MSU CHM EARLY ASSURANCE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HUMAN MEDICINE

Q: What is Early Assurance?
A: The Early Assurance Pathway (EAP/EAO/Mission Smart) provides an enhanced opportunity for admission to the MSU College of Human Medicine (CHM) for premedical students at partner institutions who are interested in becoming physicians in an underserved region or with an underserved population.

Q: What are the benefits of applying to CHM via Early Assurance?
A: There are numerous benefits to applying via the Early Assurance pathway. Compared to the regular application cycle, where roughly 10% of applicants are invited to interview and only 5-6% are accepted, approximately 50-60% of Early Assurance applicants are interviewed, and generally 25-30% receive an acceptance offer. Additionally, our Early Assurance application is free, and there is no subsequent fee to submit the AMCAS if you are admitted via EA. Third, students who are admitted via Early Assurance are guaranteed their first choice of pre-clerkship campus placement (Grand Rapids or East Lansing).

Q: Who is eligible to apply to CHM via the Early Assurance pathway?
A: Juniors or seniors working toward their first bachelor's degree at CHM partner institutions are welcome to apply. Applicants must have achieved a 3.0 overall GPA and a 3.0 science GPA (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math) at the time of application to be eligible. Students who have transferred into a partner institution from another school are welcome to apply. If you are unsure whether your institution participates with CHM Early Assurance, please contact your Pre-Health Advisor, or email us at **chm.mdadmissions@msu.edu**. Preference for Early Assurance is given to those who have graduated from a low-income high school (as defined by the U.S. Department of Education), have graduated from a high

school in an underserved area, are first-generation college graduates, are eligible or recipients of an undergraduate PELL or institutional need-based grant, and/or have a demonstrated interest and familiarity with a high-need medical specialty area.

Q: What makes someone a competitive applicant for Early Assurance?
A: There are a number of factors that are considered in our review of Early Assurance applicants. Of course, strong academic metrics are useful in helping us determine whether you are ready to handle the rigors of medical school. Applicants should prioritize doing well in their science coursework in preparation to apply. Additionally, the Early Assurance admissions review process places great emphasis on alignment with the College's **mission,** and we look to determine if your future plans align with our work in training physicians who are interested in practicing in an underserved area of medicine. Our Admissions Committee looks heavily at applicants' experiences in clinical settings and service work to gauge mission alignment.

Q: Is there a specific number of hours I should have of volunteer, clinical, and/or research experience by the time I apply?
A: There is no specific number of minimum hours needed in any category for admission to CHM via Early Assurance. Applicants are encouraged to do their best to fill their time with meaningful experiences that support their goals and interests. Early Assurance is a way for us to connect earlier with students who are aligned with our mission, so competitive applicants generally have more hours earned in activities where they are engaged with underserved populations and/or in a high-need medical specialty area. Note that, on the application, you will have room to list up to 15 experiences, which can include any clinical, community service, teaching/tutoring, advocacy, leadership, athletics, employment, hobbies, etc. that you have been engaged with outside of the classroom. It is not a requirement to fill all 15 spots on the application. Please also note, we review applications with context in mind, recognizing that students need to find balance between extracurricular commitments and academic achievement.

Q: What prerequisite courses are required for admission to CHM, and do I have to complete them all by the time I submit my Early Assurance application?

A: Applicants are required to complete the following prerequisite courses:

- Upper (300-400 Level) Coursework in Biological Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Introductory Physics

Applicants must achieve a grade of C+ or higher (2.3 on a 4.0 scale) to meet prerequisite standards. Please note that you are welcome to apply to CHM via Early Assurance if your prerequisite coursework is planned or still in progress. If admitted, our expectation is that all requirements be complete by matriculation. Also worth noting, if you have not yet taken any prerequisite coursework at the time of application via Early Assurance, you may be at a disadvantage from those who have ample foundational science coursework on their transcripts for us to consider.

Additionally, while not required, the following courses/subjects are strongly recommended for all applicants to CHM (EA and Regular), and strong performance in these courses can strengthen your candidacy for admission:

- Behavioral Sciences (Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
- Humanities (Ethics, History, Languages, Philosophy, etc.)
- Life & Physical Sciences (Anatomy, Bioinformatics, Genetics, Immunology, Microbiology, Neuroscience, Physiology, etc.)
- Mathematics (Algebra, Data Analysis & Processing, Statistics, etc.)

Q: Does CHM accept community college coursework to satisfy prerequisite requirements?
A: We accept community college coursework, yes.

Q: What are the academic metrics (GPA, MCAT) required for Early Assurance applicants?
A: Applicants to CHM via Early Assurance are required to have a 3.0 or higher overall cumulative GPA and a 3.0 or higher BCPM/Science GPA (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math). These standards must be met at the time of application. Additionally, students who are admitted and ultimately matriculate to CHM via Early Assurance must finish all prerequisite courses with a C+ or higher (2.3 on a 4.0 scale), as well as earn a 500 or higher on the MCAT, with a 125 or higher in each individual subsection.

