

# HOW TO GET INTO IVY LEAGUE MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Written by the MedLife Mastery Team, your Med-School Mentors



Future doctors helping future doctors.

# SETTING THE STAGE FOR YOUR IVY LEAGUE ACCEPTANCE

## You Don't Have To Be The Perfect Applicant

For the vast majority of premeds, Ivy League medical schools are perceived as unreachable achievements reserved for only the most perfect applicants.

While the caliber of students admitted to Ivy League medical schools is indeed impressive, **you do not have to be perfect by any means to receive an Ivy League medical school acceptance.** How do we know?

Many of your MedLife Mastery mentors have personally received multiple Ivy League medical school acceptances **with no research publications** and **MCAT scores that were well below the median score**, and we've helped many of our students do the same.

In this guide, we'll break down exactly what you need to do to receive your acceptance as well. We want to lift the veil and show you what's behind, so premeds stop being intimidated by these schools and the process.

Why are we doing this? We're future doctors too. MedLife Mastery is centered around the principle that **future doctors should help future doctors.** We're a team of med-students across the US & North America dedicated to helping you achieve your physician dream.

We won't sugarcoat anything or make any false promises, either. Getting into medical school—especially Ivy League—will feel more simple after you read this guide, but **it's not easy.** To maximize your chance of acceptance, we highly recommend [getting a medical student mentor](#) to coach, guide, and hold your hand through this process.

## The Truth About Ivy League Acceptances

Throughout this guide, we'll share three major strategies that helped us and our students **achieve Ivy League acceptances to the likes of Harvard, UPenn, Dartmouth, Brown and more.**

All three strategies have done wonders in making applications stand out to Ivy League medical schools due to their increased emphasis on **qualitative enhancement**, to prevent you from obsessing over quantitative enhancements (scores, grades, etc.) as most unsuccessful Ivy League applicants do.

The vast majority of premeds obsess over maximizing numerical parts of their applications, such as their GPA, MCAT score, and shadowing hours. However, the benefit of increasing these quantitative factors often diminishes in the eyes of Ivy League medical schools.

For example, increasing your MCAT score from 507 to 510 can have profound effects on your application's strength at many schools (it can be the difference between hitting a minimum requirement and not), but the same can't really be said for going from 519 to 522 despite both of these scenarios being three-point increases.

At the vast majority of Ivy League medical schools, you will be dealing with the latter situation, so getting a few more decimal points on your GPA or gaining a few dozen more shadowing hours will often have rather quickly diminishing returns in the long run.

Applicants accepted into Ivy League medical schools, on the other hand, often focus on **highlighting the refined polish of their unique qualities** that can't be so easily boiled down to a number.

Such as their ability to work well in a school's specific learning environment, their passion for pushing others to excel further than they ever thought possible, or their uncanny ability to seamlessly diffuse tense situations.

Though such qualities are rather difficult to quantify, the vast majority of medical school admissions committees have developed some way of doing so, and Ivy League medical schools are often the most experienced at this.

Our mentors have spoken with Admissions Deans, and one has specifically told us that it'd actually be rather easy to fill their entire class with 4.0 GPAs and 520+ MCAT scores if they wanted to!

However, they don't because **the qualities that are difficult to quantify are exactly what they focus on in determining who they believe will become a great physician**—it's not just about who they think are great test takers.

Keep in mind that the tips in this guide won't guarantee you a medical school acceptance - you still have to put in hard work to make yourself a promising future doctor.

But these tips will help you **stand out from all the other very smart and amazing future doctors who will be applying alongside you.**

# STRATEGY #1: THE SECRET TO STANDING OUT IN IVY LEAGUE MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

## How You Can Be Better Than The 'Perfect' Applicant

The first thing people obsess over when applying to Ivy League medical schools is *"How can I make myself look better than everyone else?"*.

*"Is it truly possible for me to stand out amongst people who scored a perfect 528 on the MCAT? Former Olympians? Non-profit co-founders?"*

**This is the biggest trap that so many premeds fall into** for general medical school admissions, but it is an even larger problem for Ivy League medical school admissions.

Remember that these medical schools are trying to **build a cohesive medical school class**. This means that they need more than just a bunch of excellent individual applicants.

They want a group of exceptional students who will work well together and function as one synergistic class rather than as a bunch of different, potentially antagonistic individuals. Because of this, you don't need to be perfect or better than everyone else!

**This is why so many accomplished applicants get rejected from Ivy League medical schools** despite boasting amazing credentials.

Instead, you need to be someone who **will work well with other excellent people**.

To prevent yourself from falling into this trap, you need to focus on how your past and background will truly **elevate your future classmates** and make the class greater than the mere sum of everyone's parts.

