

72 PERCENT OF TOP-RANKED MEDICAL SCHOOLS INJECT IDENTITY POLITICS IN KEY ADMISSIONS PROCESS STEP

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Elite medical schools are taking as much of an interest in training advocates for "diversity, equity and inclusion," or DEI, as they are in training physicians. As this report shows, DEI advocacy begins during the medical school admissions process, long before a student ever sets foot on campus.

A review of the admissions process at 50 of the top-ranked medical schools found that 36 asked applicants their views on, or experience in, DEI efforts. Many were overt in asking applicants if they agreed with certain statements about racial politics and the causes of disparate health outcomes.

This focus on identity politics is not limited to elite medical schools. Schools outside the top-ranked tier are also probing for information about candidates' attitudes toward race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and more. The goal, it appears, is to turn ideological support for health equity and social justice initiatives into a credential that increases an applicant's chance of acceptance, to screen out dissenters, and to signal to all applicants that they are expected to support this new cause.

#### The medical school application process

Most U.S. medical schools' websites direct prospective students to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), headquartered in Washington, D.C., for guidance on the application process. The association offers multiple resources1 and links to databases for various medical schools and their admission requirements. The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS®) is the centralized platform that sends a single application to all programs the candidate selects (except for schools in Texas).<sup>2</sup>

The comprehensive Applicant Guide,<sup>3</sup> a product of the AAMC, informs users of all the necessary elements of a complete application, including those that are considered part of "holistic review." Under a holistic review, the guide says, medical school admissions committees use broad selection criteria that "promote numerous aspects of diversity." For example, "Race and ethnicity may be considered as factors



Association of American Medical Colleges. Understanding the process. <a href="https://students-residents.aamc.org/understanding-process/understanding-process">https://students-residents.aamc.org/understanding-process/understanding-process</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

<sup>2.</sup> Association of American Medical Colleges. American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS). https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school-amcas/american-medical-college-application-service-amcas, accessed June 30, 2022.

American Medical College Application Service. 2023 AMCAS applicant guide. <a href="https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/11616/download">https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/11616/download</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

when making admission-related decisions only when aligned with mission-related educational interests and goals associated with student diversity." The AAMC helps admissions officers and program directors use this holistic review process by providing certain tools without requiring their university to belong to the association. For example, users can learn about bias in the admission process and how to use "a different lens" to promote diversity.<sup>4</sup>

Once a medical school receives an applicant's primary application, the would-be student usually completes a secondary application with question prompts. Applicants explain, in essays or short narrative answers, their interest in a program and how their life experiences align with the school's mission and values. The school's prompts may refer to the holistic approach for evaluating students.<sup>5</sup> It is in these secondary questions where an applicant's support for identity politics is tested.

## II. OUR METHODOLOGY

In 2022, U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) published its 2023 Best Medical Schools: Research, which ranks 192 medical schools that also conduct or sponsor medical research.<sup>6</sup>

A second resource, the *Medical School Secondary Essay Prompts Database*, contains the most currently available secondary essay prompts for 189 U.S. medical schools. The website *ProspectiveDoctor* updates this database as it receives records for the 2022-2023 academic year.<sup>7</sup>

The secondary questions for the top 50 schools on the 2023 Best Medical Schools list were retrieved from the database and reviewed for essay prompts around diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Association of American Medical Colleges. Holistic review. <a href="https://www.aamc.org/services/member-capacity-building/holistic-review">https://www.aamc.org/services/member-capacity-building/holistic-review</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

Association of American Medical Colleges. Applying to medical school: An overview of the medical school application process. https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school, accessed June 29, 2022.

US News & World Report. 2023 best medical schools: Research. <a href="https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/research-rankings">https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/research-rankings</a>, accessed June 27, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. Medical School Secondary Essay Prompts Database. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/medical-school-secondary-essay-prompts-database/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/medical-school-secondary-essay-prompts-database/</a>, accessed June 27, 2022.

