Policy Statement on Admissions Committee & Interviewers Roles & Responsibility

Charge

The charge of the Admissions Committee of the College of Medicine is to evaluate and select the members of the incoming first year medical school class and any applicants entering as transfer students into the third year.

The Admissions Committee reviews any policy regarding admissions.

The Admissions Committee of the College of Medicine is also charged with the responsibility to ensure the high standards and diversity that we value and to admit students whose interests, abilities, skills, and character are consistent with the institutional mission. The final responsibility for accepting students into the program rests with the Admissions Committee in whose faculty members represent the majority of voting members.

Committee Members Responsibility

The Admissions Committee of the College of Medicine annually reviews relevant policies for admissions and makes in writing recommendations to the Dean. These include an annual review of the pre-requisites, admissions policies and procedures, Student Admissions websites and a process of continual quality improvement. This will include a regular review of courses and experiences required for admission. The Admissions Committee of the College of Medicine annually reviews the academic success of admitted students and try to understand the backgrounds of students who are not successful in an effort to see if there are flaws in the admissions process that need to be rectified.

Reporting

The Admissions Committee is advisory to the Dean of the College of Medicine, and annually reports to the Executive Committee of the Faculty. The Presiding Officer of the Executive Committee and the Chair of the Subcommittee on Admissions or their surrogates attend the first meeting of the Admissions Committee each year. At this meeting, they receive the statistical data for the preceding and entering classes. In addition, every years, the
Committee presents to these two officials data about the undergraduate grade point averages and MCAT scores of the entering class. The Committee also tracks the progress of the last five classes.

- Entering Class Quick Statistics Report is provided to the Dean of the College of Medicine, the President of SUNY Downstate, Admissions Committee Members, Presiding Officer of the Executive Committee of the Faculty, and Chair of the Subcommittee of Admissions of the Executive Committee of the Faculty.
- Outcomes Report is provided to Dean of the College of Medicine and Presiding Officer of the Executive Committee of the Faculty.

Membership

The Admissions Committee is composed of at least 10 faculty members from both the clinical and basic sciences. At least, one member serves as a liaison to the College of Medicine Alumni Association. Another member serves as a liaison to the School of Graduate Studies and is responsible for coordinating the evaluation of applicants to the MD PhD program. Additional members appointed to the Admissions Committee are:

- Three administrative support members from the Offices of Student Admissions and Student Affairs.
- A maximum of four second-year medical students in good academic standing.
- A maximum of four fourth-year medical students in good academic standing.

At any meeting, there must be a majority of faculty members present for a vote to be valid.

The Dean of the College of Medicine selects the chair or co-chairs of the Admissions Committee. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the Admissions Committee is the Dean of Admissions for the College of Medicine.

The Dean of the College of Medicine recruits and appoints new Committee members from the current non-committee interviewers in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Faculty, the Dean or Chair of Admissions, the Director or Students Admissions, Vice President and Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs.

Training

As part of the appointment/reappoint process, each member of the Admissions Committee is required to complete an annual training and orientation program as well as to sign an annual Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Agreement. This ensures that all applicants are treated in a fair and equitable manner and that all decisions are made in accordance with established institutional goals and procedures.
Procedures

The first meeting of the Admissions Committee will include a business component dedicated to the presentation of procedural matters to be discussed and approved by the committee. At other times during the year, the total committee will be consulted regarding procedures or individual applicants.

Review of applications

A completed application consists of:

- AMCAS Application
- Letters of recommendation
- MCAT score reports
- Supplemental application & processing fee
- Any additional information requested by the screener (initial reviewer, see below).

Six experienced screeners, including the Dean or Chair of Admissions for the College of Medicine, review applications to the College of Medicine. Applications are reviewed in a holistic manner. Attention is given to the difficulty of the curriculum, the grades, and the performance on the MCAT exam(s). Potential for success in medical school, personal characteristics including evidence of community service (altruism) and very good communications skills are also considered in judging suitability for the profession of medicine. In keeping with the mission of Downstate COM, a candidate’s service to the community and challenges faced in obtaining an education are positive attributes. Moreover, Clinical and Research Experiences strengthen the application.

