

Medical and Dental School Application Preparation

A 3D puzzle of a human head silhouette, composed of white and blue puzzle pieces. The puzzle is set against a dark blue background with glowing blue lines. The puzzle pieces are arranged to form the shape of a head, with some pieces missing, creating a sense of incompleteness or a process in progress.

Part II

**Letters of Evaluation, Personal Statements, and
Choosing Your Schools**



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Schedule appointments using the online system: <https://msu.campus.eab.com/>



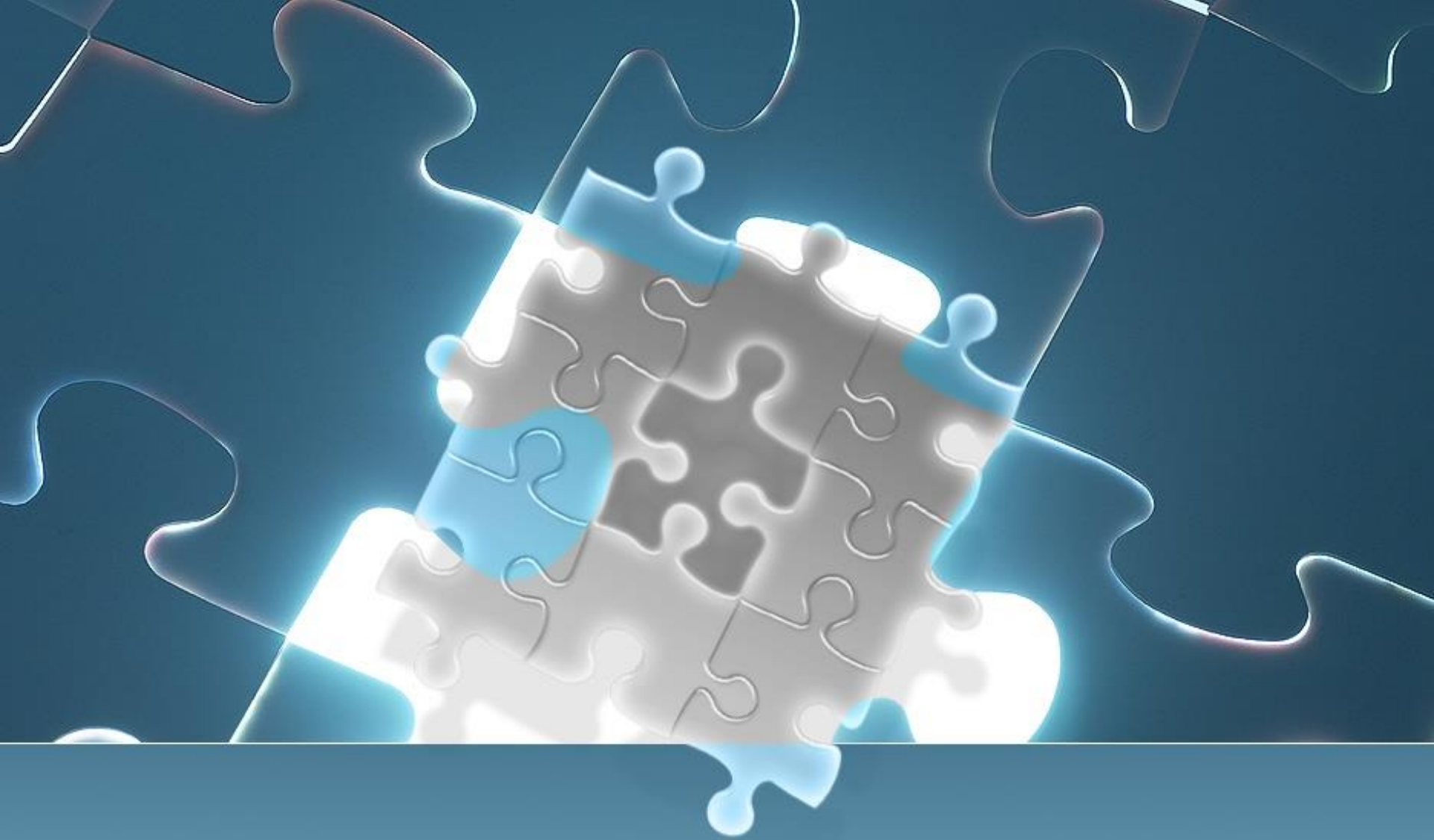
Session Highlights

Last Session

- MCAT & DAT
- Centralized Applications
- Budgets
- Timeline

This Session

- Letters of Evaluation
- Personal Statements
- Where to Apply/Matriculate



Letters of Evaluation



Who Writes Them?