# III. WHAT ARE THE MEDICAL SCHOOLS ASKING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS?

Our review found that 72 percent of the top 50 medical schools, and 80 percent of the top 10 schools, use probing questions to elicit responses from the applicant about his or her views on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. Appendix A lists the 11 medical schools in the US News & World Report top 50 that ask the most egregious questions that are intended to elicit the candidate's position on topics like social justice and health equity, and includes examples of those questions. Appendix B contains sample questions from the remaining 25 medical colleges that are using language consistent with DEI concepts during secondary interviews.

Some medical schools take a subtler approach by requesting autobiographical or socioeconomic information or by asking applicants to self-identify with particular demographic labels. But some institutions explicitly question applicants about their positions on, and commitments to, racial identity politics and institutional initiatives related to DEI. Examples include:

### **Duke University (Durham, NC)**

Duke University School of Medicine, ranked #6 by USNWR, says it "has been nationally recognized for its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion." In addition to inquiring about the "racial and/or ethnic self-description" of each applicant, Duke asks applicants:

Potential sources of health inequities include race, gender, education, income, disability, geographic location, and sexual orientation. Moments to Movement (M2M) is Duke's collective stand against systemic racism and injustice. The name signifies going beyond passive moments of reflection and becoming more active as we build to make lasting change for our patients, their loved ones and each other. Describe your understanding of race and its relationship to inequities in health and health care.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>8.</sup> Duke University School of Medicine. Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. https://medschool.duke.edu/about-us/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/office-equity-diversity-and-inclusion, accessed June 29, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. Duke University School of Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/duke-university-school-of-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/duke-university-school-of-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 27, 2022.

### David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA (Los Angeles, CA)

Ranked at #19 on the USNWR list, the Geffen School wants to know if applicants identify as 'marginalized' when they consider access to education or healthcare. It cites as examples, "LGBTQIA, disabilities, federally recognized tribe," and asks applicants "how this inequity has impacted you or your community and how educational disparity, health disparity and/or marginalization has impacted you and your community." This instruction reflects a statement given on the medical school's DEI web page: "The core values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion are inseparable from our institutional goals of excellence in all tenets of healthcare, research, education, and community engagement."

### **University of Minnesota Medical School (Minneapolis, MN)**

After inquiring about the details of applicants' identities and incidents in which they "personally experienced or acted with implicit or explicit bias," the 43rd-ranked University of Minnesota Medical School asks:

Our country is reckoning with its history, racism, racial injustice, and especially anti-black racism. Please share your reflections on, experiences with, and greatest lessons learned about systemic racism.<sup>12</sup>

Anyone who wants to know what the university means by certain words can consult the "Defining Our Terms" web page at the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.<sup>13</sup> The reader will find definitions of various terms, such as "micro-aggression," "privilege," and "anti-racism."



<sup>10.</sup> ProspectiveDoctor.com. David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/david-geffen-school-of-medicine-at-ucla-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/david-geffen-school-of-medicine-at-ucla-secondary/</a>, accessed June 27, 2022.

<sup>11.</sup> UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. <a href="https://medschool.ucla.edu/default-diversity.cfm?id=19">https://medschool.ucla.edu/default-diversity.cfm?id=19</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. University of Minnesota Medical School secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/university-of-minnesota-medical-school-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/university-of-minnesota-medical-school-secondary/</a>, accessed June 27, 2022.

<sup>13.</sup> University of Minnesota Medical School Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. Defining our terms. <a href="https://med.umn.edu/odei/about/terms">https://med.umn.edu/odei/about/terms</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

## **IV.BEYOND THE TOP 50**

These practices are not limited to the leading medical schools. We reviewed medical schools outside of the USNWR top 50 list and found institutions utilizing the same types of questions with their applicants. In doing so, these programs are revealing their steadfast allegiance to admitting applicants who are ready to prove their DEI advocacy credentials. Here are some examples:

# Florida Atlantic University Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine (Boca Raton, FL)

As a community FAU Schmidt COM has made a commitment to be anti-racist and address systemic racism in education and healthcare. Institutionalized racism can be defined as "macro level systems, social forces, institutions, ideologies, and processes that interact with one another to generate and reinforce inequities among racial and ethnic groups." As a future medical student at FAU, how can you play an active role in addressing and dismantling systemic racism? 14