## Case Study: How Henry Made His Application Stand Out

To clarify, let's examine how Henry, one of your mentors here at MedLife Mastery, included this key idea in his medical school application.

A huge focus of Henry's application was leadership, but he didn't make the common mistake of presenting himself as arrogant and unable to work well with others. He didn't say that he was going to be the student who completely changed how the school functions because he was so much better than everyone else in a certain category.

**You're applying to an Ivy League medical school where everyone is used to feeling like they are the most qualified from their undergraduate cohort..**

Put yourself in the shoes of the admissions committee for a second.

How many people who apply do you think boast about being student body president? Or executive on a premed association? These, among many other things students choose to boast about, are what the admissions committee has seen over and over again. **It's nothing new to them.**

With that knowledge, Henry presented himself as a leader who has worked exceptionally well with other leaders. He presented himself as someone who has been in multiple leadership positions not because he considered himself to be the most excellent at something but because **he made everyone around him better.**

He presented himself as someone who does not shy away from working with other incredibly talented people because **he embraces the opportunity to learn from and work with the best of the best.**

With the list of activities and essays in his application, he was also able to prove that he had genuine experience working with fellow leaders. Specifically, he proved that he had a great track record in joining fellow leaders in a way that is synergistic and **uplifted everyone to heights greater than they could have ever achieved alone.**

Additionally, he always emphasized that the part of his Ivy League medical education he looked forward to most was the amazing network of colleagues and peers.

You don't have to be the best at everything and focus on saving the world all by yourself because you'll have classmates (and in the future, you will have other doctors) who will help you cover what you can't do on your own.

Henry focused on the school's community because this is the qualitative part of Ivy League medical schools that so many people overlook. It's not the perfect scores and GPAs that will make you stand out - **it's who you are and what you can offer as a person.**

You don't have to become the next pediatric neurosurgeon prodigy with a medical device company on the side to get accepted into an Ivy League medical school.

In reality, your peers will cover a variety of areas. One may excel clinically, while another works for the CDC, someone else might be a Department Head at the NIH, and maybe one works on building the next generation of advanced surgical tools.

Even if leadership is not the strongest theme of your application, focus on **the entire community of the Ivy League medical school you hope to join** when constructing it. This will make your application shine where so many others dim.

## STRATEGY #2 THE SURPRISING QUESTION IVY LEAGUE INTERVIEWERS WANT YOU TO ANSWER

### Unveiling Ivy League Realities

Our second strategy also touches on the community of an Ivy League medical school, but it focuses more on the community's external perceptions rather than its internal functioning.

It is no secret that people who attend Ivy League institutions are often stereotyped as "snobbish, stuck-up, or elitist."

While many people will disagree with these stereotypes after actually meeting Ivy League medical school students, this does not change the fact that these stereotypes persist.

Ironically, the vast majority of applicants either ignore this stereotype altogether or address it and say that it's okay because the prestige of the institution makes up for it.

We have mentors who have been **asked directly about their thoughts on these negative stereotypes by interviewers** at Ivy League medical schools. And it was pretty clear that this was meant to trip them and all of the other interviewees up.

Instead of freezing, our mentors talked about how they want to be a reason why someone can say that the stereotype is false.

It's really impactful to show them that you want to be the reason why people can say, "*Oh, not all Harvard medical students are stuck up. You should meet this awesome person I know!*"

Our mentors have talked about wanting to join Ivy League medical school communities because they want to help change the narrative that everyone within these elite institutions rests on their laurels.

They made clear that they want to help be the reason why patients can say that Ivy League medical students come down from their Ivory Towers and truly work in the community.

This differs drastically from the **vast majority of applicants who simply say that the stereotype is just false.**

This simple shifting of the Ivy League narrative may seem very small, but it's the difference between being seen as a student who will join the class and passively benefit versus someone who will join the class and actively work to make themselves and everyone around them do better.

## Are They Better For Having Met You?

Remember, anyone can join an Ivy League medical school and benefit from its limitless resources, so **it's not enough to just highlight their resources.**

Going above and beyond to highlight how you will benefit from these resources and **make them better altogether** is what it takes to impress these Ivy League medical schools.

This focus on changing the Ivy League stereotype/narrative goes a long way in presenting yourself as someone capable of going that extra mile when others can't even see the road ahead of them.

## STRATEGY #3: THE EASIEST TRAP PREMEDS FALL INTO

### Navigating the Ivy League Pressure

Last but very crucial strategy to stand out: do not allow yourself to fall into the easiest trap premeds get themselves into, which is folding under the pressure and intimidation of the allure and reputation of an Ivy League school!