Each school will ask for a different set of letters from YOU as the applicant

- **YOU MUST PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE GUIDELINES OF EACH SCHOOL THAT REQUESTS YOUR LETTERS!**
- **Not all schools will require letters, some require forms to be filled out by evaluators instead**



Who Writes Them?

We recommend the following letters:

- 2 Science faculty who know you from class or research experience
- 1 non-science faculty
- 1 individual working in the profession you wish to pursue (D.O. physician, dentist, etc.)
- 1-2 letters from individuals who know you well from work or volunteering

Make your letter packet comprehensive to who you are!



What Are They Writing?

Letters of Evaluation are CONFIDENTIAL

- AAMC Guidelines for Letter Writers (works for dental school applicants too)
<https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf>
- Ask your evaluator if he/she will be able to provide a good, supportive letter of evaluation for you.
- Making it easier for them makes it easier for you!



What Do They Need?

- Basic information about the who, what, when, where, how and why associated with your request
- A completed [MSU Student Reference Request Authorization Form](#)
- A completed "Confidential Rights to Waiver Form" from Interfolio.com OR a pre-addressed, stamped envelope
- Timeline (allow a minimum of 3 weeks for processing)
- Your STUINFO "Transcript"
- Personal statement if available
- A current resume and list of activities/accomplishments
- Entrance examination scores (GRE, MCAT, DAT, LSAT, etc) if available

DON'T FORGET TO SEND A NOTE OF APPRECIATION AFTERWARDS!!!



When Do You Need Them?

Good Rules of Thumb:

Have your letters ready BEFORE primaries

Collect your letters in the same year you are applying

Make sure you understand the process by which letters need to be received and have noted that in your timeline