# Michigan State University College of Human Medicine (East Lansing, MI)

American society may be facing a watershed moment as it reckons with various systemic injustices. Use the space below to share your thoughts about this statement.<sup>15</sup>

# SUNY Downstate Medical Center - College of Medicine (Brooklyn, NY)

What in your current/future activity/activities have/will contribute to diversity, health equity and social justice? 16



ProspectiveDoctor.com. Florida Atlantic Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/florida-atlantic-university-charles-e-schmidt-college-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/florida-atlantic-university-charles-e-schmidt-college-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. Michigan State University College of Human Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/michigan-state-university-college-of-human-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/michigan-state-university-college-of-human-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. SUNY Downstate School of Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/suny-downstate-school-of-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/suny-downstate-school-of-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

#### Tulane University School of Medicine (New Orleans, LA)

[Optional] Tulane University School of Medicine values the diversity of its patients, faculty, staff, and students. Do you identify with a particular group that you believe is underrepresented among medical professionals? These include groups oriented around, but not limited to: ethnicity, race, sexuality, religion, disability, and economic background.<sup>17</sup>

# Loyola University Chicago – Stritch School of Medicine (Maywood, IL)

Social justice in the Jesuit tradition, justice due each person by virtue of their own inherent human dignity, is an essential dimension of education at SSOM. Describe what you have learned about yourself from your concrete social justice experiences. Explain how you plan to sustain your efforts to advocate for current social justice issues as a medical student and as a physician.<sup>18</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

The process of getting into medical school is complex, and the secondary application is an essential step. Prospective students are prepared and advised by the AAMC for the process, which further conveys to students the importance of compliance with DEI orthodoxy. Candidates applying to elite medical education programs undoubtedly feel obligated to respond to optional information requested by the universities and may not even notice the voluntary nature of the questions — especially when they are strongly drawn to a particular program. Many questions cross a clear line from asking applicants to describe their background and life experiences to demanding their explicit support and enthusiasm for a worldview and agenda that is fundamentally political in nature. These demands for endorsement of specific political ideas in order to be considered for admission may constitute, or be close to constituting, compelled speech – a long-recognized violation of our country's most basic values of free speech and freedom of conscience.

Top medical schools have woven their commitment to woke politics into their application process, asking future doctors to prove their commitment to divisive ideologies or risk being rejected from medical school.



ProspectiveDoctor.com. Tulane University School of Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/tulane-university-school-of-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/tulane-university-school-of-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

ProspectiveDoctor.com. Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine secondary questions. <a href="https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/loyola-university-chicago-stritch-school-of-medicine-secondary/">https://www.prospectivedoctor.com/loyola-university-chicago-stritch-school-of-medicine-secondary/</a>, accessed June 29, 2022.

## VI. APPENDIX A

Verbatim excerpts from the secondary application questions posted on ProspectiveDoctor.com are in italics. The rankings come from 2023 Best Medical Schools: Research, published by U.S. News & World Report. These are the medical schools that are using some of the most overt tactics for obtaining information about the applicant's commitment to woke ideologies.

Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
3 (tie)	University of California-San Francisco School of Medicine	Do you identify as being part of a marginalized group socioeconomically or in terms of access to quality education or healthcare? Please describe how this inequity has impacted you and your community.	UC San Francisco School of Medicine Secondary Questions
14 (tie)	University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine	We are interested in combating all forms of systemic barriers, and would like to hear your thoughts on opposing specifically: systemic racism, anti-LGBTQ+discrimination, and misogyny. How will you contribute?	University of Pittsburg School of Medicine Secondary Questions
17 (tie)	University of Michigan Medical School	If you recognize and/or represent a voice that is missing, underrepresented, or undervalued in medicine, please describe the missing voice(s) and how increased representation in medicine could impact the medical community.	University of Michigan Medical School Secondary Questions
19	David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA	Do you identify as being part of a group that has been marginalized (examples include, but are not limited to, LGBTQIA, disabilities, federally recognized tribe) in terms of access to education or healthcare? If so, describe how this inequity has impacted you or your community and how educational disparity, health disparity and/or marginalization has impacted you and your community.	David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA Secondary Questions

Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
25 (tie)	University of Texas Southwestern Medical School	Describe an interaction or experience that has made you more sensitive or appreciative of cultural differences, and/ or how you have committed yourself to understanding and aiding in the pursuit of equity and inclusion in your academic, professional or personal life.	University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas Secondary Questions
28	Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California	Are you a member of a group that is under-represented in medicine? (Y/N) IF yes, Which Group? How does under-representation affect your community?	Keck School of Medicine of USC Secondary Questions
29	University of Maryland School of Medicine	Without limiting the discussion to your own identity, please describe how you envision contributing to the core values of diversity and inclusion at our School of Medicine, and in the medical profession.	University of Maryland School of Medicine Secondary Questions
30 (tie)	The Ohio State University College of Medicine	The OSU COM Admissions vision statement states that the admissions committee will assemble a class that displays "diversity in background and thought." Why is "diversity in background and thought" a desirable characteristic for a medical school's student body?	Ohio State University College of Medicine Secondary Questions
43 (tie)	University of Minnesota Medical School	Our country is reckoning with its history, racism, racial injustice, and especially anti-black racism. Please share your reflections on, experiences with, and greatest lessons learned about systemic racism.	University of Minnesota Medical School Secondary Questions
43 (tie)	University of Miami Miller College of Medicine	What have you done to help identify, address and correct an issue of systemic discrimination?	University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Secondary Questions
47 (tie)	Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth	Geisel School of Medicine values social justice and diversity in all its forms. Reflect on a situation where you were the "other".	Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College Secondary Questions



# VII. APPENDIX B

Verbatim excerpts from the secondary application questions posted on ProspectiveDoctor.com are in italics. The rankings come from 2023 Best Medical Schools: Research, published by U.S. News & World Report. These are the medical schools that are probing for information about an applicant's racial/ethnic background and viewpoints on DEI principles.

Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
1	Harvard Medical School	Examples might include significant challenges in access to education, unusual socioeconomic factors, identification with a minority culture, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity. Briefly explain how such factors have influenced your motivation for a career in medicine.	Harvard Medical School Secondary Questions
3(tie)	The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine	You may address any subject you wish, such as being a first-generation college student, or being a part of a minority group (whether because of your sexual orientation, religion, economic status, gender identity, ethnicity) or being the child of undocumented immigrants or being undocumented yourself, etc.	Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Secondary Questions
3 (tie)	Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons	Columbia Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons values diversity in all its forms. How will your background and experiences contribute to this important focus of our institution and inform your future role as a physician?	Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons Secondary Questions

Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
6 (tie)	Duke University School of Medicine	Tell us more about who you are. You may provide additional information that expands your self-identity where gender identification, racial and/or ethnic self-description, geographic origin, socioeconomic, academic, and/or other characteristics that define who you are as you contemplate a career that will interface with people who are similar AND dissimilar to you.	Duke University School of Medicine Secondary Questions
6 (tie)	Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania	Are there any special, unique, personal, or challenging aspects of your personal background or circumstances that you would like to share with the Committee on Admissions, not addressed elsewhere (siblings/relatives at Penn, applying as a couple, educational environment, culture, ethnicity, etc.).	Perelman School of Medicine at the U. Pennsylvania Secondary Questions
8	Stanford University School of Medicine	The Committee on Admissions strongly encourages you to share unique, personally important and/or challenging factors in your background which may include such discussions as the quality of your early education, gender, sexual orientation, any physical challenges, and life or work experiences.	Stanford University School of Medicine Secondary Questions
10	Yale School of Medicine	Required Essay 1: Yale School of Medicine values diversity in all its forms. How will your background and experiences contribute to this important focus of our institution and inform your future role as a physician?	Yale School of Medicine Secondary Questions
11(tie)	Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai	Aspects might include, but are not limited to significant challenges in or circumstances associated with access to education, living with a disability, socioeconomic factors, immigration status, or identification with a culture, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity. Briefly explain how such factors have influenced your motivation for a career in medicine.	Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Secondary Questions



Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
11 (tie)	Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis	Some applicants use this space to describe unique experiences and obstacles such as significant challenges in access to education, unusual socioeconomic factors, and/or identification with a particular culture, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity and/or possibly challenges related to COVID or other issues in preparation for medical school.	Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine Secondary Questions
14 (tie)	Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine	We are all differentiated from or connected to one another by individual inflections that constitute our diversity. Explain how your relationship with your own diversity and to the diversities of others manifests in your personal and professional activities.	Mayo Clinic College of Medicine Secondary Questions
17 (tie)	Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine	We believe that a diverse student body improves the educational environment and the ability of our graduates to serve an increasingly diverse patient population. Narrative Descriptions: Everyone has their own narrative. Please provide more detail about how your experiences would enrich the Northwestern community.	Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine Secondary Questions
20	University of California-San Diego School of Medicine	You should also discuss the motivational factors which led you to a career in medicine, including any disadvantages or obstacles which might put your accomplishments into context. A repeat of your AMCAS statement will not be acceptable.	UC San Diego School of Medicine Secondary Questions



Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
22	Baylor College of Medicine	Indicate any special experiences, unusual factors or other information you feel would be helpful in evaluating you, including, but not limited to, education, employment, extracurricular activities, prevailing over adversity. You may expand upon but not repeat TMDSAS or AMCAS application information. This section is mandatory. Please make sure you submit an essay or your application will not be reviewed by the committee.	Baylor College of Medicine Secondary Questions
25 (tie)	University of North Carolina School of Medicine	UNC School of Medicine values diversity and inclusion across the institution. We believe that education and professional development are enhanced in educational settings that include individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Please describe how your background and/ or experiences would contribute to the UNC SOM community?	University of North Carolina School of Medicine Secondary Ouestions
27	University of Colorado School of Medicine	These could include your socioeconomic status, culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and work or life experiences. Explain how these have influenced your goals and preparation for a career in medicine.	University of Colorado School of Medicine Secondary Ouestions
30 (tie)	University of Virginia School of Medicine	How will you contribute to the diversity of your medical school class and the University of Virginia School of Medicine?	University of Virginia School of Medicine Secondary Questions
32 (tie)	Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine	Please discuss how your personal experience demonstrates the ability to overcome adversity and contributes to diversity in the provision of healthcare. Diversity may include age, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.	Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine Secondary Questions



Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
32 (tie)	Boston University School of Medicine	For example, have you lived in another country or experienced a culture unlike your own, or worked in a field that contributed to your understanding of people unlike yourself?	Boston University School of Medicine Secondary Questions
32 (tie)	University of Alabama at Birmingham Heersink School of Medicine	Learning from others is enhanced in educational settings that include individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Please describe your personal characteristics or experiences that would add to the educational environment for your classmates.	University of Alabama School of Medicine Secondary Questions
35	The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University	How will your unique attributes (e.g., cultural or socioeconomic background, lifestyle, work experiences) add to the overall diversity of the Alpert Medical School community?	Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University Secondary Questions
41	University of lowa Carver College of Medicine	Describe any unique personal characteristics or obstacles you may have overcome that will influence your contribution to a diverse healthcare system.	The University of lowa College of Medicine Secondary Questions
43 (tie)	University of Cincinnati College of Medicine	The University of Cincinnati is highly committed to selecting and cultivating students who can transform the field of medicine through the use of their distinct talents and attributes. Please tell us how you offer "diversity of thought" to our incoming class.	University of Cincinnati College of Medicine Secondary Questions
46	University of South Florida Health Morsani College of Medicine	How do you feel your particular experiences, interests, and passions will add to the strength and diversity of the USF class and ultimately to the field of medicine?	University of South Florida College of Medicine Secondary Questions



Rank	Name of Medical School	Sample Question Excerpt	ProspectiveDoctor. com Link
47 (tie)	University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School	Share your definition of diversity. Describe an example where you contributed to the diversity of a group, team or class. Connect this to how you will contribute to the diversity of the UMass Medical School community.	University of Massachusetts Medical School Secondary Questions
47 (tie)	Wake Forest University School of Medicine	We seek to train physicians who can connect with diverse patient populations with whom they may not share a similar background. Tell us one experience that enhanced your ability to understand those unlike yourself and what you learned from it.	Wake Forest School of Medicine Secondary Questions



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