

The completed Background Information Form (BIF) serves to provide the HCEC with a comprehensive summary of your preparation for medical school beyond your academic training. The BIF is divided into two parts. The first part asks for narrative responses to questions that were addressed in the Health Careers Reflection Journal. Some of these responses may be copied directly from the Reflection Journal, while others may require editing. The second part asks for a list and description of activities and events that have significantly influenced your personal and professional development. The BIF categorizes your activities by the major content areas of interest to admissions committees listed below. If multiple content areas apply to an activity, enter the activity in the most relevant content area, and simply reference the secondary content area in the narrative summary of the primary content area.

- Clinical Exposure
- Service to Others
- Research Experience
- Extracurricular Activities
- Paid Employment

In addition to academic competencies, a candidate's personal development and possession of personal competencies has been deemed by medical school admissions committees as critical to admission decisions. These "core competencies" are important to all schools of human medicine, not just allopathic schools.

Because the HCEC does not know you personally, your BIF plays a significant role in our understanding of how you have progressed along your pre-health path. Write a narrative explanation for each activity and, if applicable, indicate how participating in these activities demonstrates possession of any of the core competencies. Portray yourself in a professional way by providing evidence of how you have grown and developed personally, and illustrate the qualitative factors that have informed your life experiences. Comment on how you have grown as a person and scholar in your post-secondary years.

### Identifying activities to include in the BIF

The questions below, as well as completion of the Reflection Journal, can guide your thinking as you determine which activities to list. **You do not need** to address each question specifically.

- How would you assess the depth of your commitment, including leadership, lasting contributions, and plans to continue with this activity? If no longer involved, why?
- Have you received any honors or awards for this activity?
- How did this work help to solidify your post-college career goals/aspirations? How would you assess the impact of this work on you and others?
- If you have not had any experience in this category, explain why not.

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### **Information Required for Each Activity**

For each activity or event, complete the fields described below. Enter each activity only once, in the most relevant content area. If multiple content areas apply to an activity, enter the activity in the most relevant content area, and simply reference the secondary content area in the narrative summary of the primary content area.

**Name of Activity and Brief Description:** Assign a name for the activity. This may include the title of a position you held, or a descriptive phrase. Provide a brief description of the activity, no more than one sentence in length.

**Start Date, End Date, and Total Hours:** Enter a start date, an end date, and an estimate of the total number of hours devoted to the activity. In describing your time commitment, indicate the date you began your participation and the date when you ended your involvement. If there are multiple dates, or the activity is episodic, note that in the narrative explanation. If your participation is ongoing, indicate this as well in the narrative section. Honesty and accuracy in reporting your time is essential. Be realistic and review your responses before submitting. The BIF is read carefully; an overstatement of hours, specifically for work that requires more than 24 hours in a day, could lead to questions about the veracity of your participation. Always make a good faith effort to estimate your time involvement so we can make a judgment about your level of commitment. A claim of inability to estimate your hours may make us question your involvement.

**Location:** Enter the location of the activity, including both the name of the institution and also the actual town/city, state, and if outside the US, the country.

**Personal Contact and How to Contact:** Enter a name and contact information for the person. We may need to contact the organization or individual to clarify your role. If you cannot include a specific contact for a personally significant experience, simply indicate why on the form (e.g., personal contact left the position). If it is an activity you conduct by yourself, no contact information is required. For research activities, please include the name and contact information of the Principal Investigator.

**Narrative summary:** Provide a narrative explanation of the activity. In the explanation, use your Reflection Journal to inform your responses in the BIF. Edit and distill the Reflection Journal answers down to more succinct information about the activity and provide specific details. In addition, briefly explain why this activity was important to you and describe how you developed personally and professionally from the experience. See Core Competencies below.

**IMPORTANT:** After completion, save a .pdf of your BIF for your records by clicking on the appropriate link in the HCEC Online Checklist.

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### **Core Competencies**

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) has compiled a list of 15 Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students (defined below). The competencies fall into four categories: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Thinking and Reasoning, and Science. In completing the BIF keep these competencies in mind as you reflect on your participation with the listed activities.

### **Interpersonal Competencies**

**Service Orientation:** Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society; locally, nationally, and globally.

**Social Skills:** Demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.

**Cultural Competence:** Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

**Teamwork:** Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.

**Oral Communication:** Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.

### **Intrapersonal Competencies**

**Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others:** Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.

**Reliability and Dependability:** Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.

**Resilience and Adaptability:** Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.

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**Capacity for Improvement:** Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

### **Thinking and Reasoning Competencies**

**Critical Thinking:** Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

**Quantitative Reasoning:** Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.

**Scientific Inquiry:** Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.

**Written Communication:** Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences.

### **Science Competencies**

**Living Systems:** Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.

**Human Behavior:** Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.