

File Review Guidelines for the 2023 Admissions Cycle

Academics - 50 points possible, 63 with qualified grad degree (points for this section are auto-tabulated)

Overall GPA = this is an undergraduate and undergrad postbac cumulative total only; it should not include graduate level grades, which are handled separately

20 = 3.95 – 4.0	12 = 3.55 – 3.64	5 = 3.15 – 3.24
18 = 3.85 – 3.94	10 = 3.45 – 3.54	4 = 3.05 – 3.14
16 = 3.75 – 3.84	8 = 3.35 – 3.44	3 = 2.95 – 3.04
14 = 3.65 – 3.74	6 = 3.25 – 3.34	2 = 2.85 – 2.94

BCPM GPA = all undergraduate-level science and math courses taken by applicant

10 = 3.75 – 4.0	2 = 3.25 – 3.34
8 = 3.55 – 3.74	1 = 3.15 – 3.24
6 = 3.45 – 3.54	0 = <u>≤</u> 3.14
5 = 3.35 – 3.44	

Graduate Program

all must be TRUE, to receive 13-point bonus

- Has applicant completed at least 27 hours of a Certificate, MS, or PhD program, with at least half or more hours in BCPM subject material?
- Is graduate program GPA ≥ 3.5 ?
- Is effective MCAT ≥ 508 ?

Effective MCAT Score

- Scores obtained prior to Jan 1, 2020 will be considered expired.
- The most recent valid score is the score you should use, even if another valid score is higher.
- Average all MCAT scores taken since July 1, 2021

20 = ≥ 517	14 = 510 – 509	7 = 503
19 = 516 – 515	12 = 508	0 = < 503
18 = 514 – 513	9 = 507 – 506	
17 = 512 – 511	8 = 505 – 504	

Experiences - 30 points possible

Clinical Exposure

direct observation of doctor/patient interactions and direct clinical patient care, such as EMT; activities like hospital volunteering should not be counted in this category, since there is no reasonable expectation, such duties will result in the necessary exposure we seek

** Due to nationwide COVID restrictions in-place since March of 2020, certain activities such as virtual shadowing that occurred during this timeframe will be classified as clinical exposure -- be judicious and fair in your assessment, particularly with applicants that are clearly trying to get the much-needed exposure we seek; descriptions of virtual experiences should clearly delineate the lessons they have learned and how it in some way recapitulates doctor/patient observations **

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|-----------|---|
| 5 High | Has significant and above average medical exposure in both amount and quality. Works in a profession that involves significant patient contact (e.g., scribe, nurse, physical therapist, and other work with doctors in a US/Canadian-based setting). At least 4 semesters/summers or 150+ hours |
| 3 Average | An average amount and quality of medical exposure which provided at least some direct interactions with both physicians (e.g., shadowing) and patients (e.g., working, volunteering) so that we are satisfied that the applicant has a good understanding of the profession and what it's like to interact with patients. At least 2-3 semesters/summers or 60-150 hours. |
| 2 Low | Some exposure but below average in terms of amount and quality to the point that we are uncertain whether the applicant really knows what doctors do and/or if they could interact well with patients. < 2 semesters/summers or 40-60 hours. |
| 0 None | No direct interactions with physicians and patients. |

Community Service

1. primarily non-clinical volunteerism that demonstrates passion and dedication over time
2. serves vulnerable populations
3. may be in a virtual environment in the COVID era
4. may include clinical settings, such as hospice care
5. be mindful that hospital volunteering (e.g., serving as a way-finder) as well as non-direct and/or transactional service opportunities (e.g., fundraising and home-building) are not the types of service opportunities we are looking for and should be assessed accordingly

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|----------------|--|
| 15 - High | Has performed significantly above the average community service in regards to both amount and quality or participated in a service organization such as Teach for America, AmeriCorps, or VISTA; worked with the underserved and/or special populations. Consistent over time; > 1 year of consistent, dedicated service; this should be reserved for <u>exceptional</u> service and commitment. |
| 10 - Above Avg | Has performed consistent community service, with dedication over for at least a year. Shows passion for the work done. And expresses learning about self and others. At least one year of service; ~75hrs/yr over 4 yrs time (200-300 hrs total) |
| 5 - Average | Has performed an average amount of community service and that at least some of this service involved direct interactions with someone "in need" so that we are satisfied that the applicant is empathetic and service-oriented. ~50 hrs/yr over 4 yrs (100-200 hrs total) |

- 2 - Low Has done some, but it is below the average of both amount and quality of community service such that we have doubts about the applicant's empathy for those in need and/or if he/she is service-oriented. 60-100 hrs total.
- 0 - None Has not done any community service.

Research

- 5 - High Has done library, bench, or clinically-related research which has led to authorship on a publication in a peer-reviewed journal and/or presentation at a conference outside the applicant's university and/or independent funding or has written a grant proposal; 1 or more years.
- 3 - Above Avg Has spent less time in research but has significant understanding; >3 semesters; poster presentation.
- 2 - Average Has had some direct exposure to library, bench, and/or clinically-related research. Approximately 90% of the applicants that have conducted some research will fall into this category; 2 semesters
- 1 - Below Avg 1 semester or summer experience.
- 0 - None Has had no direct exposure to library, bench, and/or clinically-related research.

Leadership

demonstrating the qualities of a leader through organizational leadership positions; includes being a TA for a class, RA in the dorm, and supervisory-level positions at work.

- 5 High High level of responsibility and leadership with a significant commitment of time & effort. This may include such things as being a teaching assistant where the applicant lectures, organizes labs, and evaluates performance, or being an RA, a class or organization officer, team captain, founder of an organization, manager of a group of people in a work situation.
- 2 Some Some responsibility and leadership that required a modest amount of time & effort.
- 0 None No leadership activities.

