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## **What is the application process like?**

The application process entails three steps. First, you must fill out a primary application from the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS). To apply to our M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program, make sure you indicate on your AMCAS application that you are also applying as an M.D./Ph.D. applicant. Next, you will receive information on how to fill out a secondary application that is unique to UNMC. Your final step will be to interview at our campus, which will include the opportunity to meet with current Scholars one-on-one, interview with a variety of UNMC faculty, and a formal interview with the College of Medicine.

## **I've scheduled my interview, what can I expect?**

The interview process at UNMC begins with a dinner on a Wednesday evening at a local (and appetizing) restaurant. Attending this dinner with you will be the current M.D./Ph.D. Scholars. This is a perfect opportunity for you to get to know those who are already in the program and to ask questions in an informal environment. The following day will be your M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program interview, including two sessions with faculty of your choice depending on your research interests. Thursday evening there will be a dinner at one of the directors' homes, where you will be able to meet UNMC faculty and again interact with current Scholars. The interview process will conclude on Friday with your College of Medicine interview. This will consist of a one-on-one interview with the COM admissions faculty, a campus tour, a small group session, and lunch.

## **What are the academic qualifications of the current scholars?**

The qualifications of Scholars currently in the program are comprised of a mean MCAT score of 32 and GPA of 3.71.

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## **How many applicants are there each year and how many applicants were interviewed?**

It certainly varies each year, but in 2007 we had 27 applications and interviewed 8 and in 2008 we have 29 applications and interviewed 9 students.

## **How many students are in the program?**

The UNMC M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program currently has 20 members from 18 different colleges and universities across the nation. Additional information about our Scholars can be found [here](#).

## **Do I need to take the GRE in addition to the MCAT?**

The GRE exam is not required for admission into the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program. However, in the event you feel the GRE exam would better display your qualifications as a candidate for admission, then it would be in your best interest to complete the exam and inform the Program of your scores.

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### **How did the M.D./Ph.D. program start at UNMC?**

The M.D./Ph.D. option was first listed in the College of Medicine Bulletin and Graduate Studies Bulletin about 20 years ago. No centralized financial or administrative support was available in the early years of this dual degree option. The Department of Pathology & Microbiology was the most active department/graduate program and supported students in the M.D./Ph.D. objective, until 1994, when the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program was created. The formalized program had their first two graduates in May of 2001.

### **If my application is turned down by the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program, will I still be considered for admission to UNMC's College of Medicine?**

Yes, you will still be considered for admission into the College of Medicine. If accepted, you would have the option of applying to the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program during your first year of medical school.

### **Can I apply to the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program after matriculating in the UNMC College of Medicine?**

Yes, it is not uncommon that medical students reconsider their career and personal goals during the first year of medical school. The alternative admissions route provides you the opportunity to apply during your M1 or M2 years. Qualified candidates will be invited for a series of interviews and are eligible for admission into the Program upon successful completion of the M1 and/or M2 curriculum.

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### **What's medical school really like?**

This is a common question, but is unfortunately heavily based on personal experiences. That said, you CAN succeed in medical school. Sure, it's tough—you're going to be taking people's lives into your own hands—but worth all of the effort and time demanded by the medical profession. Additionally, the College of Medicine is on your side! COM faculty and staff want nothing more than to see all of their matriculated students graduate and become well-respected and successful physicians. By taking advantage of the services provided to the COM students, you will find that your medical education at UNMC will be a challenging but exciting experience.

### **I'm still undecided on M.D. vs. M.D./Ph.D. Are there any additional resources to help me make an informed decision?**

The Association of American Medical Colleges has an informative resource for potential applicants and current M.D./Ph.D. students. To download the PDF version of this document, click [here](#).

### **What is the curriculum for M.D./Ph.D. scholars? Is it different from the regular M.D. curriculum?**

A basic outline of the curriculum for M.D./Ph.D. scholars can be found [here](#). The training is equivalent to the College of Medicine

curriculum, except that after you complete your USMLE Step 1 exam, you will take a leave of absence from the COM and join the Graduate College.

### **What extracurricular activities does UNMC offer?**

UNMC offers a wide variety of [student organizations](#) that allow you to share common interests with your peers including the American Medical Association, American Medical Student Association, Student Alliance for Global Health, and an array of medical interest, student government, and medical society groups. The Center for Healthy Living (<http://www.unmc.edu/services/bus-fin/fitness/>) provides you with intramural leagues in badminton, basketball, golf, racquetball, softball, table tennis, and volleyball. If you're looking for additional volunteer and community service activities, the Omaha metro has numerous organizations and opportunities for you!

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### **How is life in Omaha?**

The "Big O" offers numerous opportunities for you to entertain and enjoy yourself. In recent years, Omaha has been host to the NCAA Baseball College World Series, USA Olympic Swim Team Trials and the Men's NCAA Basketball Tournament. For theatre enthusiasts, Omaha offers the Performing Arts Theater, which has "The Rat Pack," "Grease," "Avenue Q," and "Wicked" on its 2008-2009 calendar. Looking for some outdoor activities? The public parks here are top notch and the [Omaha Trails](#) offer miles of fun including a 27-mile continuous trail for the distance enthusiasts. Combine all of this with a great selection of restaurants and a vibrant downtown atmosphere, and you will only begin to experience all that Omaha has to offer. More information can be found [here](#) along with additional links to Omaha venues.

