

Laureates & Leaders

MD/PhD: ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE

Cohort	Assignment Title	Objective	Deadline
Sophomores	Meet Prehealth	Meet with Prehealth Advising staff	By end of Spring semester
	Ready, Set, Research!	Explore research opportunities for the Spring semester and/or summer (summer research programs)	Fall - January Summer: Application deadlines ~Jan-Feb
	Find a Faculty Mentor	Begin the process of finding a Faculty Mentor	Ongoing through Spring & Summer
	Test, Test, 1,2,3	Prepare and complete required graduate entry exam. Test prep is offered via either study guide or online class.	Can start taking it (varies but no later than end of Spring of Junior year): -over IAP -late Spring -Summer
	Where Should I Go?	Generate a preliminary list of graduate schools to consider & look into their requirements	Ongoing through Sophomore year
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Shadow (highly recommended)	Spend time shadowing a doctor (connect with Prehealth Advising for more information)	Ongoing through Junior year
Juniors	Who Am I?	Begin drafting personal statement and AMCAS essays	By end of Fall semester
	Start the COPA	Schedule a meeting with Prehealth Advising about COPA	September - November
	Find a Faculty Mentor	Secure a Faculty Mentor	First week of October
	Request COPA	Request COPA letter, pay fees, etc.	December
	Shadow (highly recommended)	Spend time shadowing a doctor (connect with Prehealth Advising for more information)	Ongoing through Junior year
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Am I on Track?	Meet with your Faculty Mentor and discuss your graduate school preparation plans	October & February



Office of Minority Education

Laureates & Leaders

	Ready, Set, Research!	New or continued research experience during semester and/or summer	Fall & Spring semester Summer: Application deadlines ~Jan-February
	My Team	Request recommendation letters	Make all requests by end of IAP
	Upload!	Upload transcripts, resume, draft personal statement, and Prehealth Advising Questionnaire to Credential Service Account	By end of IAP
	Get the COPA	Reserve a COPA interview time with Prehealth Advising and COPA Faculty Member	February – April
	Where Should I Apply?	Finalize list of schools you're applying to	By end of Spring Break
	Finalize Essays	Final drafts of statement(s) and AMCAS essays	Before June 30 th
	AMCAS App	Complete the AMCAS application	May 1 st -June 30 th
Seniors	Secondary Apps	Complete secondary apps as requested by schools	June – August
	Am I on Track?	Meet with your Faculty Mentor and discuss your graduate school preparation plans	Within 2 weeks after the Fall semester begins
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Why Medicine?	Complete mock interview with Prehealth Advising	September - November
	Check it Out	Attend interviews as invited	October - March
	Where's The Money?	Submit Fellowship applications (if applicable)	October - November
	Make a Choice	Confirm spot and withdraw other acceptances	By April 30 th

All students have to attend a one-on-one check-in with L&L staff at least twice a semester. An email will be sent out to schedule these meetings.



Laureates & Leaders

	Assignment Title	Objective	Deadline
Sophomore Year	Meet Prehealth	Meet with Prehealth Advising staff	By end of Spring semester
	Ready, Set, Research!	Explore research opportunities for the Spring semester and/or summer	Fall - January Summer: Application deadlines ~Jan-Feb
	Find a Faculty Mentor	Begin the process of finding a Faculty Mentor	Ongoing through Spring & Summer
	Test, Test, 1,2,3	Prepare and complete required graduate entry exam. Test prep is offered via either study guide or online class.	Can start taking it (varies but no later than end of Spring of Junior year): -over IAP -late Spring -Summer
	Where Should I Go?	Generate a preliminary list of graduate schools to consider & look into their requirements	Ongoing through Junior year
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Shadow (highly recommended)	Spend time shadowing a doctor (connect with Prehealth Advising for more information)	Ongoing through Junior year



Laureates & Leaders

What I should be doing to prepare:

- Maintain a GPA of 4.25 or higher.
- Learn about your field.
- Explore and define your research interests.
- Explore and obtain a research opportunity (UROP).
- Explore and if possible apply to summer research opportunities.
- Connect with faculty, graduate students, and upper class students.
- Begin/Continue to establish meaningful relationships with faculty.
- Begin to think when to take standardized test/s.

Assignment Details:

Meet Prehealth Advising

Schedule an introductory meeting with Prehealth Advising staff. At MIT, all students applying to medical school need a letter of support from the Prehealth Advising office.

For information on suggested coursework for prospective MD/PhD students to take while at MIT, check out the "MIT Prehealth Advising Suggested Coursework" document under the Resources section on the L&L website.

Ready, Set, Research!

