

Developing Your Experience Descriptions

ADEA AADSAS and OptomCAS

Holistic Review of Application

Balanced
consideration of
characteristics
valuable in both that
school and the health
profession

Traditional Criteria

- GPA, DAT/OAT

Nontraditional Criteria
– aligned with
institutional mission

- Who you are, what
you have done, what
you want to do

Looking at your
personal
statement and
experiences.

What are My Experiences?

Every professional you shadowed, club you belonged to, job you held, organization you volunteered with, etc.

Document hours starting at collegiate level

Most relevant – ADEA recommends limiting to [six in each category](#)

OK to mention continued from high school in description

OK to not include lesser experiences

Which Experiences are Important?

- Community Service
- Campus Involvement with leadership
- Shadowing
- Field-specific experience
- Employment
- Research (ADEA AADSAS)



Experience Types ADEA AADSAS

Academic Enrichment

- Programs sponsored by colleges, universities, or other not-for-profit organizations; for example, Summer Medical and Dental Education Program, Summer Health Professions Education Program, and Lessons in a Lunchbox.

Dental Experience

- Either paid or unpaid work in a dental field where you observed patient care, interacted with practitioners, or had responsibility for patient care.

Dental Shadowing (In-Person)

- Time spent officially following and observing a dental professional in an office or clinic.

Dental Shadowing (Virtual)

- Time spent officially observing a dental professional at work virtually.

Employment

- Paid work done outside of the dental field; for example, a retail or restaurant job.

Extracurricular Activities

- Related activities you would like your selected programs to review; for example, academic clubs and competitive teams. Do not include paid work experience in this section.

Research

- Any experience working on a research project, preferably in addition to or outside of regular classroom work. This may include student research positions, research technician positions, summer research student, master's rotational student, etc.

Volunteer

- Volunteer work done outside of the dental field; for example, working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive, etc.

Experience Types OptomCAS

Employment

- Paid work done outside of the optometry field; for example, a retail or restaurant job.

Extracurricular Activities

- Related activities you would like your selected programs to review; for example, academic clubs and competitive teams. Do not include paid work experience in this section.

Optometric Experience

- All paid and unpaid optometric work experience with the exception of shadowing/observation and volunteer experiences.

Shadowing

- Time spent officially following and observing a health care professional at work, preferably in the optometry field.

Volunteer

- Volunteer work done; for example, working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive, etc.



How to Categorize Experience Type

- Follow descriptions as best you can
 - DCG recommends “Dental Impressions Day” is “Dental Experience”
- Divide hours between categories if a position’s duties encompasses multiple categories
 - Shadow Dr. J for 50 hours Jan-March (Shadowing)
 - Work in Dr. J’s office for 150 hours May-July (Dental/OptomCAS Experience)

Experience Information Needed

- Organization information
- Supervisor information is optional
 - Helpful if program wishes to verify
 - Student-run experiences can have a student supervisor
- Start and end dates
- Average weekly hours
 - Application will compute total hours
 - Do not enter future hours; explain future in description
- Description (600-character max)
- Permission to contact
 - Check with experience supervisor

The application will not verify experiences or collect documentation. Schools may contact the experience supervisor or ask you for additional documentation.

Status Guide

- Full time
 - Working 30-40 hours per week on a consistent basis with commitment.
 - Typically, a job that is your primary focus.
- Part time
 - Working less than 30 hours per week, usually on a consistent basis with commitment.
 - Volunteering every Tuesday at the food bank
- Temporary
 - Experience was created with a specific start/end date not to be re-visited.
 - Mission trip
- Per diem
 - “For each day”
 - Working on a day-to-day basis with minimum commitment
 - Shadowing

Use your best judgement in assigning the status.

How to Describe Experiences

Maximum 600 characters

Plain text paragraph

Include Leadership

Use AAMC Core Competencies

Examples of Leadership

- Mentoring
- Teaching/tutoring
- Committee work
- Planning
- Organizing
- Solving problems/innovations
- Taking initiative
- Public speaking
- Outreach
- Facilitating

You don't have to serve on the executive board to lead!