### **How long does it take to finish the program?**

The program generally takes 7-8 years to complete, including four years of medical training and 3-4 years of graduate research training. Students should, however, prepare themselves for the possibility that a longer timeframe could present itself in extreme cases. It is typically not to the student's advantage to attempt to finish the program in less than this timeframe.

### **What is an MSTP? What's the difference between a MST program and one without that designation?**

The Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) is a M.D./Ph.D. program that has applied for and been awarded funds specifically for training M.D./Ph.D. students from the National Institutes of Health. Other than the source of funding, there is no significant difference between a MST program and a non-NIH designated M.D./Ph.D. program other than school-specific variations in curricula and support for students.

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### **Is tuition covered? Insurance? Books? Fees?**

Your tuition, student health insurance (including membership to the Center for Healthy Living), books, and fees are all covered by the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program during your medical training. Please be aware, however, that the cost of books are incorporated into your monthly stipend similar to federal financial aid. During your period as a graduate student, costs will be covered by your

department and/or extramural funding.

### **Does the M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program sponsor additional social or educational activities?**

The M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Program holds monthly meetings where a UNMC physician presents a medical case study with potential research applications. This allows students to work through real life medical situations in a group setting while receiving instruction from physicians on how to approach common medical problems. Although not required by the program, access to national conferences and meetings for M.D./Ph.D. students is provided. There are also social gatherings for the Scholars at a variety of Omaha venues throughout the year. Additional social events sponsored by the Program are currently being evaluated by the Directors and Scholars, and additional information will be posted once available.

### **How do I choose my research rotations for the summer prior to starting medical school?**

The Program takes many steps to assist you with choosing the laboratories in which you'd like to rotate. To start, however, the best option is to explore UNMC's [departmental and faculty websites](#). The information available here will include current and previous graduate students, research funding and research foci. Feel free to explore the different departments and faculty members. Once you have a few potential candidates, you can e-mail the faculty member yourself or arrange a meeting through Sonja Cox. If it's a lab in which you would like to work, then contact Sonja to confirm your rotations and look forward to your upcoming research! We understand choosing these labs the summer prior to your M1 year can be difficult, especially if you are not familiar with UNMC, but the students and faculty associated with the Program are here to help you in any way we can! (Note: if your summer rotations aren't what you were looking for, don't worry! There will be an orientation session at the end of the summer that will introduce you to a variety of laboratories looking for graduate students)

### **Where can I live in Omaha?**

Omaha has a variety of living options from which you can choose. The cost of living is quite affordable given the annual stipend provided by the Program. Numerous apartment complexes are available across a wide range of prices and distances from the UNMC campus. UNMC also offers student housing in the form of one or two bedroom apartments. Additional information regarding these apartments can be found [here](#). If you are interested in joining one of the medical societies, Phi Chi and Phi Rho Sigma, housing may be available at either of these locations. With all of these options, Omaha and UNMC help to make finding a home during your years in the Program relatively stress-free.

### **How can I best prepare myself prior to starting my first year of medical school?**

First and foremost, relax!! No matter how prepared you try to be for the start of medical school, there is going to be something that will challenge you on an academic and perhaps a personal level. The College of Medicine provides opportunities for you to get a head start on acquiring the tools necessary to be successful in medical school via its Fast Start pre-matriculation program. This online tool provides important first-year tips from the M2 class regarding life as a medical student, which books and equipment you should consider purchasing, and an introduction to the curriculum. Orientation week provides ample opportunities for you to explore the UNMC campus, meet faculty members, and interact with your fellow classmates in a stress-free environment. At the end of orientation, you will kick off your medical career at the White Coat Ceremony, where alumni sponsors will provide you with your first (albeit short) white coat and welcome you to the medical professional community.

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## **How much is the stipend during medical school/grad school?**

During your years in medical school, the stipend will be \$22,000 split evenly over a period of twelve months. While pursuing your graduate studies, the stipend will be based on the NIH standard, which amounts to no less than \$20,772 per year. While in graduate school, there are also opportunities to increase your annual stipend by applying for extramural funding as well as federal financial aid.

## **How can I continue to work on my clinical skills while in the graduate years of the program?**

As of 2008, the Program has implemented new policies to provide the Scholars with additional clinical opportunities. For ten months out of the year, our students will shadow a UNMC physician in a field of medicine chosen by the student. The time commitment will be two half-days each month allowing the student ample time to perform research duties while exploring medical specialties and subspecialties of interest. Additionally, the students will be required to volunteer at UNMC's SHARING clinic four (or more) times a year. The [SHARING Clinic](#) is a student-run, faculty-supported health clinic serving the health needs of underserved and uninsured communities in Omaha. Because of its student-centered operation, the SHARING clinic offers many opportunities for students to practice their interview and physical exam skills in an environment that is often less stressful and less demanding than your training in hospital clinics.

## **What sort of mentoring options are available?**

There are a variety of mentoring options available to you during both your medical and graduate training. During your years in medical school, you are assigned a group of advisors within your Integrated Clinical Experience (ICE) course. The primary purpose of these ICE advisors is to ensure your development as a medical professional and to provide advice and direction to students during your four years of training. While in graduate school, your advisor will most likely (and should) serve as your most influential mentor. This is why it is important to evaluate your rotations not only on the research being performed, but on the strength of the primary investigator as a mentor as well. For additional counseling during stressful times, UNMC Student Health offers personal and student [development counseling services](#) that are included in your student fees and health insurance.

## **How can I get more information? Who should I contact if my question was not addressed here?**

Additional information can be obtained by contacting [Sonja Cox](#) through mail, phone, or e-mail.

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