Admitting Diverse Classes: Strategies, Barriers, and Possibilities for Using MCAT Scores in Context

Learn Serve Lead 2021
Catherine Lucey, MD, MACP
Executive Vice Dean and Vice Dean for Education

Online Profile
Equity and the MCAT Exam

Process equity or inequity

Intrinsic design of assessment

Context in which assessment is implemented

Instrumental use of assessment

Assessment outcomes

Outcome equity or inequity

Source
Medical Education’s Wicked Problem: Achieving Equity in Assessment for Medical Learners

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You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
✓ What are schools trying to accomplish?

✓ What gets in the way?

✓ How are they currently doing it?

✓ Where are the opportunities for improvement?
Diversity Is a Common Focus Across Schools

National Data from 2021 AO Survey

Geographic location
- 83% Medically underserved areas
- 72% In-state
- 70% Rural
- 62% Tribal
- 48% Urban

Individual characteristics
- 99% URM
- 97% Experienced disadvantage
- 96% Low-SES
- 92% 1st Generation
- 47% Multilingual
- 35% Under-resourced university
- 21% Non-science major
- 19% Community college

98% of schools consider contributing to a diverse physician workforce important to their missions

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Promising Practices at Boston University, Morehouse School of Medicine, and University of Illinois-Chicago
Kristen Goodell, MD
Associate Dean of Admissions
Online Profile
We recruit classes with diverse backgrounds to help us serve our larger mission.

Most students with undergraduate GPAs 3.0 or higher.

Some students with mid-range MCAT scores.
How do you put MCAT scores in context during the admissions process?
MCAT Scores/UGPAs in Context

**Educational data**
- Upward/downward college grade trends (95%)
- BCPM coursework/grades (87%)
- Post-college coursework/degrees (≥81%)
- Letters of recommendation (81%)
- Required coursework (77%)

**Background/experience data**
- Evidence of grit (98%)
- 1st gen, lower-SES, URM (≥94%)
- Work experience (93%)
- Essays/personal statements (91%)

**College data**
- Prehealth advisor (29%)
- Average MCAT/UGPA (29%)
- % graduates who continue education (29%)
- Graduation rate (29%)

**High school data**
- % who go to college (35%)
- Average SAT/ACT score (20%)
- Graduation rate (25%)

**Community data**
- Poverty rate (33%)
- Housing stability (36%)
- % single-parent households (38%)
- Crime rate (28%)
Ngozi Anachebe, MD, PharmD, FACOG
Senior Associate Dean
Admissions & Student Affairs

*Now Vice Dean for Educational Affairs at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine
2018-2020 Matriculants (N = 305)

Almost 60% students with mid-range MCAT scores, much lower than the national average.

Most students are URM by race/ethnicity or come from medically underserved areas.

MCAT Total Score

- LOWER 3rd: 2%
- MIDDLE 3rd: 58%
- UPPER 3rd: 40%

Undergraduate GPA

Undergraduate GPAs trend lower than national GPAs.
How do you use student performance data in feedback systems between admissions, medical education, and student affairs?
Use of Student Performance Data

National Data from 2021 AO Survey

Pressure to admit higher MCAT scores

- 63% Passing licensure exams
- 60% Matching to residency
- 58% Graduating on time/+1
- 52% Financial & social risks of not graduating
- 31% USNWR ranking
- 30% Expectations from administration/ board

Use of performance data by MCAT/GPA
- 71% First time pass rates on licensure exams
- 58% Graduation rates
- 38% Match rates

84% of schools provide info about students’ success to admissions

14%-29% would use these data if available

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Large percentage of rural students and URM students.

Students with a wide range of MCAT scores.

Students with a wide range of undergraduate GPAs.
How do you support the students you admit?
The **MCAT/GPA thresholds** for students who can succeed with/without academic support and the **number of students supportable** in each entering class are **wide-ranging** across schools.
Schools Support Their Students in Different Ways

Wellness and counseling services
Step 1 prep
Content tutoring

Pre-matriculation program on foundational sciences
Deceleration with one extra year
Post-matriculation coursework on foundational sciences

Most offered services
Least offered services

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National Data from 2021 AO Survey