Core Competencies

- Designed by AAMC to assess medical school applicants
- Adopted by many dental and optometry schools
- Demonstrated in your personal statement and experience descriptions



AAMC Core Competencies

Interpersonal
Competencies



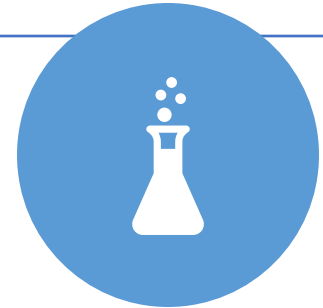
Intrapersonal
Competencies



Thinking and
Reasoning
Competencies



Science
Competencies





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.
- **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.



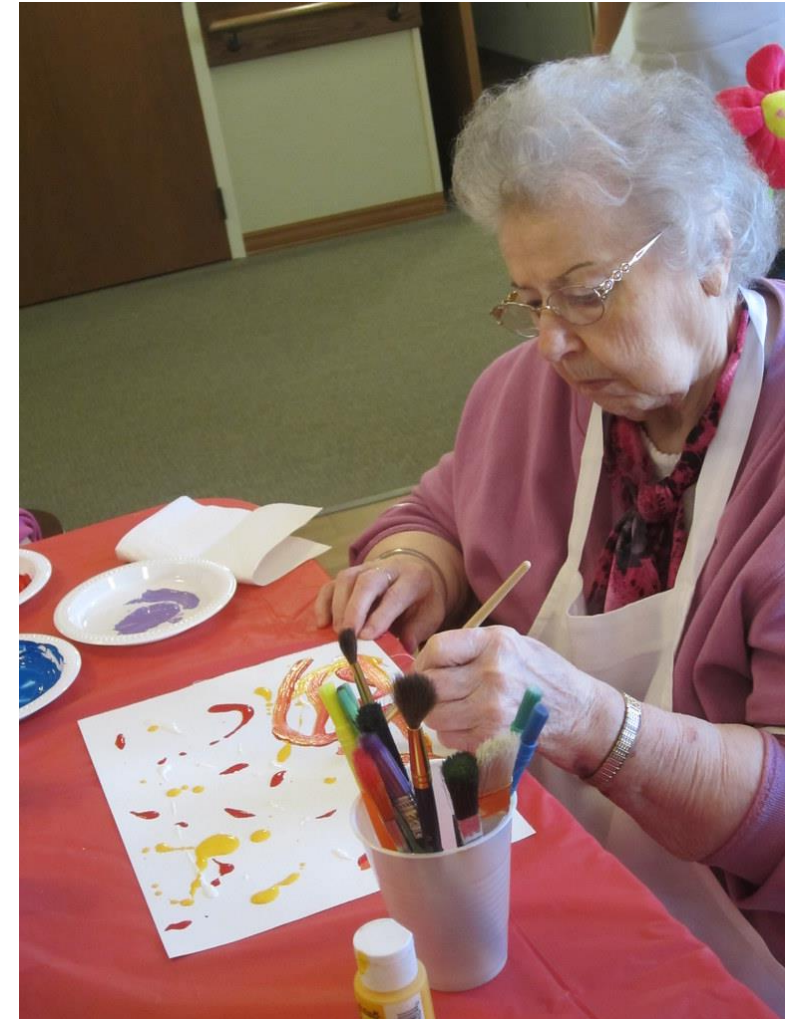
Science Competencies

- **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.

Volunteer

Service Orientation, Collaboration, Teamwork, Oral Communication, Cultural Competence, Critical Thinking, Social Skills, Resilience and Adaptability

We deliver art programs to area senior citizens. As Vice President, I coordinate interactions between members and the community to cultivate relationships between different groups through art. For example, I collaborated with the executive board to plan monthly activities with local nursing home residents, guiding them through crafts and facilitating conversations. During the pandemic, we maintained membership connections by shifting to a remote approach, creating projects together over Zoom to give to the residents. We use the power of a shared interest to bridge diverse communities.