Essays - 10 points possible

AMCAS Essay *Prompt = Use the space provided to explain why you want to go to medical school.
(5300 characters allowed)*

5 Excellent	Superior in content, tone, and scope; well written, creative, and enjoyable to read. Demonstrates a high passion for medicine with a transformative journey.
4 Above Average	Well written with above average content. Demonstrates passion for medicine and professional maturity; clearly an empathetic and compassionate individual.
3 Average	A thoughtful, organized personal statement that expresses the applicant's sincerity, maturity, empathy and compassion for others as well as their motivation for choosing medicine as a career.
2 Below Average	Contains elements that are consistent with being a physician; however, the execution of thoughts and ideas do not coalesce. Tends to lack focus and has no clear motivation.
0 Poor	A rambling personal statement that lacks focus and depth.

AAMC Competency Components:

- Ethical responsibility: demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning
- Service orientation: demonstrates social responsibility
- Social skills: treats others with respect
- Reliability/dependability: fulfills obligations in a satisfactory manner
- Capacity for improvement: learns new concepts, does the research
- Resilience and adaptability: adapts effectively to difficult or new situations
- Cultural competence: shows an appreciation and respect for diverse options

VCU Essay

Prompt = The last couple of years have been challenging for us all in various ways (i.e., dealing with the impacts of COVID, social unrest and injustices). Please describe a particular challenge you faced. What are some challenges others may have experienced? What did you learn about yourself and others during this time? (Comments are limited to 2000 characters.)

5 - Outstanding Response

Addresses 7-8 key components with significant meaningful insight and/or sensitivity; writing is clear, concise, and well organized with excellent sentence/paragraph construction; thoughts are superbly expressed in a coherent and logical manner; there are no spelling, grammar, or syntax errors.

3 - Good Response

Addresses 5-6 key components with some insight and/or sensitivity; writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction; thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner; there is an occasional spelling, grammar, or syntax error.

1 - Fair Response

Addresses 3-4 key components some insight and/or sensitivity; writing is somewhat lacking in clarity with some disorganization; Sometimes tangential; some issues with sentence structure/paragraph structure; thoughts are somewhat disjointed; there are several spelling, grammar, or syntax errors.

0 - Poor Response

Addresses 0-2 key components with a lack of in-depth analysis or insight and/or sensitivity into the issue; writing is unclear and disorganized; thoughts ramble and make little sense; poor sentence structure and paragraph construction; there are numerous spelling, grammar, or syntax errors throughout the essay.

Key Components Specific to the VCU Essay:

1. Addresses a specific personal challenge
2. Provides concrete example of a challenge faced by others
3. Demonstrates honest introspection/reflection
4. Provides of personal resilience despite challenge
5. Reveals an understanding of significant issues faced by others, especially those that may be related to culture
6. Shows empathy toward the plight of others
7. Understands importance of exhibiting empathy
8. Demonstrates capacity for growth with evidence of ability to learn from experiences

Letters of Recommendation - 10 points possible

3 letters are required; score up to 5 letters. It is best to score each letter individually and then calculate an average for the suite of combined letters.

8-10 Outstanding	All letters are enthusiastically supportive. They have been written by people who clearly know the applicant well and speak highly of his/her personal characteristics (such as intelligence, maturity, professionalism, empathy for others, strong work ethic, interpersonal skills, and commitment to serving others). If a committee letter is included, the applicant should be very highly rated.
5-7 Average	Generally supportive letters from at least a few references who know that applicant and can speak well of his/her abilities, appropriateness, and potential to succeed in medical school and as a physician. If a committee letter is included, the applicant should at least be recommended.
0-4 Poor	Majority of letters are from references who clearly don't know the applicant well and/or someone mentions a personal characteristic which would suggest they would not be a good fit for our class.

Extra Points

Unique/difficult life/upward BCPM swing (+5)

- Would add something unique to the class, e.g., cultural background, life experience, artistic talent, participation in VCU pipeline programs and/or had a life challenge to overcome to be successful academically, rural background, disadvantaged, has overcome despite hardships.
- Upward trend of BCPM grades from a level below 3.5 to a **sustained level of at least 3.5 or higher for two years** beginning at or beyond junior year of college -- for instance, this can be the last two years of college, or the senior year plus a post-bac year. Sustained excellence over the two years should be at least 30 hrs of BCPM credit.

Military Service (+5)

Must be active duty for 3 years or honorably discharged if less

Varsity Sports/Work/University-Sponsored Team (+5)

Must be for 2 years or more during college. Includes working >20 per week and other activities such as band and dance team that take a time from studying.

File Review Rubric

Point Totals	File Review Score
90+	1.0
80-89	1.5
75-79	2.0
70-74	2.5
60-69	3.0
55-59	3.5
≤ 54	5.0

RED BUTTON

(sending back to Admissions Office for a second look)

If an applicant scores below 60 points but there is something special about the applicant, or the applicant is from a group that is under-represented in medicine, use the red button to return to admissions and email Dr. Whitehurst-Cook. If you think they have promise, then state this in the summary comment box. Alternatively, if an applicant has a good score, but you do not feel they are the type of student that would fit in well at VCU, make note of this in the comment box and press the red button. In either scenario, please complete the file review. The Admissions Office will decide whether or not to offer him/her an interview or is someone that needs advising for a future application.

(expedited end of file review – requirements not met)

If an applicant has no medical experience and/or community service, make note of this in the comment box and you may then stop the review by clicking on the red button and filling in the comment box with reasons.

The computer will automatically add the scores for you. If the applicant's Academics metric score is less than 20, make note of this in the comment box and you may then stop the review by clicking on the red button and filling in the comment box with reasons.