

Holistic Review

DEFINITION

A holistic application review involves an individualized assessment of applicants' experiences, attributes, and academic metrics, utilized in a balanced manner, in order to select a diverse and inclusive resident team.

Aims of Holistic Review Subcommittee

We hope to offer to dermatology programs the benefits gained by holistic review, a framework of how to approach and design holistic review (based on our adaptation of the original AAMC EACMs) and examples of how holistic review can be applied.

We have removed the “Competencies” section of AAMC’s “Experiences, Attributes, Competencies, Metrics” because we concluded that the bullets listed under “competencies” may be difficult for programs to ascertain about most applicants. Additionally, many of the competencies, in our opinion, are skills that we aim to cultivate in residency.

Ultimately, each program’s decision on holistic review, what EAMs are used, how they are applied and the rubric in which they are used will need to be individualized to the program.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

1. Expanding the racial diversity of dermatology given that it is the 2nd least diverse field in medicine.
2. Expansion of residency education to include more diverse voices and experiences. This will enrich all members of a residency program, including faculty and other learners, as well as enrich the field of dermatology as a whole.
3. More effective mission and aims-aligned matching of applicant to program, which can help maximize potential and wellbeing of both individual learners as well as the programs themselves.
4. Less risk of unconscious bias affecting the residency selection process.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Selection of EAMs for your holistic review process will vary depending on your program's specific mission and aims.
2. We strongly encourage all programs to incorporate expanding diversity, inclusion and equity within dermatology as a part of their mission and aims and select EAMs that will support this goal.
3. We emphasize that programs adopt an inclusive lens and expand their traditionally utilized application review and ranking processes to intentionally consider the selection of candidates that:
 - a. Are "URM/UIM" to expand racial diversity
 - b. Have a diversity of experiences and/or careers prior to entering the field of medicine
 - c. Have a greater "distance traveled" in terms of obstacles they have had to overcome to reach their career goals.
4. Standardized testing, included the Step 1 exam, has been shown to be subject to racial bias and may contribute to racial disparities in the physician trainee workforce. Step 1 will be pass/fail as of January 2022, however at this time, Step 2 CK remains a scored test. We strongly caution programs against using Step 2 CK as a "replacement" metric or differentiator in lieu of Step 1, given that it is susceptible to the same racial bias and promotion of racial inequity.

**** Supplemental documents, such as the AAMC worksheet on further defining your chosen EAMs, literature supporting the need for holistic review, and sample rubric(s) of the holistic review process, will be provided with this document.*

SUGGESTED PROCESS

1. Establish your residency program's mission and aims with an emphasis on increasing recruitment of underrepresented in medicine applicants as defined by the AAMC as those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population.
 2. Share and discuss amongst your program these holistic review guidelines and this document.
 3. Establish your program-specific holistic review process for both initial application screening/interviewee selection as well as applicant ranking.*
 4. When writing letters of recommendation, we recommend writing letters that enhance the holistic review process for the applicant.**
 5. We strongly recommend to adopt interview techniques that complement and add to the holistic review of a candidate (structured interviews, behavioral interviews, etc) as unstructured interviews are prone to bias.***
 6. Engage in the holistic review process from initial application review to the final candidate ranking process.
- **This document represents Phase 1 of the Holistic Review Working Group's Recommendations, which addresses the fundamentals of holistic review, as well recommendations for the applicant screening/interviewee selection process. Phase 2 will address the applicant ranking process and will be forthcoming at a later date.*
 - *** Recommendations on writing letters that enhance holistic review will be provided in a separate document.*
 - **** The Holistic Review Working Group will communicate with the Interview Coordination Working Group regarding recommendations on utilizing interview techniques that enhance the holistic review of an applicant.*

Experiences

① Criteria	② Importance of criteria to interview invitation			
	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Diversity of life experiences Personal statement, LORs, prior work/life experiences				
Underrepresented In Medicine Demographic information—may not be available for all programs; we recommend NOT including photos during application review				
Distance traveled (i.e. barriers overcome) Personal statement, LOR				
Community service/volunteer experience * eval length of involvement, depth of involvement * number of experiences				
Experience living or working in a medically underserved area *demographic info, LOR, personal statement				
Leadership experiences * evaluate length of involvement, nature of role, impact * multiple roles?				
Educational background				
Scholarly experiences * length of involvement, impact, consideration of resources/opportunities available at home institution * LOR				
Artistic/creative experiences * LOR, personal statement, prior work/life experiences				
Activity in professional associations * eval length of involvement, depth of involvement, impact (may have some overlap with other categories above)				

Attributes

***LOR, personal statement, MSPE summary, third year clerkship and other dermatology rotation descriptive summary/feedback**

① Criteria	② Importance of criteria to interview invitation			
	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Humanism/Compassion				
Honesty and integrity				
Humility				
Team-minded				
Open/Receptive to feedback/self reflective				
Positive attitude/enthusiastic				
Autonomous/takes initiative				
Cultural sensitivity/ Sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population				
Interest in the desired specialty				
Interest in your specific program				
Intellectual curiosity				
Excellent work ethic				
Innovative/Creative				
Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS)				

Metrics

*** Please note that many of these metrics have been shown to be subject to grade inflation, implicit bias and/or structural inequities built into medical education that unduly favor certain applicants over others. This should be considered when assessing applications.**

Note: If these metrics are not available to you, please edit, delete, and/or add any alternatives.

① Criteria	② Importance of criteria to interview invitation			
	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
MSPE				
Performance in core clerkships/ medical GPA/class rank				
Clerkship performance in desired specialty				
Publications/Presentations				
Scholarships, Awards, Honors				
Grants/Research Fellowship				
Performance on STEP/COMLEX Exams				

