uses the applicant's record of volunteerism as an indicator of the applicant's commitment to the community and to society. A good physician recognizes the role that local, national and world communities play in the health of the individual as well as the health of public. The applicant's previous experience in the community provides perspectives on these important interrelationships. The Committee on Admissions takes into account the fact that many applicants must work to support their education, and that volunteer time may be limited. However, holidays and weekends may be opportunities to get in some volunteer time.

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#### **Assessment and Recommendations:**

## **5. Does the applicant have recent experience in a health care setting in direct contact with patients and does the applicant have a good knowledge of national and international health issues?**

The Committee on Admissions uses the applicant's experience in the health care setting to determine if he or she understands the challenges and complexities of medical practice. The Committee is especially looking for direct contact with patients. Being a physician requires a strong commitment to patients that brings with it enormous self sacrifice of personal energy and time with family and friends. Without direct patient care experience in the health care setting, many applicants fail to understand and appreciate these challenges and they are more likely to not finish their medical training or to become dissatisfied with their careers. In addition, clinical experience provides the applicant with an understanding of the challenges of dealing with patients who are often experiencing the most stressful time in their lives. The applicant is able to determine if he or she has the capacity to deal with patients in an empathetic manner under these difficult conditions. The interviewer almost always asks applicants to describe an encounter with a patient.

Almost all medical school admissions interviewers engage applicants in discussions on national and/or international health care issues. Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow these issues by reading local and national newspapers, national news magazines, and websites. Two important websites are the New York Times Health Section ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) and the World Health Organization (WHO) ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

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### **Assessment and Recommendations:**

## **6. Does the applicant have effective oral and written communication skills?**

The Committee on Admissions uses the applicant's answers on the medical applicant form and the applicant's admissions interview to determine the quality of these communication skills. The physician plays a critical role in teaching patients how to make good decisions about their physical and behavioral health. In addition, the practice of medicine requires that physicians function as members and often leaders of a team of health professionals that work together closely and effectively. A physician must not only be able to speak effectively with a patient, but must be able to listen effectively and ask good questions. It is important to be able to balance these speaking and listening skills so that information is transmitted in an accurate and efficient manner. The physician is also required to keep accurate and precise records of patient encounters that are used by different parts of the health care system. A physician's writing must have a proper balance of information content, succinctness and clarity.

The medical school interview usually includes a discussion of the applicant's motivation for becoming a physician, academic and clinical experiences, and health care issues. In addition, the interviewer may pose specific questions or problems to examine the applicant's problem solving abilities. Interviewers are particularly sensitive to applicants who are too verbose, fail to answer the questions directly, or who dominate the conversation without asking any questions. The Committee on Admissions encourages students to practice their interview with their colleagues and teachers. Applicants should pay attention to body language and refrain from nervous habits. Many applicants with outstanding academic credentials and a wealth of clinical and volunteer activities fail to gain entrance to the School of Medicine due to poor interviews. It is important to keep in mind that each interview should be approached as if it were the first interview. Some applicants who have applied multiple times may feel frustrated, and may express this frustration in the form of anger or resentment in the interview. This behavior does not demonstrate the patience and strength of character required to be a good physician.

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### **Assessment and Recommendations:**

**I understand that the assessment and recommendations provided above are for the purpose of increasing the quality of my application to the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, but that fulfillment of any or all of these recommendations does not guarantee admission. Each year's applicant pool contains a large number of highly qualified applicants, and there are more qualified applicants than positions available. Applicants are ranked with respect to each other according to their individual qualities as well as on the experiences and diversity that they will contribute to the entering class.**

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**Applicant's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Interviewer's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**