AAMC Holistic Review Project
Achieving Improved Learning and Workforce Outcomes through Admissions

What is the AAMC Holistic Review Project?
Medicine is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, collaborative, and technology-enabled, just as our society is growing more diverse, multicultural, and globally interconnected. Effectively responding to this changing landscape requires changing how we think about medical school admissions, as well as the full educational and career development continuums. To that end, the AAMC Holistic Review Project’s goal is to support excellence in admissions while also widening the lens through which we view applicants in order to maximize the benefits of holistic admissions across the full spectrum of education and development. It does so by assisting medical schools in establishing, implementing, and evaluating mission-driven, student diversity-related policies, processes, and practices that help build a physician workforce capable of and committed to improving the health of all.

About the Project
The Holistic Review Project, established in 2007, was originally designed to develop admissions tools and resources that medical schools can use to create and sustain diversity. Over time, the project has evolved into a catalyst for thinking about and conducting admissions differently.

In this next phase, the Holistic Review Project places holistic admissions within the full context of the medical education and career development continuums, firmly situating the work within the diversity and excellence paradigm. Understanding that expertise lies in the field, the greatest emphasis continues to be on deepening and expanding engagement and collaborations with constituents.

Moving Forward
The Holistic Review Project is building on its existing work, identifying new opportunities and areas for refinement, and working in collaboration with the MCAT® exam staff, AMCAS®, the Admissions Initiative, and other relevant AAMC projects. With a unique focus on mission- and evidence-based admission, the project’s goals are to

- collect, analyze, and disseminate baseline and outcome data;
- sustain and expand efforts to engage new and current audiences;
- build and implement an infrastructure for an active community of practice;
- develop scaled efficiencies in holistic review admissions practices and process; and
- continue to monitor and help schools interpret the legal landscape.

Expanded Project Focus
Attaining the full benefits of holistic admissions requires expanding the project’s focus and aligning its work with all points along the medical education and the career development continuums. To that end, the next phase of the project will be guided by a new constituent advisory committee, which has identified three principle areas of focus: sustaining an inclusive learning environment, institutional alignment, and legal and policy leadership. The 2013 AAMC Admissions Survey, which was recently completed by medical school admissions officers, well provide a baseline for future project work as well as other AAMC-admissions efforts.
What is holistic review?

Holistic review is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics (E-A-M) and, when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value as a medical student and future physician. Holistic admissions

- provides a mechanism for aligning admissions with institutional mission and
- facilitates identifying a broadly diverse student body, which contributes to an enriched learning environment for all students and a better prepared physician workforce

An integrated holistic admissions process incorporates four core principles at each stage: screening, interview, and selection. These four core principles emphasize the importance of giving individualized consideration to every applicant and provide operational guidance to ensure that admissions processes and criteria are both mission- and evidence-based, promote diversity, and use a balance of Experiences, Attributes, and Academic Metrics (see the AAMC E-A-M Model below).

The AAMC Experiences-Attributes-Metrics Model is a central focus of the Holistic Review Project. The E-A-M model broadens the lens through which admission committee members can view applicants to recognize the varying dimensions and contexts that shape each candidate’s identity. It is not meant to be a complete representation of all dimensions of an individual, nor is it intended to serve as a modified checklist. Schools have found it to be a helpful point of reference when assessing their admissions policies and practices.

For more information about the project or to access available tools and resources: https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview/

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