Q: Can I apply to CHM via Early Assurance if I have already earned my bachelor's degree?
A: Only students who are still in pursuit of their first bachelor's degree are eligible to apply to CHM via Early Assurance. Students apply during their junior year if they are planning to begin at CHM immediately after graduation, or during their senior year if they intend to take a growth year.

Q: When is the Early Assurance application open, and when is it due?
A: Each year, the Early Assurance application opens the week of Thanksgiving and closes at the end of January. For the 2026/2027 cycle (2028 matriculation), the application will become available on Monday, November 23, 2026 and close on Sunday, January 31, 2027 at 11:59pm (EST). Note that we do not begin the review of applications until the deadline has passed, so please take your time over those two months to prepare your best application.

Q: When is the last acceptable MCAT date for Early Assurance applicants?
A: Applicants who are offered admission to CHM via Early Assurance (generally, decisions are released in mid-April) have until mid-August to complete their MCAT. For the 2026/2027 cycle (2028 matriculation), the last acceptable test date for consideration is August 14, 2027. As a reminder, admission to CHM via Early Assurance requires a score of 500 or higher on the MCAT, **with a 125 or higher in each individual subsection.**

Q: Are there essays or short answer questions on the Early Assurance application?
A: There are six written responses included on the Early Assurance application. Your longer personal statement will allow for up to 1,000 words, and the two shorter EA supplemental essays are each 350 words maximum. Applicants through Early Assurance are also required to submit the College's Secondary Application, which contains three supplemental questions at 400 words or less per response. Applicants who wish to apply for any of our certificate or dual degree programs are presented with additional essay questions specific to those programs. Once you create your application, you will be able to view all required essay prompts.

Q: How many letters of recommendation are required, and who should we ask to write them?
A: CHM requires a minimum of three, and will accept a maximum of four,

letters of recommendation. Of the submitted letters, we require that one be written by a science faculty member. Science can be a number of subjects and is not limited to just biology or chemistry, for example. If you are unsure whether a specific subject satisfies the science requirement, please connect with your Pre-Health Advisor or reach out to us at **chm.mdadmissions@msu.edu**. In addition to the one science faculty, it is strongly recommended that one letter be from someone who has worked with you (ideally in a supervisory capacity) in a clinical space. Beyond those two, the remainder of your references are entirely up to you. Letters do not need to be from an M.D. to be considered. You are encouraged to use your best discretion when selecting letter writers, taking care to ask those who know you well and can speak to your abilities as a student and/or a future physician. Note that, as part of the Early Assurance application, your Pre-Health Advisor will be submitting an endorsement form for you, which allows them to offer additional comments about your candidacy. Once you secure your letters of recommendation, please have them sent to your Pre-Health Advisor, who will then compile them alongside your transcript(s) and submit those documents to us.

Q: Where do I send my transcripts?
A: All transcripts should be sent to your Pre-Health Advisor, who will then submit them to us for review within their endorsement packet. If you have attended more than one institution, please make sure that all transcripts are included.

Q: Are situational judgment tests required for admission via Early Assurance? Does CHM have a preference for either the CASPer or the PREview?
A: Situational judgment tests are required for all applicants to CHM, including those who apply via Early Assurance. Like the MCAT, a score does not need to be sent to us at the time of application. If admitted, you are expected to test and have a score sent to us by mid-June after receiving your acceptance. If you have tested and have scores available at the time your application is received and reviewed, we will consider the highest score on file, if multiple are reported. CHM does not have any preference for the CASPer or the PREview. You are encouraged to select the test that best aligns with your testing style and preferences.

Q: Are Early Assurance students eligible to apply for CHM Certificate Programs?

A: Early Assurance applicants are welcome to apply for additional programs, including our two certificate programs (**Leadership in Rural Medicine**, **Leadership in Medicine for the Underserved**), as well as the following dual/degree programs (**MD/MBA**, **MD/MPH**). Applicants interested in applying to our dual **MD/PhD** degree program should apply to CHM during the regular application cycle.

Q: If I am not admitted to CHM via Early Assurance, can I reapply the following year?
A: Applicants not chosen for admission via Early Assurance are more than encouraged to reapply. In fact, we have numerous students who were unsuccessful EAP applicants but went on to apply in a subsequent regular cycle and were successful in being accepted. Individual admissions counseling is available and encouraged for students who are unsuccessful in applying to CHM.

Q: Who do I contact if I have further questions about Early Assurance?
A: CHM maintains relationships with all Pre-Health Advisors at partner institutions, so your Pre-Health Advisor will always have the most up-to-date information available to share with you if you have questions. We strongly encourage you to develop a relationship with them and meet with them regularly in preparation to apply! Additionally, our Admissions Counselors are more than happy to connect with you at any time. Please refer to your Pre-Health Advisor for your institution's assigned Counselor or email us at **chm.mdadmissions@msu.edu,** and you will be directed to the right place.

College of Human Medicine
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