Employment

Reliability and Dependability, Collaboration, Teamwork, Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, Social Skills, Resilience and Adaptability

As a host, I was responsible for greeting and seating 50 groups of customers per shift. I coordinated with the wait staff to balance service stations and ensure that customer needs were met. During peak hours I communicated with the team to help any sections that were overwhelmed while also cleaning tables as needed to seat more patrons. After 4 months I was promoted with the added responsibility of training new wait staff and resolving customer complaints. I learned how to deescalate tension and think clearly in stressful situations.



Description Structure



- Summarize your work in context of organization mission
- Details of duties/responsibilities showing leadership and AAMC Core Competencies
- Reflection of experience connecting leadership and AAMC Core Competencies
 - *Capacity for Improvement*



What is UGA Food2Kids?

UGA Food2Kids is a student-run nonprofit organization through the university that partners with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia. We aim to decrease food insecurity in the Athens-Clarke area through weekly baggings, mobile pantries, educating children on proper nutrition and exercise at local elementary schools, and fundraising to provide food for those in need.

Your work in Context
of Organization
Mission

For three years, I attended weekly baggings at the Food Bank of NE Georgia and raised money to fight food insecurity in Athens.

Duties/Responsibilities-Leadership & AAMC Core Competencies

As **Co-Director of Organization Outreach**, I helped to **select and train** women from different sororities as Greek Liaisons, **collaborated** on the **logistics of volunteering at COVID-friendly mobile pantries**, and **facilitated** brainstorming of fundraiser ideas.

- *Leadership*
- *Communication, teamwork, social skills*
- *Critical thinking*



Reflection of Experience – Leadership & AAMC Core Competencies

I learned how to **communicate and share** a **diverse perspective with members and the people we serve**. I developed **leadership skills by overseeing** a group of people and **providing** a **positive environment**.

- **Communication**
- **Social Skills, Cultural Competence**
- **Leadership**



Vary Your Reflections

I developed leadership skills by overseeing a group of people and providing a positive environment.

I learned about their different backgrounds and gained empathy for their challenges.

This role taught me about managing the financial side of an organization.

I saw the impact of collaborating as a group and sharing information.

Being a part of this organization pushed me to continue to excel in my grades and build my leadership skills on campus.

This organization introduced me to campus involvement, and I strove to be more hands-on in my future engagement efforts.

I expanded on my professional skills as we went through exercises from how to write an email properly to what to do after interviewing for a position.

Writing Strategy 1 – Gather Information

- Organization mission
- Identify leadership roles
- Brainstorm duties/responsibilities showing AAMC Core Competencies



Writing Strategy 2 – Compose



- Use Microsoft Word/Google Docs
- Compose paragraph following the recommended structure:
 - Summarize your work in context of organization mission
 - Details of duties/responsibilities showing leadership and AAMC Core Competencies
 - Reflection of experience connecting leadership and AAMC Core Competencies
- Include all important details; you will trim to fit later

Writing Strategy 3 – Edit

- Trim to fit within 600 “characters with spaces” while keeping integrity of grammar and sentence structure.
 - Use [concise writing techniques](#)
- Proofread for accuracy



Updating Experiences on the Application

- Existing experiences CANNOT be updated on application
 - Include future roles already assigned or anticipated hour accumulation in description of existing experiences.
 - “In May I was elected to serve as Vice President for the 2022-23 academic year.”
 - “I expect to accumulate 150 shadowing hours with Dr. Jones by August 1.”
- Add new experiences at any time to application
 - Do NOT put planned experiences on application
- Contact your target schools with updates

You can add new experiences at any time during the application cycle, but your schools will not be notified of the update and may have already reviewed your application.