Interviewing policies

The Dean or Chair of Admissions for the College of Medicine reviews criteria for interview selection prior to the start of the admissions cycle. These criteria will be adhered to over the course of the admissions season. The interviewer pool should include members of the Admissions Committee as well as faculty, administrative staff and students. Interviewers should consult the Dean or Chair of Admissions of the College of Medicine or the Director of Student Admissions when dealing with a challenging or controversial applicant’s file. The interview is important to the applicant and the selection process and it is the interviewer’s responsibility to maintain a professional and engaged approach to interviews.

The interview day experience should provide the applicant with the opportunity to ask questions about the school, the curriculum, financial aid, housing, and an opportunity to tour the campus and facilities.

Interviewers for the College of Medicine should be trained to carry out a structured interview, guided by a mandatory orientation, interviewer manual and interviewer report form. Interviewers complete a comprehensive applicant assessment and interview report, which becomes part of the applicant file and is critical to the final disposition decision made by the Committee.
Usually, faculty or professional staff from the Office of Academic Support Services and Advisement conducts one interview lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Subsequently, by phone or Skype, applicants are involved in a 30-minute Peer-to-Peer conversation with a currently enrolled medical student.

Interviewer Training Sessions take place each year in the summer and fall and on an ad hoc basis during the year. Sessions will last at least one hour and include a review and discussion of all rules and regulations regarding interviewing, a thorough review of the AMCAS application and interview report, holistic admissions, and the curriculum description. New interviewers must attend a one-hour interviewer training session prior to being assigned their first interview. All interviewers receive an annually revised Handbook about interviewing information and are invited to attend a mandatory training session. All interviewers must attend a refresher training session if there are major changes, e.g. a new curriculum or application process.

Interviewers must recuse themselves from interviewing any candidate who is a relative, an acquaintance, or for whom they cannot be impartial or when a conflict of interest exists.

All returning and newly appointed interviewers are required to fill out a standard Interviewer Report form which is reviewed annually by the Director of Student Admissions and revised as needed.

**Interviewer Responsibilities**

It is the joint responsibility of the Dean or Chair of Admissions of the College of Medicine and the Director of Student Admissions to ensure that all interviewers have been properly oriented to admissions procedures, confidentiality, and legal requirements.

- Interviewers must not ask the applicant questions regarding controversial issues which may be misinterpreted as the sole reason for his/her rejection later.
- Interviewers must not ask questions that violate federal laws or regulations.
- Interviewers must not share any personal thoughts on the candidate’s likelihood of acceptance.
- Individual interview evaluations will be kept confidential and only shared with the appropriate members of the admissions committee.
- The rating form and its contents will never be shared directly with the applicant.

**Presentation and Voting Procedures**

Committee members are trained to holistically review and evaluate an applicant comprehensive file including the interview and peer-to-peer reports. Every week, the Committee meets to assess interviewed candidates, and these detailed assessments are conducted by a minimum of 5 committee members guided by a team leader. A committee member presents each interviewed candidate. All members of the Admissions Committee use an I-Pad to holistically review the current AMCAS application, letters of recommendation, supplemental information, prior application materials, interview reports (faculty and student), and any supplemental materials provided by the applicant. After each presentation, the members discuss the applicant and then electronically assign a numerical score ranging from 1 to 5 (“reject” to “accept immediately”) by secret ballot. The teams may pose questions or request additional information and the Director of
Student Admissions will then follow up with the applicant and represent the information once obtained.

Committee members are required to recuse themselves from deliberations and voting on any candidate who is a relative or an acquaintance and for whom they cannot be impartial or when there is a conflict of interest. Committee members must leave the room when their children or family members are being presented.

Each member has one vote, which is confidential. Candidates are scored for acceptability on a numerical scale.

For the purpose of candidate presentation, the committee may be divided into two subgroups with no fewer than five members including at least three faculty members. Thus, the minimum number required for a quorum is five voting members of whom three must be faculty. In some instances, an applicant is reviewed for a vote by the entire Committee. In controversial cases, the Dean of the College of Medicine will be consulted.

**Acceptance Procedures**

Traffic rules of AAMC are followed regarding the timing of acceptances.

Candidates attaining a score of “acceptance” by the Admissions Committee will receive an accept letter starting February 15. Acceptances will be offered on a weekly basis until the class is filled. At this point, a Hold list is formed. In June, an Alternate list is formed from the Hold list. Based on the Committee scores, applicants are accepted to fill vacancies in the entering class from the Alternate list until matriculation has occurred.