Research experience is essential for a strong graduate school application. That is why it is advisable to have a UROP and/or summer research experiences early on. Explore what research field interests you and narrow down laboratories in which you would like to do research. Contact the professor and set up an appointment to talk about research opportunities for the semester. Summer research opportunities are great to get more research experience, discover new institutions, and broaden your network. Deadlines for summer programs are usually during January and February, so plan ahead!

For information on research at MIT and summer research opportunities, check out the links in the "Resources, Volunteering, and Experiences" subsection of the Resources page on the L&L website.

Find a Faculty Mentor

One of the key aspects of the program is finding a faculty mentor that can help you navigate the process of applying to graduate school and answer questions you might have about your field of study. Mentors hold PhD or MD/PhD degrees and are usually, but not necessarily, MIT faculty. You have until October of your Junior year to secure a mentor.

Strategies to secure a mentor:

- What & Who to consider:
 - Spend some time thinking about what you are interested in research-wise.



Laureates & Leaders

- Contact L&L staff to see if they know of faculty available to mentor.
- Create a list of faculty who are doing work in your field of interest. Keep your options open as this person may not be in your major.
- Do a bit of research on the people on your list.
- Reach out to them:
 - If they are your professor, consider going during office hours to talk to them about your interest in graduate school and your participation in the Laureates and Leaders program.
 - Send an introductory email and try to schedule an appointment to meet. Be sure to have done some research on the person and mention that you are interested in their work. If you don't get a response:
 - Try to schedule an appointment with their assistant.
 - Send a follow-up email.
- Keep in touch:
 - Once you have identified a potential mentor, you will need to continue building that relationship.
 - Determine the best form of communication (email, in person, etc.)
- Ask them to be your mentor:
 - Describe what the mentor commitment would involve:
 - Meet at least once a semester to discuss graduate school plans
 - Answer questions and offer advice on graduate schools and the application process
 - It is an informal mentoring commitment. Laureates and Leaders program also provides mentoring through L&L staff.
 - If they are unable to mentor you, ask for suggestions of other people to contact.

Test, Test, 1,2,3

As an MD/PhD student, you will take the medical school standardized entrance exam (MCAT). You will need to prepare thoroughly to take it (either with a study guide or online class).

Where Should I Go?

Begin generating a preliminary list of schools that you may be interested in applying to. Things to consider:

- Where do you want to be?
- How large of an institution?
- Who is doing work in your field at the institution?
- What is the quality of the program department and faculty?
- Are there at least 2-3 faculty members which research interests you? (see below)
- Quality of research facilities, laboratories, etc.?
- What is their attrition policy?
- What is the average time for completion?
- What type of financial support is available?
- Are there any teaching requirements?
- Can you schedule a visit?



Laureates & Leaders

Consider these questions when looking for a prospective graduate school advisor:

- What are their current projects? Does any interest you?
- Where have their former students gone after? (Industry, academia, government, etc.)
- How long does it take for their students to graduate?
- Do they have tenure?
- Educational background
- Academic Experience
- Recent publications
- Honors and awards

Volunteer (highly recommended)

Volunteer experience (at a hospital or elsewhere) is a great way to show commitment to service. The Prehealth Advising website contains information on volunteer opportunities in Boston-area hospitals. To volunteer outside of a hospital setting, check out the MIT PKG Center or volunteermatch.org.

For information on volunteering at MIT and externally, check out the links in the "Resources, Volunteering, and Experiences" subsection of the Resources page on the L&L website.

Shadow (highly recommended)

Connect with Prehealth Advising for more information on how to shadow a doctor in the Boston area. Shadowing is not required for medical school applications, but it is helpful for students to decide how much they enjoy direct patient work.



Laureates & Leaders

What I should be doing to prepare:

- Maintain a GPA of 4.25 or higher. Strive for a GPA of 4.5.
- Continue to establish meaningful relationships with faculty. Ask for advice on how to

Juniors	Who Am I?	Begin drafting personal statement and AMCAS essays	By end of Fall semester
	Start the COPA	Schedule a meeting with Prehealth Advising about COPA	September - November
	Find a Faculty Mentor	Secure a Faculty Mentor	First week of October
	Request COPA	Request COPA letter, pay fees, etc.	December
	Shadow (Optional)	Spend time shadowing a doctor (connect with Prehealth Advising for more information)	Ongoing through Junior year
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Am I on Track?	Meet with your Faculty Mentor and discuss your graduate school preparation plans	October & February
	Ready, Set, Research!	New or continued research experience during semester and/or summer	Fall & Spring semester Summer: Application deadlines ~Jan-February
	My Team	Request recommendation letters	Make all requests by end of IAP
	Upload!	Upload transcripts, resume, draft personal statement, and Prehealth Advising Questionnaire to Credential Service Account	By end of IAP
	Get the COPA	Reserve a COPA interview time with Prehealth Advising and COPA Faculty Member	February – April
	Where Should I Apply?	Finalize list of schools you're applying to	By end of Spring Break
	Finalize Essays	Final drafts of statement(s) and AMCAS essays	Before June 30 th
	AMCAS App	Complete the AMCAS application	May 1 st -June 30 th

identify good graduate programs in your field.