- Centralized Application Service
- Credential File
- Direct Mailing



Credential File

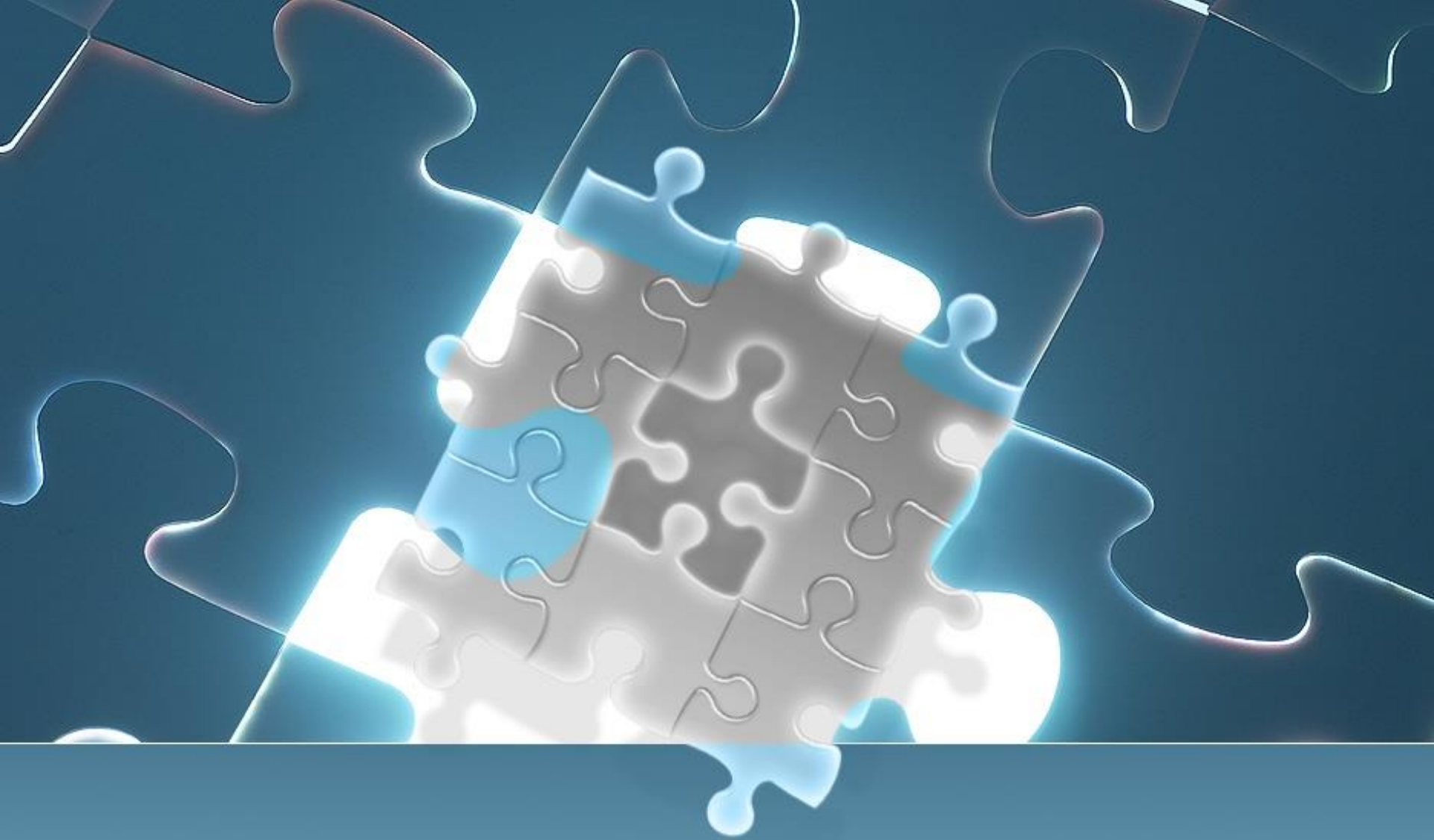
If you choose to use a credential file,
we recommend Interfolio

- www.Interfolio.com
 - [Guide for linking Interfolio to application](#)
- Used to hold letters and unofficial transcripts for candidates
- Documents sent out upon your request
- Establish well in advance of submitting your primary application



Questions

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Personal Statement



The Personal Statement

Your statement must:

- Be personal
- Be well-written
- Answer the questions:
 - Why medicine (or dentistry)?
 - Why are you pursuing this career?
 - Why me?
 - What personal characteristics make you a good fit for this career?



The Personal Statement

Your statement could:

- Discuss, individuals or incidents that have shaped your life
- Elaborate on experiences listed on your application
- Explain academic irregularities
- State your personal philosophy
- Discuss a non-traditional background



The Personal Statement

Personal Statement Tips

- There is no formula- just **YOUR** unique story
- **Draw the reader in** and help him/her **clearly understand** why the experiences you have chosen to share are important to you
- Don't just make statements. **SHOW** the reader using **specific examples**.
- Make it interesting enough that an admissions committee will want to invite you to campus for an interview
- Consult with others you trust to have them review your statement for organization/clarity, but keep it your story.
 - Consider asking individuals familiar with reading personal statements for medical school, pre-health advisors, mentors, writing center, etc.



The Personal Statement

Maximum number of characters

Dental – DDS & DMD	Allopathic – MD	Osteopathic – DO
AADSAS	AMCAS	AACOMAS
4,500 Characters Max	5,300 Characters Max	4,500 Characters Max

Take advantage of the space you have!

When submitting through application services (i.e. AMCAS),
avoid expressing interest in a specific school.



Personal Statement Examples

Most importantly....this is your space to tell the medical schools things that you have not already told them.

Example A:

In the fall of 2004, I enrolled at Michigan State University's Lyman Briggs College and began to pursue my major of physiology and minor in Spanish with a specialization in Bioethics, Humanities, and Society. I was excited about the challenges ahead but also apprehensive.

273 characters with spaces

Most importantly....this is your space to tell the medical schools things that you have not already told them.

Example B:

When I entered college, I was excited about the challenges ahead but also apprehensive.

