

Medical Careers Advisory Committee (**MCAC**)

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Chair, Medical Careers Advisory Committee

The College of New Jersey

Webpage: mcac.tcnj.edu

MCAC direct contacts

MCAC Chair

- Sudhir Nayak, PhD - nayak@tcnj.edu
- Professor of Biology
- >20 years at TCNJ

MCAC Administrative Support

- Ms. Helen Kull - mcac@tcnj.edu
- General Advisor, Program Assistant, and Knower of (MCAC) Things
- Department of Biology
- >15 years at TCNJ

Ad Hoc MCAC Members (examples):

Biology: Dr. Jeffery Erickson, Dr. Tracy Kress

Chemistry: Dr. Stephanie Sen

Engineering: Dr. Christopher Wagner

Public Health: Dr. Jill Bush

Psychology: Dr. Andrew Leynes

- What does the MCAC do?
- Do I need the MCAC?
- How do I get to medical (dental, optometry, etc.) school?
- How do I become pre-med?
- Where do I get reliable information?
- What do I need to apply?
- Am I a good candidate for medical school?
- What courses do I need?
- Do I have to be a biology major?
- Do minors help?
- Do I need to shadow more than one doctor?
- Do I need research?
- When should I get started?
- What are my chances of getting in?
- How important is the MCAT?
- Is the GPA more important than the MCAT?
- Does my major matter at all?
- Is my C in Orgo going to keep me out of medical school?
- What is the minimum GPA to apply? Is there a minimum MCAT to apply?
- MD vs DO?

- **Can you talk to my parents?***
- How long should I study for the MCAT?
- Should I take an MCAT prep course?
- When should I take the MCAT?
- I want to stay (or leave) NJ?
- Which schools? How many?
- Does it help to be in state?
- When should I apply?
- Is it better to apply early?
- How many letters of recommendation?
- Who gets a composite letter?
- What happens if I don't get a composite letter?
- What are my chances of getting in?
- Should I take the MCAT again?
- Should I apply to MD, MD and DO, or DO only?
- What happens if I apply later in the cycle?
- When should I think about a gap year(s)?
- When will I know if I get in?
- If I'm on the waitlist does it mean I'll get in?
- What happens if I don't get in?
- Are post-bac programs worth it?

Today - Focused on early advising

- What is the MCAC?
 - What does the MCAC do?
 - Do I need the MCAC?
- Registering with the MCAC / resource access
 - Canvas
 - PAWS
- Are you pre-med?
- Medical school requirements / recommendations
 - Hidden requirements, prerequisites, and complications
 - Application vs matriculation requirements
- Timeline - 18 months
- Common mistakes
- Basic components of a medical school application

MCAC

- Assist **TCNJ students and alumni** applying to medical school and other health professional schools
 - Help students **from any major**
- Provide validated resources and information
- Data-driven advising and mentoring
- Generate the **committee (or composite) letter**

- Who are YOU?
- Year?
- Major?

MCAC:

The MCAC
is **NOT** a
Student
Group!
We advise
students.

Student “Pre-Health” Clubs:



When do you need the MCAC?