- Continue researching potential graduate schools and look into their application requirements.
- Develop personal selection criteria for graduate schools. What is important to you?



Office of Minority Education

Laureates & Leaders

- Refine your research interests.
- Participate in research in your field.
- Participate in volunteer and community service opportunities especially in career choices such as medicine.
- Continue preparing for standardized tests.
- Register and take standardized tests (timelines varies).
- Begin to develop your personal statement.

Assignment Details:

Who Am I?

Each health profession school asks for a 4,000-6,000-character essay on your motivations for applying. AMCAS requires a personal statement that is limited to 5,300 characters. MD-PhD applicants will also have to write essays about why you want to pursue a dual-career path and about your research.

Some tips to help you:

1. Attend an essay-writing workshop (generally offered by MIT Prehealth Advising at the end of the fall semester and over IAP).
2. Brainstorm ideas. Consider experiences that had a major impact on you or that helped you determine that this career is a good fit.
3. Create an outline, jot ideas down, and start writing. Narrow down your ideas to three or four experiences and develop a theme to tie them together.
4. Have your essay critiqued by Prehealth Advising staff. You can also go to professors, academic advisors, the MIT Writing and Communication Center and/or your peers to get feedback.

Use the following questions and activities to help you get started brainstorming:

- List the personality traits and skills and academic training that you think graduate schools are looking for in your field.
- List 3 (or more) events in your life that you think might illustrate some of your key skills or personality traits.
- When did you become interested in your field?
- What excited you the most?
- Who are you? I am driven to... I have learned to... I believe...
- What are your most passionate interests or concerns? What problem(s) most occupy your thinking and your efforts?
- How did you develop those interests? (Not just the story, but what drives you.)
- What errors or regrets have taught you something important about yourself?
- To what extent do your current commitments reflect your most strongly held values?
- How do your interests and who you are relate to your goals in graduate school?



Laureates & Leaders

Start the COPA

Meet with Prehealth Advising to begin the COPA process.

Secure a Faculty Mentor

By now the search for your mentor should be well underway and hopefully you have kept in touch with those on your list. You have until October to secure a mentor. Below are some strategies to secure a mentor:

- Reach out to them again
 - Go visit them as soon as the semester begins if you have not been in touch over the summer. Remind them about your interest in graduate school and the Laureates and Leaders program.
 - Send an email and try to schedule an appointment to meet. If you don't get a response try to schedule an appointment with their assistant or send a follow up email.
- Ask them to be your mentor.
 - Describe what the mentor commitment would involve:
 - Meet at least once a semester to discuss graduate school plans
 - Answer questions and offer advice on graduate schools and the application process
 - Remind them that it is an informal mentoring commitment. The Laureates and Leaders program also provides mentoring through L&L staff.
 - If they are unable to mentor you, ask for suggestions of other people to contact.

Request COPA

Formally request the COPA letter, pay any required fees, etc.

Shadow (highly recommended)

Connect with Prehealth Advising for more information on how to shadow a doctor in the Boston area. Shadowing is not required for medical school applications, but it is helpful for students to decide how much they enjoy direct patient work.

Volunteer (highly recommended)

Volunteer experience (at a hospital or elsewhere) is a great way to show commitment to service. The Prehealth Advising website contains information on volunteer opportunities in Boston-area hospitals. To volunteer outside of a hospital setting, check out the MIT PKG Center or volunteermatch.org.



Laureates & Leaders

For information on volunteering at MIT and externally, check out the links in the "Resources, Volunteering, and Experiences" subsection of the Resources page on the L&L website.

Am I on Track?

Before each meeting with your mentor be sure to prepare ahead a list of questions you want to ask and outline your plans for the semester -what are you doing to prepare for graduate school application? Remember to share with Laureates and Leaders staff your plan each semester during one-on-one check-ins.

Ready, Set, Research!