Though this applies to all medical schools and all parts of the process, this feeling of intimidation and stress is most prevalent for Ivy League medical schools and **at the interview stage.**

Despite all of the hard work people put into getting to this point (which they should already be incredibly proud of!), sometimes Ivy League applicants fall into the trap of using an interview style that might come across as disingenuous while thinking that they are giving “more prim & proper” answers that an Ivy League medical school ‘wants’ to hear.

If you have had prior interviews at any medical school and felt they went well, or if you have acceptances proving so, **stick with that approach and be true to yourself!**

### Your Best Strategy To Showcase Your Best Self To Ivy League Schools

Imposter syndrome is such a real issue, and you have to be mindful and try to prevent yourself from falling into the mindset that you don’t belong at the school you’re applying to.

Don’t feel the need to change how you’re acting solely because you’re now interviewing at a school that some magazine ranks as the #1 school in the nation or because you personally consider it to be your top choice.

You wouldn't be lucky to get accepted to these Ivy League schools - these Ivy League schools would be lucky to have you as a student, and **we truly mean that.**

Because of this, **don't be afraid to show your true self to these med schools!**

Be unapologetically you during the interview and in your essays beforehand. If the school can't appreciate that, then **it's probably not a good fit anyway.**

Don't get us wrong here! It's okay to tailor essays to specific schools, but if you're changing your interview answers from being super interested in research at one school to loving community work in another, then maybe you shouldn't be applying to medical school because chances are good that you don't know what you want yet. And that's okay too...

We know too many people who committed to writing essays that weren't true to themselves and were stuck with a disingenuous narrative during their interviews and application to secure an acceptance.

And you might be thinking, "at least they got it in", but you know what?

Even if those students ended up getting accepted to these med school programs, **every single one expressed a lot of regret for choosing the school they did** because it wasn't them who fell in love with the school and program—it was a fake version of them.

In this rigorous and prestigious journey, these individuals convinced themselves that their true selves would thrive at this school despite mountains of evidence to the contrary.

If you are ever fortunate enough to receive an Ivy League medical school interview and were true to yourself in your applications and essays, **don't veer away from that.**

Don't be intimidated by the fact that you're interviewing Olympians or people with 10+ publications. The school took time out of their incredibly busy schedule to interview you and get to know YOU better, not some random version of yourself that is more "proper" or "Ivy-like".

Above all, remember that Ivy League interviewers are people, too, and should be viewed that way. **They will see you the same way.**

## How To See Beyond the Ivy Prestige

Approach it just as you would any other medical school interview, and remember that you are interviewing them just as much as they're interviewing you.

If you see numerous red flags, don't ignore them just because "it's an Ivy League school." Acknowledge it and **bring it up with the school to see if they truly care.**

By keeping the school accountable and showing them that you can see beyond their very storied history, you're showing them that you have the potential to be a real force of change and proving to this Ivy League school that they now have the opportunity to reach greater heights than they ever could before **by admitting you into their class.**

Though we can never be 100% sure exactly why some of your mentors and peers at MedLife Mastery have received multiple Ivy League medical school acceptances, we do know that **these three factors/strategies were common threads in all of our applications.**

Common thread strategies are highly valuable - you're already ahead of most applicants - but **there are personalized strategies you can implement** based on your unique history, accomplishments, and experiences.

## Conveying You Are A Future Doctor

The key is to 1) successfully **identify those unique qualities** and 2) **strategically demonstrate them** in your interactions with your target medical schools.

Doing this alone is confusing, hard, overwhelming, and, quite honestly, scary. It's scary because you don't know if you're doing it right, and doing it right is so important simply because of the cost. The financial cost—yes—but also the potential cost of time; waiting for another cycle is painful. We know this firsthand.

Many of us have paid these costs before getting accepted, and we're here trying to make sure all our students **get admission on this attempt.** Not next year or two years from now. Not after doing a master's program or gap year.

So, our highest recommendation is not to do it alone. [Get a med-school acceptance mentor](#) to ensure you're showcasing your best self and conveying to med-schools that **you are a future doctor.**

[You can learn more here](#) and feel free to reach out with any questions. Once you sign up, our team will match you with a mentor in a medical school that aligns with your goals.

Lastly, know that if we can do it, we know you can too. When you focus on community, shift the narrative, stay true to yourself, and get some personalized guidance, you will be able to present a compelling application, and gain acceptance.

You got this,

**The MedLife Mastery Team**  
*Your Med-School Mentors*



**Written by the MedLife Mastery Team, your Med-School Mentors**

Future doctors helping future doctors.