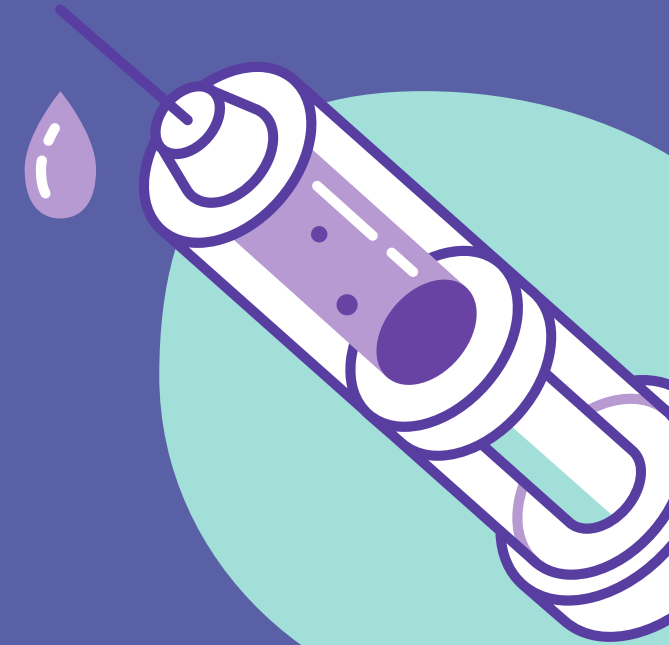




FIVE MUST-HAVE ACTIVITIES

For Admission to Medical School
The Experiences Every Competitive Pre-Med Student Should
Prioritize



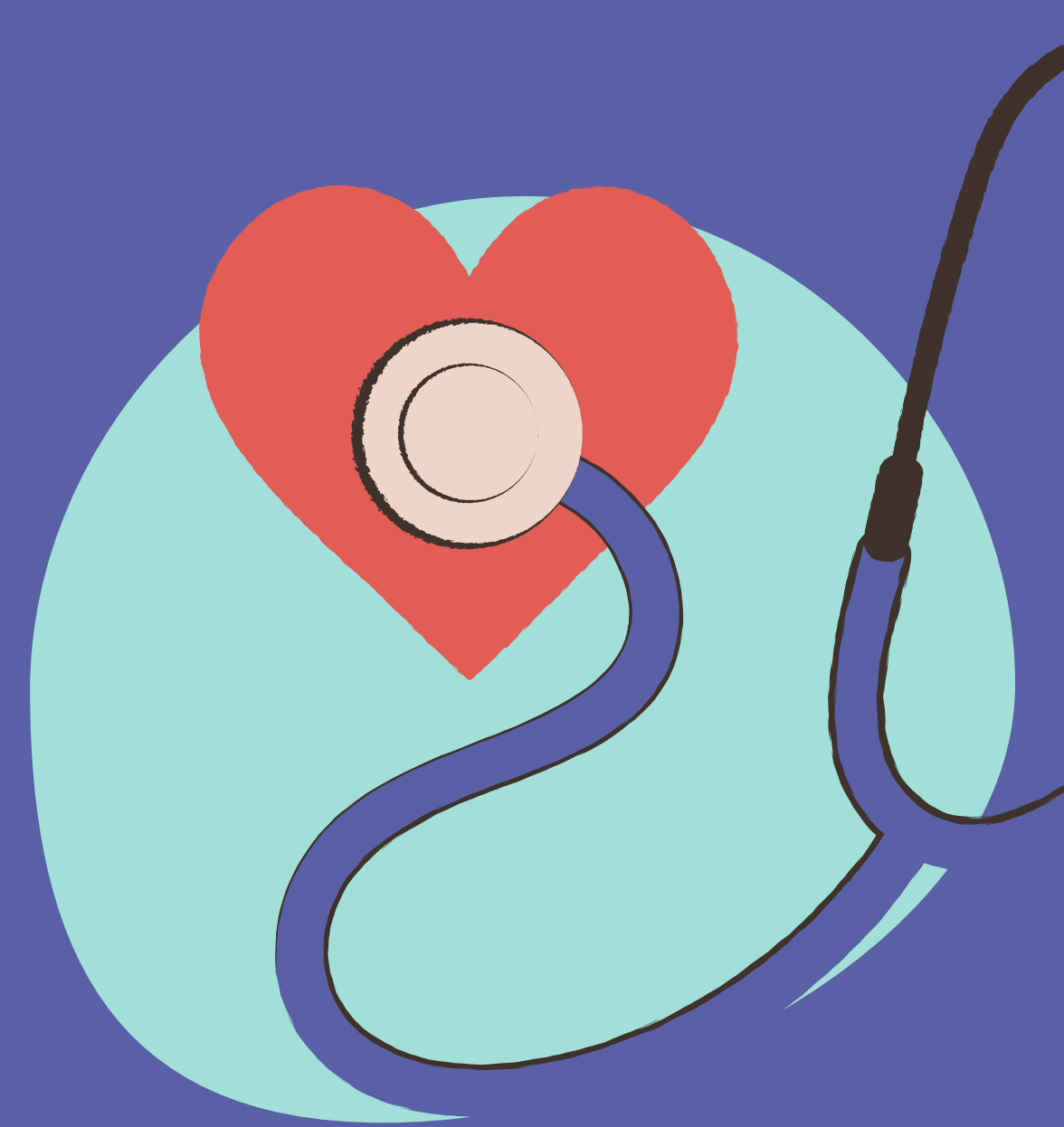
Beyond GPA and MCAT

Medical schools evaluate much more than grades and test scores. Admissions committees use a holistic review process to assess the whole applicant.

They seek evidence of:

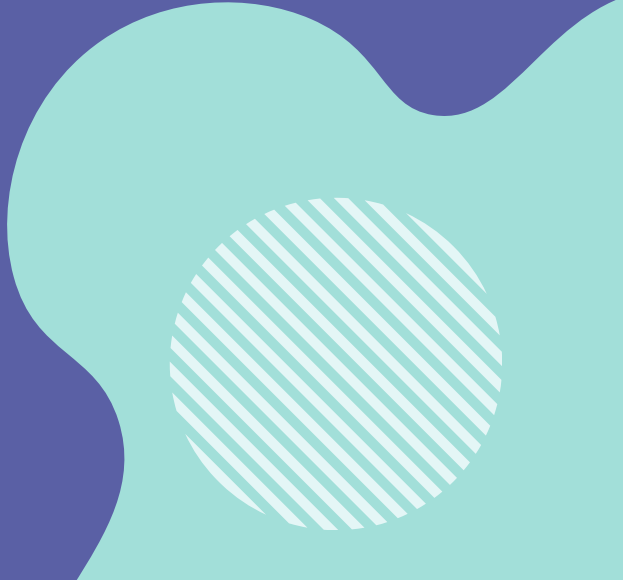
- Understanding of medicine and patient care
- Commitment to service and community
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Leadership and initiative
- Personal growth and self-reflection

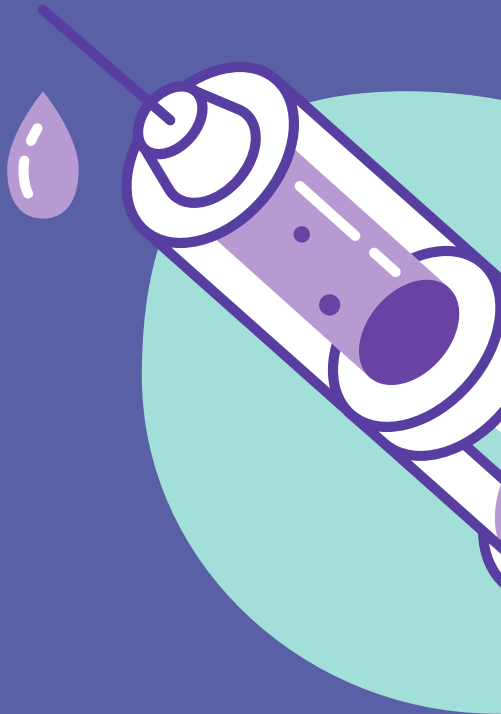
Five key activity categories form the foundation of every competitive medical school application.





What Medical Schools Are Looking For

- Service Orientation:** Desire to help others
 - Social Skills:** Effective interaction with diverse people
 - Cultural Competence:** Respect for different backgrounds
 - Teamwork:** Collaborative working
 - Ethical Responsibility:** Professionalism and integrity
 - Scientific Inquiry:** Curiosity and critical thinking
 - Leadership:** Initiative and impact
- 



Activity #1 — Clinical Experience

Most important non-academic component of your application.

Demonstrates understanding of healthcare environments and direct patient care.

Recommended: 150–300+ hours of hands-on involvement.

Examples: Medical scribe, EMT, medical assistant, hospital volunteer, patient care technician.

What doesn't count: Pure research, administrative work, or non-healthcare volunteering.





Activity #2 — Community Service



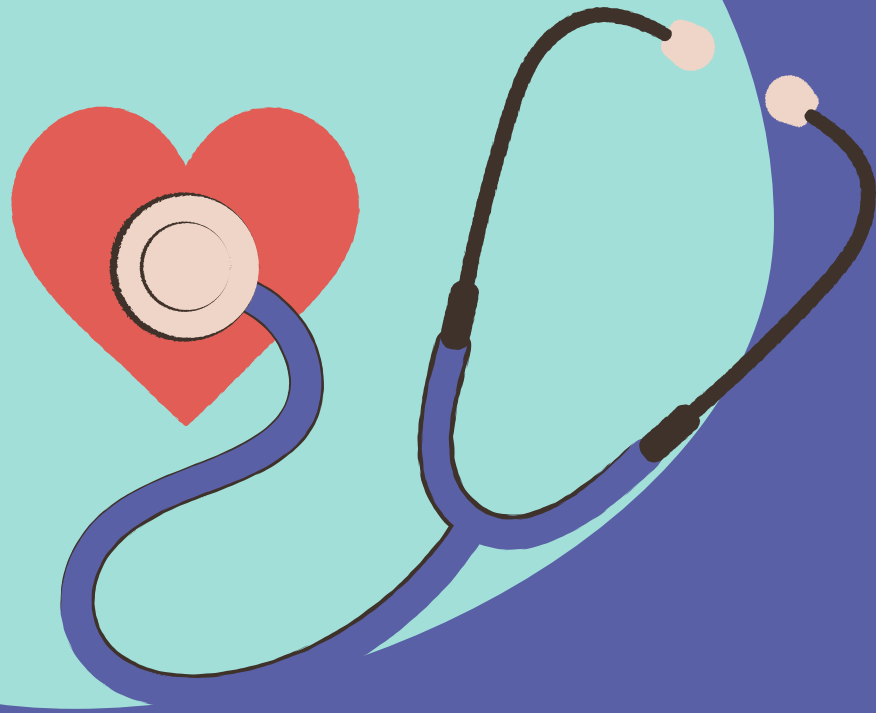
Medicine is fundamentally a service profession – compassion and giving back are core values.
Recommended: 150–300+ hours of meaningful community engagement.

Examples: Food banks, homeless shelters, crisis hotlines, tutoring programs, Special Olympics.

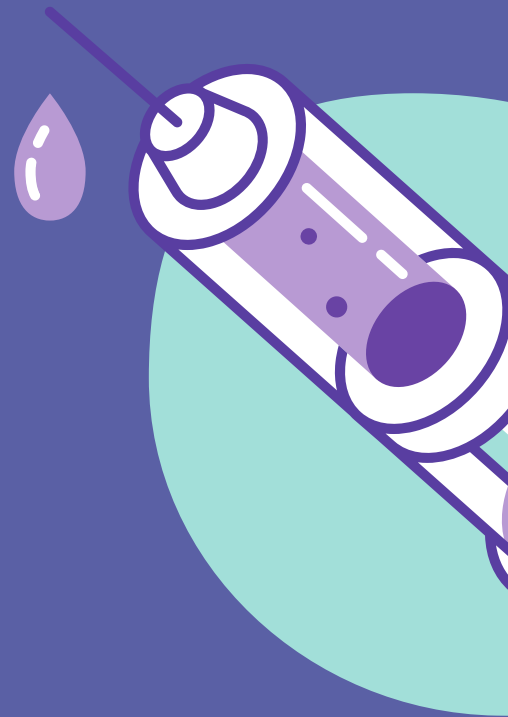
Meaningful service = consistency, direct interaction with those you serve, and long-term commitment.

Growth matters: Reflect on how service shaped your understanding of community and healthcare.





Activity #3 — Physician Shadowing

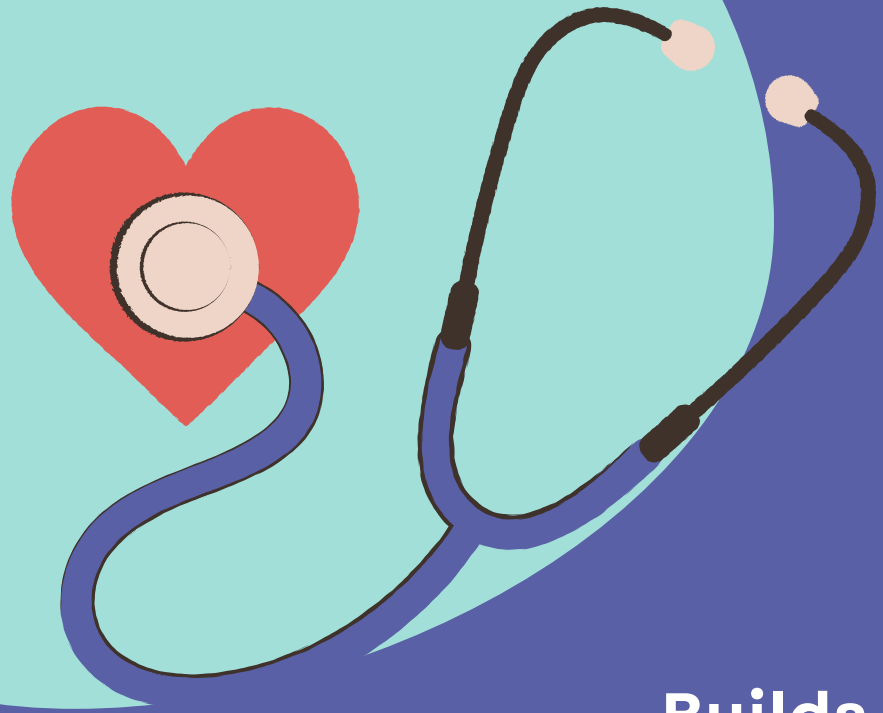


Observe physicians in real-world clinical settings to understand daily duties and responsibilities.

Confirm your interest in medicine and explore different specialties before applying.

Recommended: 40–100 hours across multiple specialties and care settings.
Settings: Primary Care, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine, Surgery, Specialty Clinics.





Activity #4 — Research Experience

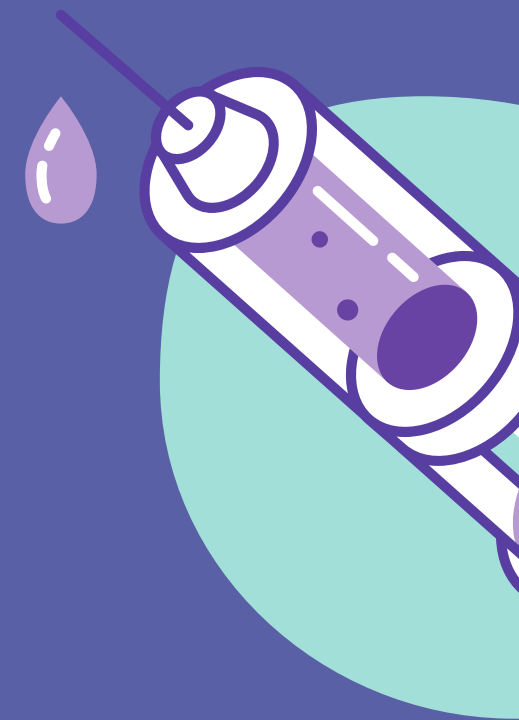
Builds critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

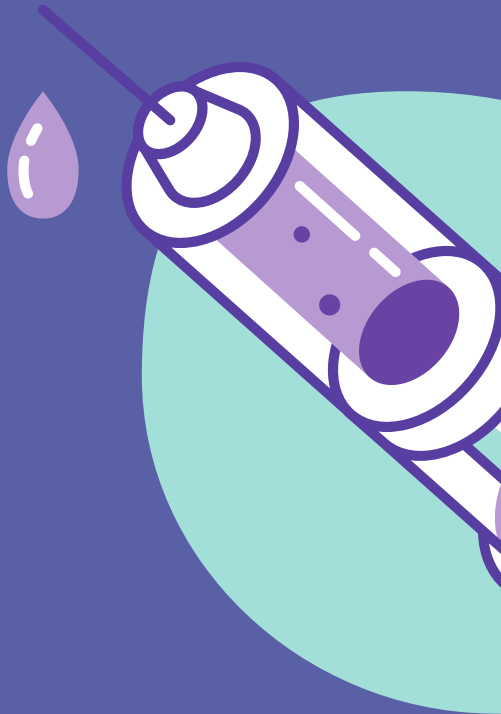
Especially valuable for research-intensive and MD/PhD programs.

Recommended: 1–2 years of meaningful, sustained involvement.

Types: Basic science, clinical, public health, and social science research.

Focus on intellectual curiosity and commitment over publications.





Activity #5 — Leadership Experience

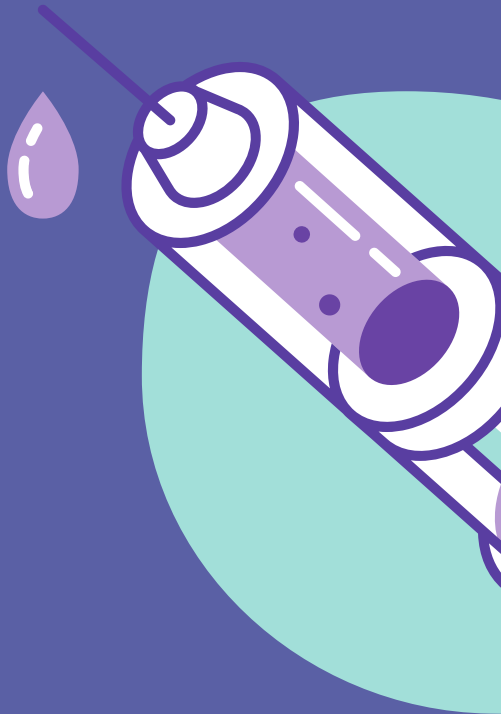
Physicians lead teams, departments, and health initiatives every day.

At least one significant leadership role is strongly recommended for competitive applicants.

Demonstrates initiative, responsibility, and problem-solving under pressure.

Examples: Student organization officer, peer mentor, community health project leader, research team lead, club founder or president.





How Admissions Committees Evaluate Activities

Commitment: Duration and depth of involvement in each activity.

Consistency: Sustained engagement over time, not just one-time participation.

Impact: Meaningful contributions that made a real difference.

Growth: Personal and professional development through experiences.

Reflection: Ability to articulate what you learned and how it shaped you.



Quality vs. Quantity

The Key Principle

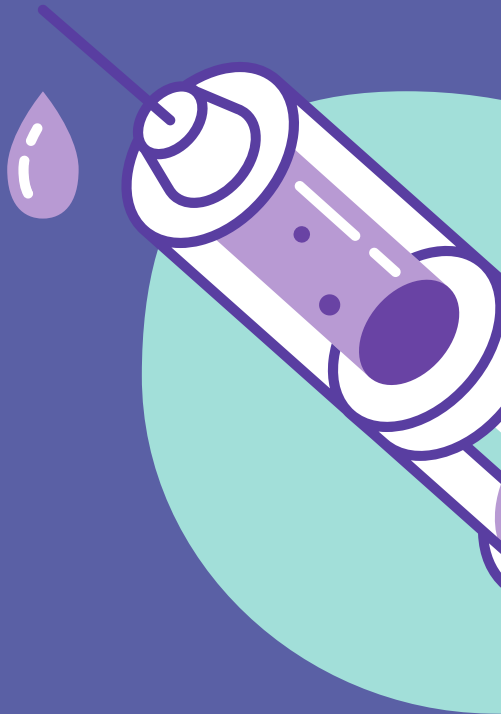
Depth and commitment matter far more than the number of activities on your application. Admissions committees value sustained engagement and meaningful growth over a long list of brief involvements.

Weak Profile ×

- Many clubs, minimal involvement
- No leadership roles
- Short-term commitments
- Hours-focused, not impact-focused
- Scattered, unrelated activities

Strong Profile ✓

- Medical scribe: 2 years clinical
- Food pantry volunteer: 3 years
 - Research assistant: 2 years
- Club president or org leader
 - Consistent, reflective engagement



Common Mistakes Applicants Make

Focusing only on academics – grades and MCAT alone are not enough to stand out.

Starting activities too late – begin building experiences in your freshman year.

Chasing hours instead of impact – quality and reflection matter more than raw numbers.

Ignoring community service – medicine is a service profession; commitment to others is essential.

Lacking reflection on experiences – admissions committees want to see growth and self-awareness, not just participation.





Building a Balanced Profile

Clinical Experience ✓
Community Service ✓
Shadowing ✓
Research ✓
Leadership ✓

Sample Four-Year Activity Plan

Freshman Year

Begin volunteering in your community. Explore clinical roles such as hospital volunteering. Join pre-med organizations and clubs. Start building relationships with mentors.

Sophomore & Junior Years

Continue service with consistency. Start physician shadowing across specialties. Join a research lab. Take on leadership roles in student orgs. Expand clinical experience and deepen research involvement.

Senior Year

Maintain all key commitments. Prepare and submit medical school applications. Mentor younger pre-med students. Reflect on and articulate your experiences and growth.



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need all five activities? Most successful applicants have experience in all five categories – each demonstrates a distinct competency medical schools seek.

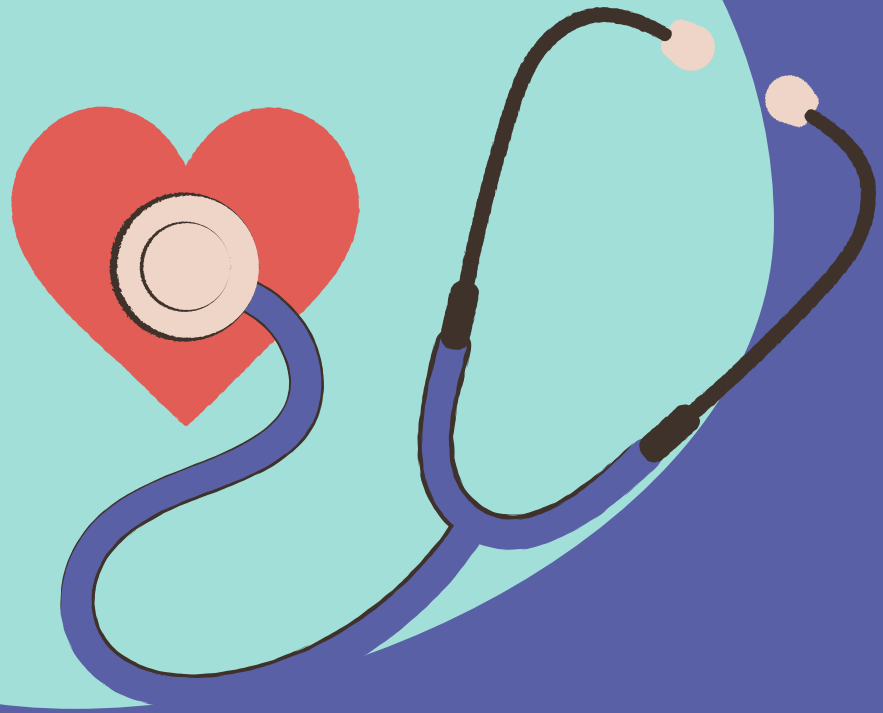
Which activity is most important? Clinical experience is considered the most essential non-academic component of a competitive application.

How much research is required? It depends on your target schools. Research-focused programs expect more; community-focused schools may prioritize service.

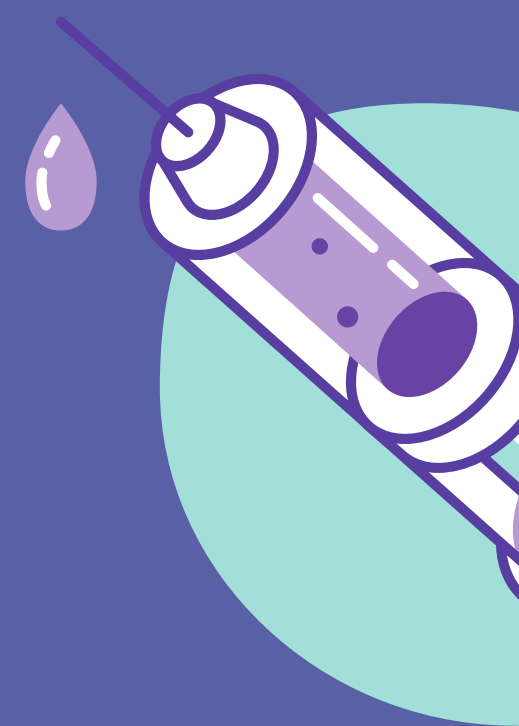
Can one activity count for multiple categories? Sometimes – but each core area should be distinctly represented in your application.

Is shadowing enough for clinical experience? No. Shadowing complements but does not replace direct, hands-on clinical exposure such as scribing or medical assisting.





Final Key Takeaways



Clinical experience proves your understanding of patient care and healthcare environments.

Community service demonstrates genuine commitment to helping others beyond the classroom.

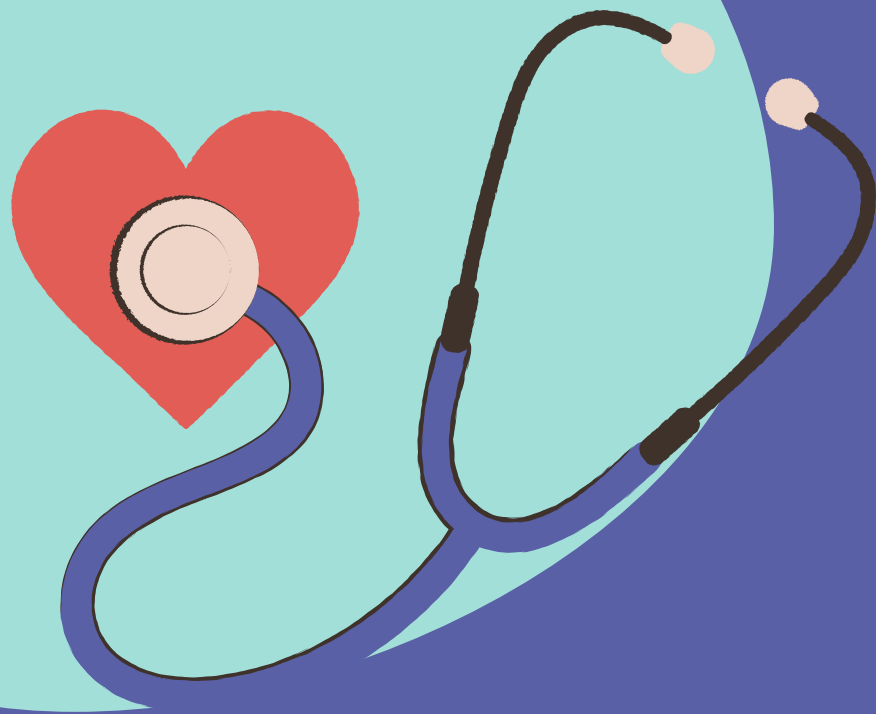
Physician shadowing confirms career exploration and understanding of medical practice.

Research experience develops scientific thinking, curiosity, and problem-solving skills.

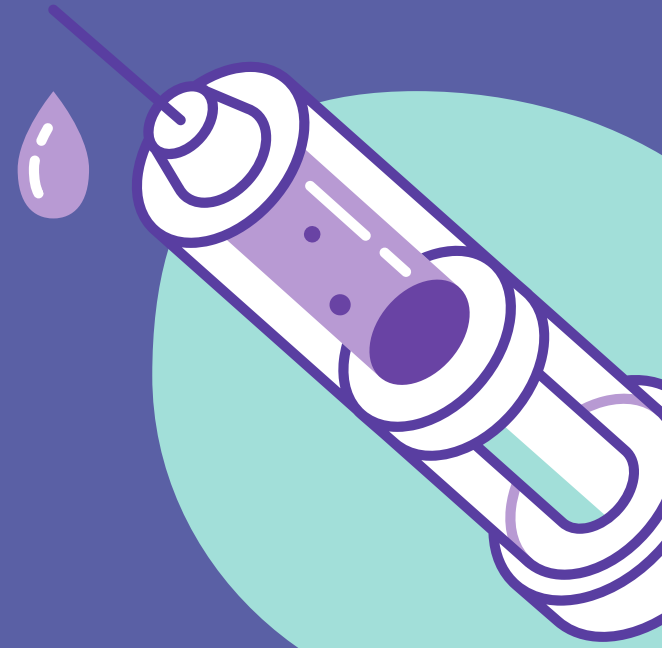
Leadership roles showcase initiative, responsibility, and your ability to drive impact.

Deep, consistent engagement and meaningful reflection build the strongest application.





THANK



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