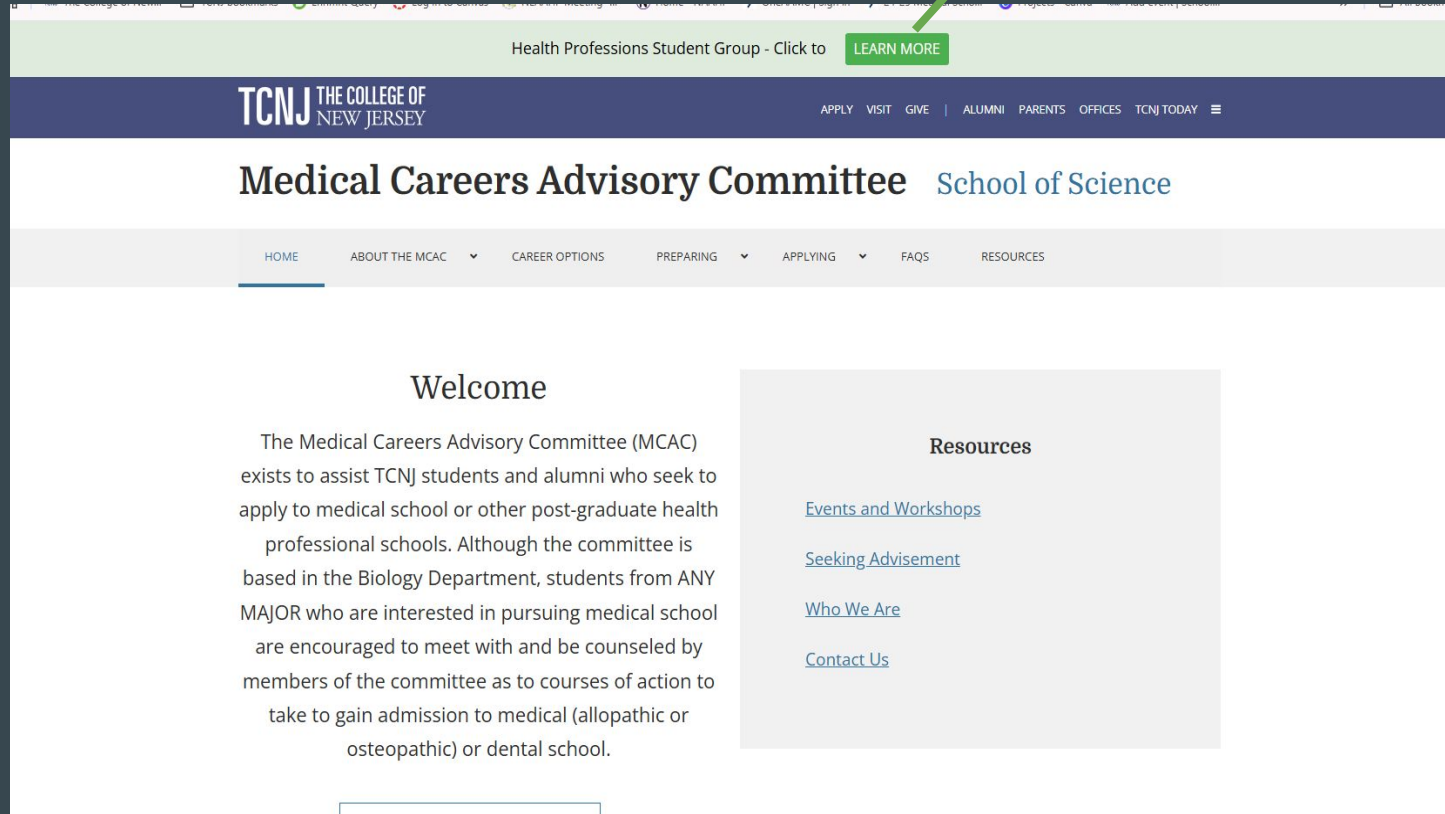
- 1st and 2nd year
 - [TCNJ MCAC website](https://mcac.tcnj.edu) - mcac.tcnj.edu
 - Presentations - Like this one! (will be posted)
 - PAWS - Health Professions Student Group
 - Canvas* - MCAC 101; also “One Pager” BASICS MCAC Advising Sheet
 - Take classes, get good grades, make connections, get experience
- 3rd year and beyond
 - Canvas MCAC 201
 - MCAT, reflection, and application
 - Gap year(s) plan
 - **Meet with Dr. Nayak**
 - MCAC - Composite/committee letter
 - Take classes, get good grades, make connections, get experience

Health Professions Student Group

- **Group affiliation in PAWS - noted as “HEPR”**
 - Open to TCNJ Students from any major
 - **MCAC can sign you up - link to request form on MCAC homepage**
- Receive email notices of events
 - Webinars, professions opportunities, information from MCAC, etc.
- Noted in PAWS - your advisor can see it as well
- Remember the following:
 - It **does not** provide automatic preferential treatment for enrollment
 - It **does not** negate the need for individual advisement by your advisor
 - It **does not** guarantee successful application or admission
 - It **does not** alone provide all resources, deadlines, and information required
 - Each student must seek out **validated** information and opportunities on their own

mcac.tcnj.edu homepage

Click [here](#) to access HEPR signup form



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Medical Careers Advisory Committee (MCAC) at TCNJ. At the top, there is a green banner with the text "Health Professions Student Group - Click to" and a green button labeled "LEARN MORE". Below this is a dark blue header with the TCNJ logo and navigation links: "APPLY", "VISIT", "GIVE", "ALUMNI", "PARENTS", "OFFICES", "TCNJ TODAY", and a menu icon. The main heading is "Medical Careers Advisory Committee" followed by "School of Science". Below the heading is a light gray navigation bar with links: "HOME", "ABOUT THE MCAC", "CAREER OPTIONS", "PREPARING", "APPLYING", "FAQS", and "RESOURCES". The "HOME" link is underlined. The main content area has a "Welcome" section on the left and a "Resources" section on the right. The "Welcome" section contains a paragraph about the MCAC's purpose. The "Resources" section contains four links: "Events and Workshops", "Seeking Advisement", "Who We Are", and "Contact Us". A green arrow points from the text "Click here to access HEPR signup form" to the "LEARN MORE" button.