Research experience is essential for a strong graduate school application. The strongest letter of recommendation come from professors or PhD professionals that can speak of your research abilities and critical thinking. Aim to have at least have 3 unique research experiences throughout your undergraduate career, with at least 1 as a long-term experience (one full academic year or longer). These include UROPs, summer research, and industry research. Be sure to mention to each supervisor that you are interested in going to graduate school in the future. Summer research opportunities are great to get more research experience, discover new institutions, and broaden your network. Deadlines for summer programs are usually during January and February so plan ahead!

For information on research at MIT and summer research opportunities, check out the links in the "Resources, Volunteering, and Experiences" subsection of the Resources page on the L&L website.

My Team - Request Recommendations

The strongest letters of recommendation come from professors or PhD professionals that can speak of your research abilities and critical thinking. Ask your recommender if they will be willing to write you a recommendation before the schools send them requests. Be sure to ask for the letters **at least four weeks before they are due**. Remember that professors are extremely busy and they need time to craft a good letter. Some recommenders may need you to remind them of submission deadlines.

Upload!

Upload transcripts, resume, draft personal statement, and Prehealth Advising Questionnaire to Credential Service Account (created when you begin COPA process).

Get the COPA

Reserve a COPA interview time (30 minutes) with Prehealth Advising and COPA Faculty Member.

Where Should I Apply?

Finalize list of schools that you may are going to apply to.

Finalize Essays

Finalize your statement and required AMCAS essays.



Laureates & Leaders

AMCAS App

Complete the AMCAS primary app between May 1st – June 30th.

June 30th is MIT's recommended deadline for students to submit primary app. AMCAS closes

Seniors	Secondary Apps	Complete secondary apps as requested by schools	June – August
	Am I on Track?	Meet with your Faculty Mentor and discuss your graduate school preparation plans	Within 2 weeks after the Fall semester begins
	Volunteer (highly recommended)	Volunteer at hospitals or other organizations (see Prehealth Advising site for info)	Ongoing through Sophomore – Senior year
	Why Medicine?	Complete mock interview with Prehealth Advising	September - November
	Check it Out	Attend interviews as invited	October - March
	Where's The Money?	Submit Fellowship applications (if applicable)	October - November
	Make a Choice	Confirm spot and withdraw other acceptances	By April 30 th

around August 1st.

What I should be doing to prepare BEFORE THE SENIOR YEAR:

- Gather graduate program brochures and information.
- Finalize list of schools.
- Create a master checklist of all deadlines, documents and supporting materials that you will be required to provide.
- Verify that your official transcript is correct.
- Finalize personal statement and essays.
- Begin contacting faculty in departments that you are interested in.
- Keep in contact with recommenders and remind them of deadlines if needed.



Office of Minority Education

Laureates & Leaders

Assignment Details:

Secondary Apps

Schools that are interested in your candidacy will request you to complete a secondary application, typically between June – August.

Am I on Track?

Meet (or exchange emails) with your mentor about your plans for graduate school. Share with him/her which schools and departments you are looking into applying, who you are asking for letters of recommendation, and the area of research you intend to do your graduate work on. Ask for his/her advice on these topics, but remember that ultimately it is your decision to make! Be sure to prepare ahead a list of questions you want to ask during your meeting. Remember to share with Laureates and Leaders staff your plan each semester during one-on-one check-ins.

Volunteer (highly recommended)

Volunteer experience (at a hospital or elsewhere) is a great way to show commitment to service. The Prehealth Advising website contains information on volunteer opportunities in Boston-area hospitals. To volunteer outside of a hospital setting, check out the MIT PKG Center or volunteermatch.org.

For information on volunteering at MIT and externally, check out the links in the "Resources, Volunteering, and Experiences" subsection of the Resources page on the L&L website.

Why Medicine?

Schedule and complete a mock interview with Prehealth Advising.

Check it Out

Interested schools will likely invite you to participate in an interview as a final step of the application process. Remember, you are interviewing the school just as much as they are interviewing you. Be sure to have a list of questions ready to ask, both about faculty and their research, but also about the program, etc.

Where's The Money?

STEM MD/PhD programs (MSTP or have an NIH grant) do not require you to pay or find your own funding for your graduate degree. Some programs provide a stipend and tuition scholarship, but limit the number of years this aid is available. For programs that do require you to secure your own funding, remember to apply for financial assistance early on. Be sure to stay informed about opportunities provided through the schools, programs, nationally, and internationally, as well as their deadlines. Begin submitting fellowship applications as early as September.

For a listing of MD/PhD programs in the United States, including information about funding for



Laureates & Leaders

each, check out the "MD/PhD Program Listing" document under the Resources section on the L&L website.

Make a Choice

Schools will begin sending notifications of acceptance in December through the early spring. You are able to hold multiple acceptances through April. You must confirm your attendance at a school and withdraw all other acceptances by April 30th.