87 characters with spaces

Opening Paragraph Examples

Example A:

In a certain sense, I am a terrible example of a pre-medical student. Pre-med students are known for our competitive natures. We are stereotyped as being students who claim to "want to help people" but who in the end really only care about ourselves and our eventual financial success. I am a terrible pre-medical student because I do not fit into this mold. Although I do value hard work and academic success, experience has taught me that the values of compassion, communication, and personal respect are of even greater importance in my life.

Personal hardship...

Example A:

My undergraduate years started out a little rocky my freshmen & sophomore years because of personal difficulties. After only one week of college my freshmen year, my mom called to say that she & my dad had separated. Needless to say, I was devastated & unable to concentrate in my classes at all that first semester. After receiving my report card, I was shocked to realize just how poorly I had done in all my classes. I was very depressed about my grades which affected my progress the following semester. A few weeks into the 2nd semester, my mom called again only to say that she and my dad were getting a divorce. I was devastated! I returned home most weekends to comfort and care for my siblings, but being home made the divorce so real. Perhaps I would have been better to stay at school and concentrate on my studies, but at the time, that was not an option. The divorce was messy and lasted through most of my sophomore year which explains my poor performance that second year as well. My parents divorce is now final, & we are all trying to continue with our lives. I am prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. While my academic career has not always been stable due to personal problems, my desire and motivation for this profession has never wavered and is actually stronger today because of the setbacks I have faced. I look forward to the challenges that medical school will bring.

You MUST explain WHY you are pursuing medicine

Example B:

Only midway through my undergraduate work did I narrow my focus to osteopathic medicine, although my past experiences with doctors and my choice of major made it an easy decision. Growing up I had long term relationships with primary care doctors. In time trust grew and they were concerned about the whole life of the patient. They often acted as therapists, experiencing the tragedies of their patient's lives with them. To me, this is the ideal doctor-patient relationship and it is the kind I hope to facilitate as a physician. This more holistic philosophy best suits health interactions and gives a fuller view of patient health that a focus limited to disease processes cannot offer. Given a depressed patient, a strong relationship could tell the physician that she is recently embroiled in an ugly divorce and needs support rather than medication.