Health Professions Student Group - Click to [LEARN MORE](#)

TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

APPLY VISIT GIVE | ALUMNI PARENTS OFFICES TCNJ TODAY

Medical Careers Advisory Committee School of Science

[HOME](#) [ABOUT THE MCAC](#) [CAREER OPTIONS](#) [PREPARING](#) [APPLYING](#) [FAQS](#) [RESOURCES](#)

Welcome


The Medical Careers Advisory Committee (MCAC) exists to assist TCNJ students and alumni who seek to apply to medical school or other post-graduate health professional schools. Although the committee is based in the Biology Department, students from ANY MAJOR who are interested in pursuing medical school are encouraged to meet with and be counseled by members of the committee as to courses of action to take to gain admission to medical (allopathic or osteopathic) or dental school.

Resources

- [Events and Workshops](#)
- [Seeking Advisement](#)
- [Who We Are](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

HEPR Signup Form
for 2025/26 AY

OR scan [here](#) to access HEPR signup form



After the Presentation:

Please use the form linked from
our website (see previous slide)
to request to be added to the
Health Professions
Student Group.
Thank you.

Accessing MCAC 101: “What’s Up, Doc?”- Exploring and Preparing for Health Careers

...

*What you need to know to prepare for a future
medical or health profession career,
from the Medical Careers Advisory Committee*

CANVAS!



~~TCNJ
CANVAS~~



“Free for Teachers”
CANVAS





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All



Images



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News



More

Tools



Instructure

<https://www.instructure.com> › try-canvas



23



Try Canvas Free-for-Teacher

Use **Canvas For Free** · Create content such as assignments, quizzes, discussions, and video conferences · Personalize learning with Mastery Paths, Outcomes, and ...

“Free for Teachers” CANVAS



You can log in
with your tcnj
email, or another
(gmail, etc)
email address



This Canvas

- **NO** Grades!
- **NO** Credit!
- JUST advising
info for you

“Free for Teachers” CANVAS



You can log in
with your tcnj
email, or another
(gmail, etc)
email address



- Must create a NEW ACCOUNT
- Use a different PASSWORD - Not your TCNJ password

“Free for Teachers”
CANVAS



- We will ask for names and emails for enrollment
- **MCAC 101: What's Up, Doc? Exploring and Preparing for Health Careers**

Scan code to be enrolled in MCAC 101

After the Presentation:

Please write to Ms. Kull
at mcac@tcnj.edu
to request to be added to the
MCAC 101 v2025-2026
Canvas Advising course.
Thank you.

Resources

- Medical Careers Advisory Committee (MCAC)
 - Presentations, data driven advising, mentoring
- American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- American Osteopathic Association (AOA)
- American Dental Association (ADA)
- American Optometric Association (AOA)
- Student associations at TCNJ
 - TCNJ American Medical Student Association (AMSA)
 - Delta Epsilon Mu
 - Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS)
 - Pre-dental Club - dental@tcnj.edu

The wrong resources

- **Reddit** and the maze of subreddits
 - It is the pinnacle of misinformation
 - Lots of trolling
- **Student Doctor Network (SDN)**
 - Some resources are excellent (e.g mental health)
 - Some resources are quite poor (e.g, forums)
 - More trolling
- **Quora**
 - Same as SDN - some good, some bad, lots of trolling
- **Most Youtube videos**
 - Anyone that tells you they have a secret or you have to pay
- **Previous generation of information**
 - >10 years ago

Pre-med is not a thing

- All Biology (BS) and Chemistry majors are “pre med” for their first 2 years by default
- Any student that takes a **series of courses** required by all medical schools*
 - Philosophy, Math, Spanish, English, Computer Science, Engineering, Psychology, Public Health, Kinesiology, etc.
- **Pre med is not a major - just advising designation**

Pre-med potato



- This potato wants to be a physician

Medical School required courses

- 2 semesters of biology with lab
 - BIO 201, BIO 211
- 2 semesters of inorganic chemistry with lab
 - CHE 201, CHE 202
- 2 semesters of organic chemistry with lab
 - CHE 331, CHE 332
- 2 semesters of physics with lab
 - PHY 201, PHY 202 (requires MAT 127 and 128)
 - **Most schools accept PHY 121/122 (requires MAT 120)**

Medical school required courses (cont.)

