

## KAPLAN SURVEY OF MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS OFFICERS GIVES CRITICAL INSIGHTS INTO THE INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

*Increase in Number of MCAT Administrations Move Few Medical Schools to Consider Adjusting Their Application Deadlines; Majority Recommend First Time MCAT-Takers Test in Spring*

New York, NY (September 19, 2007) – A comprehensive survey by Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions of admissions officers from 139 of the country's leading medical schools reveals that 27 percent of respondents believe students may change their own personal application timelines due to the increase of MCAT administrations from two to 22 times throughout the year and its move to being a computer-based exam – prior to 2007, the exam was only offered once in May and once in August and taken in paper and pencil. However just because students decide this on their own doesn't mean medical schools will adapt. 78 percent stated that even if students do start applying later than the traditional June kick-off, it will have no effect on their schools' application deadlines.

Admissions officers also recommend that even if students have not taken their MCAT before the start of the traditional application process to still send in the completed parts of the application. 43 percent of the respondent pool said it may be to a student's advantage to follow this strategy, but 54 percent stated that it made no difference.

“That medical schools will likely maintain their traditional application timelines may come as a relief to students, as at least this one factor in the admissions process will remain constant. With this year's shift from a paper and pencil-based MCAT to a computer-based MCAT, many students might feel they have been through enough radical changes,” said Matt Fidler, MCAT program manager, Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions. “And while a majority of admissions officers said it doesn't make a difference in the admissions process if students send in their applications before receiving their MCAT scores, over 40 percent imply that starting the process earlier may be advantageous. It may be beneficial to err on the side of earlier”

Other key survey findings:

- **Spring Ahead:** 59 percent of admissions officers advise first time MCAT-takers to sit for the exam in either April or May, with 27 percent recommending January (the only winter month when the exam is offered). Less than 15 percent responded that the summer months were the best options – which is not surprising because this is just after the traditional June application boom.
- **Retest!:** 47 percent responded that if a student submits an application with an MCAT score stating they plan to retake the exam that they will not review the application until all scores are in. 40 percent of respondents said they would evaluate the application, but not make a final decision about admission until the next MCAT score arrived. The remaining 13 percent said that a final admissions decision will be made regardless of a second, yet to be obtained MCAT score.
- **When Placing Second is Good:** After a completed primary application is submitted, a student may receive “secondaries,” which are a series of essays for the applicant to write that help admissions officers get a clearer view of an applicant's skill set. The good news for applicants is that 63 percent of admissions officers said that at least 76 percent of students will have the opportunity to participate in this next step of the admissions process. According to the survey, 70 percent of admissions officers said they send out secondaries within two weeks of receiving a completed application, MCAT included.
- **The Interview:** When a medical school is in the final stages of evaluating a candidacy, a prospective student will often be asked to meet personally with an admissions officer. 56

percent of admissions officers said they invite applicants to interview in either September or October of an application year.

- **The Waiting Game:** And while the admissions process itself can be excruciatingly tense at times, once a student submits a primary application, completed secondaries and goes in for an interview, admissions officers can make a final decision rather quickly. 45 percent responded that October is the earliest that they send out acceptance letters; 17 percent said November; and 13 percent said December.

“What these results show us is that even though the MCAT itself has gone through a major format overhaul, other pieces of the admissions process remain largely unchanged and intact,” added Fidler. “For specific information about a particular program, we encourage students to contact the medical school personally.”

The next MCAT administrations will take place in January, followed by administrations throughout the spring and summer. Because testing centers can only accommodate a limited number of students for each administration, Kaplan strongly encourages students to register for the MCAT as soon as registration opens to avoid being shut out of their preferred testing dates and testing sites. To register for the exam, go to [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org), the webpage of the Association of American Medical Colleges, the organization that administers the MCAT.

### **About Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions**

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