

Med School Activities

Sharing your experience in a meaningful way



Lyman Briggs College
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



WHAT IS THE ACTIVITIES SECTION?

OVERVIEW

Your activities section is an opportunity to highlight the [competencies](#) you developed through each of your experiences in preparation for pursuing medical school and the profession. These experiences might include...

- **CLINICAL:** Working with patients/in a medical environment
- **RESEARCH:** Working through the scientific process in or out of the classroom
- **VOLUNTEER:** Anything involving serving others; think about purpose
- **LEADERSHIP:** Student organizations, teaching roles, etc.

LOGISTICS

Depending on the application(s) you are submitting, you will need to ensure that your activities fit into the logistical parameters for the AMCAS and AACOMAS.

AMCAS (MD Programs)

- You can include a maximum of **15 experiences** on the AMCAS application
- For each of your experiences, you get **700 characters** to write about them
- Within your 15 experiences, you will get to select **3 most meaningful experiences**
 - There is no 'right' answer for what your most meaningful experiences should be; choose the things that **made the biggest impact on your preparation** for becoming a physician
- For each of your most meaningful (3) experiences, you will get an **additional 1,325 characters** to talk about the experience
 - Consider using this space to share a specific story that demonstrates your use of the overall skills that you talked about in your 700 character description of the experience

AACOMAS (DO Programs)

- On this application, you can include an **unlimited number of activities**; try to keep it under 25 at the most.
- You will have **600 characters** for each of your experience entries on this application
- AACOMAS **does not** offer a chance to highlight most meaningful experiences

DEVELOPING CONTENT

When writing your activities descriptions, we'll want to focus on three main areas:

- **Tasks:** Briefly describe what you did; most folks reviewing applications are going to know what a medical assistant, or teaching assistant, or club president does, broadly. Highlight your tasks, being sure to name anything that is unique
- **Skills:** This should take up the bulk of your activities description. Really focus in on what you learned during this experience, what [competencies](#) (from the AAMC; DO schools have adopted this list, too!) you developed, and what skills you gained.
- **Connection to medicine:** Add a short line at the end of how you will use this experience to inform your medical practice.



MED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES GUIDE

Taking a competency-based approach to your experiences



ORGANIZING YOUR CONTENT

GATHERING INFORMATION

For each of your experiences, you should gather the following information:

- Activity Name (your job title)
- Organization Name & Location
- Contact Person, Phone, Email
- Dates Worked & Hours Completed

(For AMCAS you'll also be able to submit anticipated work & hours)

- Category

Categories Include...

- Artistic Endeavors
- Community Service/Volunteer – Medical/Clinical
- Community Service/Volunteer – Not Medical/Clinical
- Conferences Attended
- Extracurricular Activities
- Hobbies
- Honors/Awards/Recognitions
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Leadership – Not Listed Elsewhere
- Military Service
- Other
- Paid Employment – Medical/Clinical
- Paid Employment – Not Medical/Clinical
- Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation
- Presentations/Posters
- Publications
- Research/Lab
- Social Justice/Advocacy
- Teaching/ Tutoring/ Teaching Assistant

BUILDING YOUR DESCRIPTIONS

When writing descriptions reflect on the tasks you completed, the skills you gained, and how you would apply this to medicine. To help you write your descriptions, you can make a copy of this [google doc](#) to help you organize your content before you copy and paste it into the application. Below you'll find a sample (based on ULA experience) of how you might go about brainstorming for your activities descriptions.

TASKS	SKILLS	APPLICATION
• Help professor lead class • Engaged with students and aided them during class, graded assignments • Office hours • Helped students pick and create a research project	• Interpersonal skills - building relationships, communicating • Reliability - showing up for students when they needed help • Cultural awareness - facilitating conversations around social justice	• Teach others and take on a leadership role as a practitioner • Provide information to patients in clear way and assist in learning of their health
ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION		
In this role I worked with a professor to help lead and assist students in their learning of biology and research projects. By being present during all lab hours and offering extra one on one time, I was able to foster strong relationships with students that honed my interpersonal skills and improved my sense of reliability as student needs increased. Working closely with a professor to help curate a curriculum centered around how race and ecology are interconnected taught me how important cultural awareness is especially in a space with many different individuals like clinics. This awareness paired with my personal skills will aid me in connecting and teaching future patients.		



MED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES GUIDE

Taking a competency-based approach to your experiences



MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

SELECTING EXPERIENCES THAT SHINE

FOR AMCAS APPLICATIONS ONLY

Your most meaningful section is a chance to highlight the activities that have had a more significant impact on your preparation of becoming a physician. These 3 experiences should be marked by opportunities that have helped you to develop your competencies, and for which you can share specific stories. The additional characters you get for this section are in a separate box from your initial description, so your entry for a most meaningful experience (based on clinical research role) may look like this:

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	MOST MEANINGFUL
In this role I work closely with ALS patients who are participating in our longitudinal research study to better understand what causes contribute to ALS. I accompany them to phlebotomy appointments, and talk to them one-on-one about their diagnosis, providing a listening ear during what is often a very anxiety-inducing process. By learning to quickly develop connections and working on my bedside manner, this experience has helped me to understand how to quickly build trust with patients and make a genuine connection, which will help me to do the same with my own patients in the future.	For the ALS patients I see, it seems that more than anything, they value having a provider that cares about them beyond just the illness afflicting them. One of the patients that I see loves building tiny homes and legos, and while this is becoming more difficult as his symptoms progress, he is still excited to show me the progress he has made since our previous visit. One of the assessments I do asks about activities of daily living so I will ask him about this hobby to assess how fine motor functions are progressing. This is preferable for him as well; rather than focusing on the fact that the disease is progressing, he can focus on what he is still able to do. This experience as a whole has been my first time focused on research with human subjects, so I have had to learn about the ethics and procedures that go along with human research. I also have to be cautious because I play a role in patients' care as both a provider and a researcher. I always make it clear to them which portions of their visit with me are part of research and which are part of the clinical visit. This job has given me experience with how I can balance being a provider and a researcher in the future.

FINAL THOUGHTS

TIPS & TRICKS

- Select a range of experiences that will allow you to address as many of the competences as possible.
- To make up for the lower character allotment on the AACOMAS application, you may consider splitting up different positions from the same organization; for example you may talk about your experience as a “treasurer” for a club in one activity and then your experience as “president” for the same club in different activities
- Be authentic; share the things that have been instrumental in your preparation for med school.

NEXT STEPS

Ready to start writing? Use the [google doc](#) to write your own experiences and then book an appointment with the LBC Career team on [Handshake](#)!



Lyman Briggs College
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY