**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:
   1. Are “URM/UIM” to expand racial diversity
   2. Have a diversity of experiences and/or careers prior to entering the field of medicine
   3. 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.

**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.

**Experiences**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **➀ Criteria** | **➁ Importance of criteria** | | | |
|  | **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**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **➀ Criteria** | **➁ Importance of criteria** | | | |
|  | **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.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **➀ Criteria** | **➁ Importance of criteria** | | | |
|  | **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 |  |  |  |  |