- 2 semesters of math
 - MAT 127, STA 215 or MAT 128*
- 2 semesters of English (or equivalent)
 - All majors at TCNJ have this automatically
 - A few schools require courses taught by the English department
- Other (psychology and sociology)
 - PSY 101 and SOC 101*

Prerequisites can be a major issue

- **Biology**

- BIO 201 -> BIO 211 -> BIO 231 (recommended / required)

- **Chemistry**

- CHE 201 -> CHE 202 -> CHE 331 -> CHE 332
 - CHE 201 has MAT 120 as a corequisite
 - CHE 331 requires C- or better in CHE 202

- **Physics**

- PHY 201 -> PHY 202 or PHY 121 -> PHY 122
 - PHY 121/122 requires completion of MAT 120
 - PHY 201/202 requires completion of MAT 127/128

- **Math**

- MAT 095 -> MAT 120 -> MAT 127 -> STA 215 or MAT 128 (if required)

Medical school recommended courses

- Computer science* (CSC 220 or 230)
- Genetics* (BIO 231)
- Immunology (BIO 444)
- Microbiology (BIO 312)
- Physiology (BIO 410)
 - Some accept BIO 301/302
- Statistics / biostatistics (STA 215)
 - STA 115 does not count
- Second course in biochemistry (CHE 350 or 420)
 - Must have organic chemistry as a prerequisite

Application vs matriculation requirements

- **Application requirements**

- Tests: MCAT and frequently AAMC PREview
- Classes: Biology, chemistry, physics, math
 - Minimum grades vary, usually B- or C
 - Repeating class sometimes flagged
 - **There is some grey area here***
- GPA (STEM more important)
 - Minimum is usually listed as 3.0 but actually 3.5 at most schools

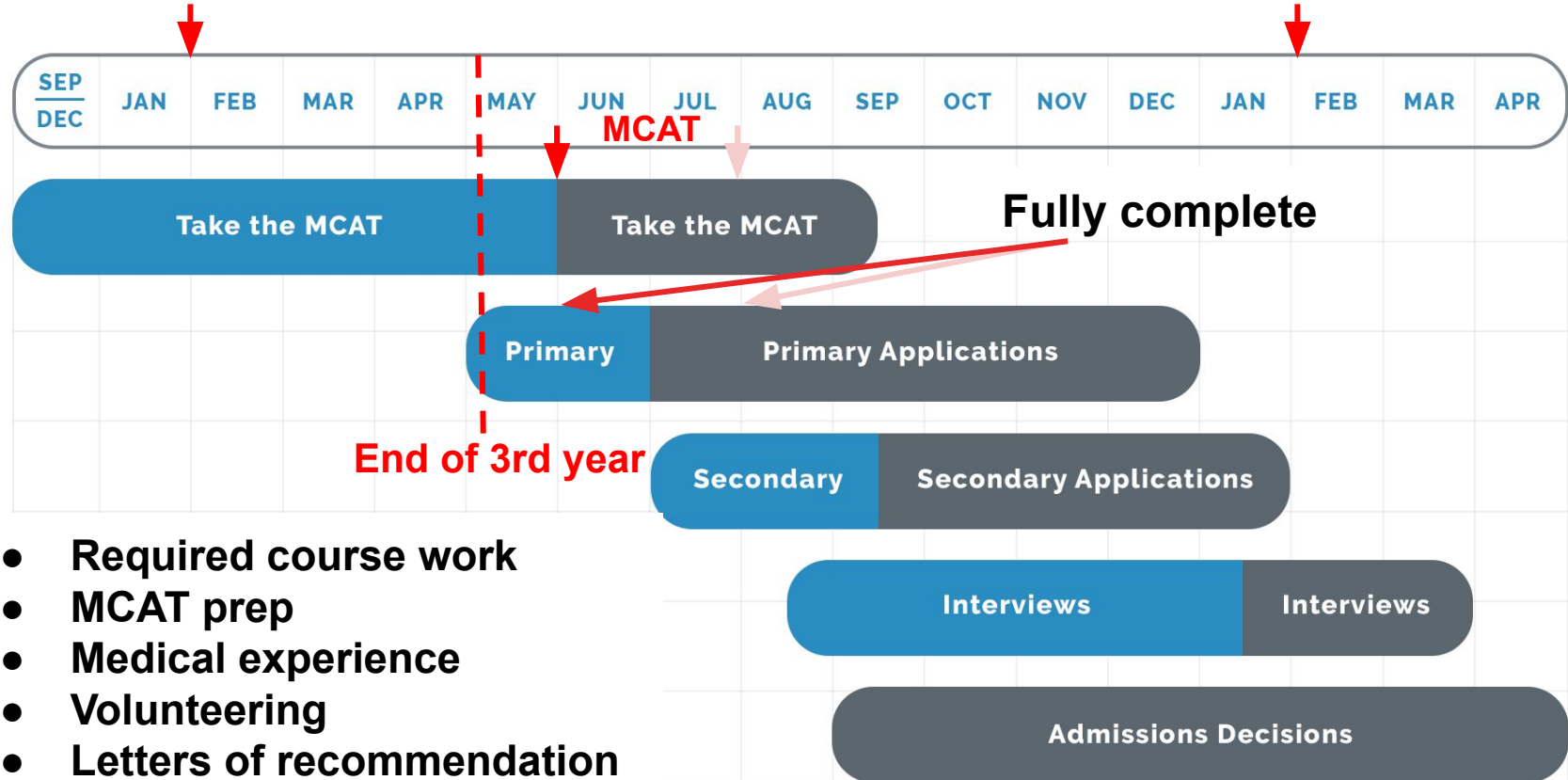
- **Matriculation requirements**

- Second course in biochemistry
- Completion of writing intensive / English
- Clean academic record
 - Academic integrity or student code of conduct violations
- Clean background
- Completion of degree requirements

The timeline - 18 months

- All requirements must be completed by the **end of the junior year!**
 - Without gap year(s)
- **AND** study for the MCAT
 - 300-1000 hours (or more) of study and you don't get your score for 30 days and it's expensive
- **AND** medically relevant experience
 - About 50-500 hours
- **AND** volunteering
 - About 50-500 hours
- **AND** get 3-6 strong letters of recommendation
 - STEM, non-STEM, medical professional
- **AND** complete MCAC letter request application and meeting
 - Composite or committee letter
- **AND** complete the AMCAS or AACOMAS applications (and other exams)

Medical School Admissions Timeline



- Required course work
- MCAT prep
- Medical experience
- Volunteering
- Letters of recommendation
- MCAC file

How do I get all the medical school requirements in?

- Academic advising
 - Work out a plan, backups, alternatives
- Summer coursework at TCNJ
 - +: Rigorous coursework, counts toward your TCNJ GPA
 - -: Costs money
- Summer coursework at community college
 - +: Significantly cheaper, lots of courses, count if you go through NJtransfer
 - -: Course rigor, performance on MCAT, may “look bad”, does not count toward TCNJ GPA
- **You will have a personal footprint**

Planning and flexibility are the keys

- What if you are starting at a different point?
 - No dual enrolment, no AP, starting in MAT 095
- What if you have had a bad class / semester?
 - Usually means D/F/W in a class
- What if you are not a STEM major?
 - E.g. English, Psychology, Philosophy, KHS
- Getting requirements to fit can be difficult in the standard footprint

How do I get all the medical school requirements in?

- Consider: winter / summer, TCNJ / community college
 - Example: CHE 201/202, CHE 331/332, PHY 201/202 (sometimes 121/122), BIO 231 are offered in the summer at TCNJ
- **Planned gap year(s)**
 - Addressed in another presentation
- 5th year at TCNJ to complete medical school requirements
 - +: Spread out requirements, allows for double major/minor
 - -: Costs money
- Post-bac program (E.g. Rutgers)
 - +: Allows completion of requirements over 1-2 years
 - -: Costs money, may or may not help, repeating courses

Common mistakes

- Try to complete the medical school requirements in as fast as possible
 - Example: CHE 331, BIO 231, PHY 201 at the same time
 - **Usually results in disaster**
- Not sequencing the courses properly
 - Taking CHE 201 or PHY 202/121 before math skills are addressed
 - Taking CHE 331 because everyone else is
- Not taking the W and getting the F instead
- Not learning from your mistakes
- **Not developing time management and study skills for STEM courses**

Basic components of a medical school applicant

- **MCAT** - Medical College Admission Test
 - Targets: ≈512 MD, ≈506 DO, ≈500 International MD / podiatry
- **GPA** - Grade Point Average
 - The transcript matters
 - Targets: ≈3.7 MD, ≈3.6 DO, ≈3.3-3.4 International MD / podiatry
- **Letters** of recommendation
 - Composite letter
 - Academic 2-3 (1-2 STEM), medical professional*, others (volunteering, character)
- **Clinical** experience
 - Direct patient contact (EMS, CNA, MT, phlebotomy) > shadowing
- **Volunteering**
 - Sustained experiences > many experiences
- **Other** experiences*
 - Engagement: interest groups, clubs, NCAA athletics, tutoring, CA, Bonner, community (Trenton Soup Kitchen, Capital Health, Trenton/Ewing FD), etc.
 - PELL eligible, first generation college, military, foster care, ward of state, etc.
- **You get in medical school by doing these obvious things well.**

Questions?