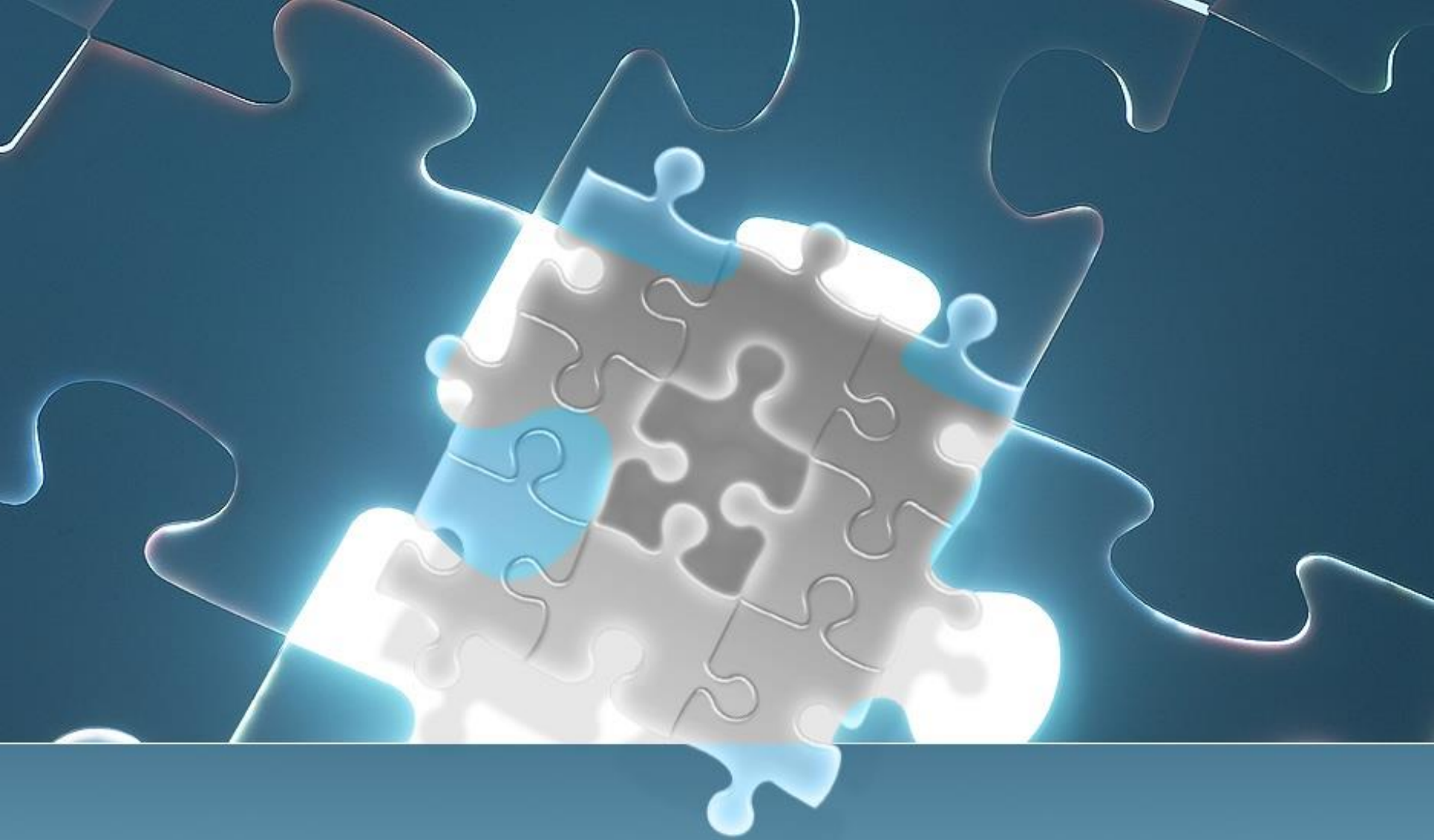
Personal Statement Resources

- MSU Writing Center
 - <http://writing.msu.edu/>
- Examples
 - <http://www.examcrackers.com/mcat/MCAT-EssaySamples.aspx>
- MSU CHM Video
 - <https://www.facebook.com/MSUMDadmissions/videos/826666077488622/>



Questions

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Choosing Your Schools



Choosing Where to Apply

Which school is right for me?

What should I look for in a professional school?

Where can I find the information?



Factors to Consider

- State Residency
- Location
- Mission/Focus
- Financial Support
- Grading System

Where to Find Information

- **Reference Books & Webpages**

- Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR) (MD Schools)
 - [Online database](#)
- Osteopathic Medical College Information Book
 - [Free online PDF](#)
- ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools
 - [Online tool or printed book](#)

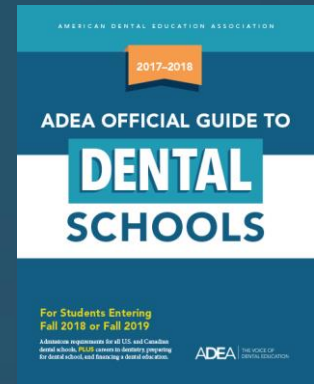
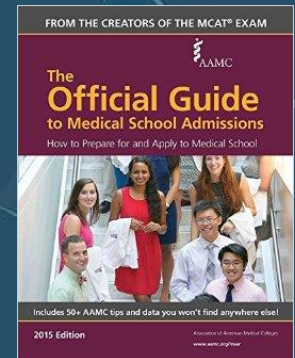
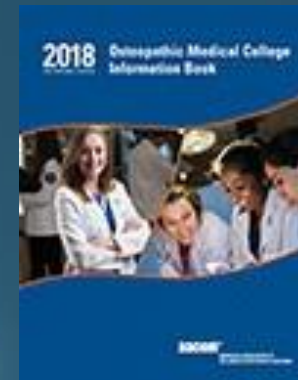
- **Websites**

- www.AAMC.org
- www.AACOM.org
- www.ADEA.org

- **Presentations** (fairs, campus visits, visiting lecturers)

- **Michigan Medical Schools Night**

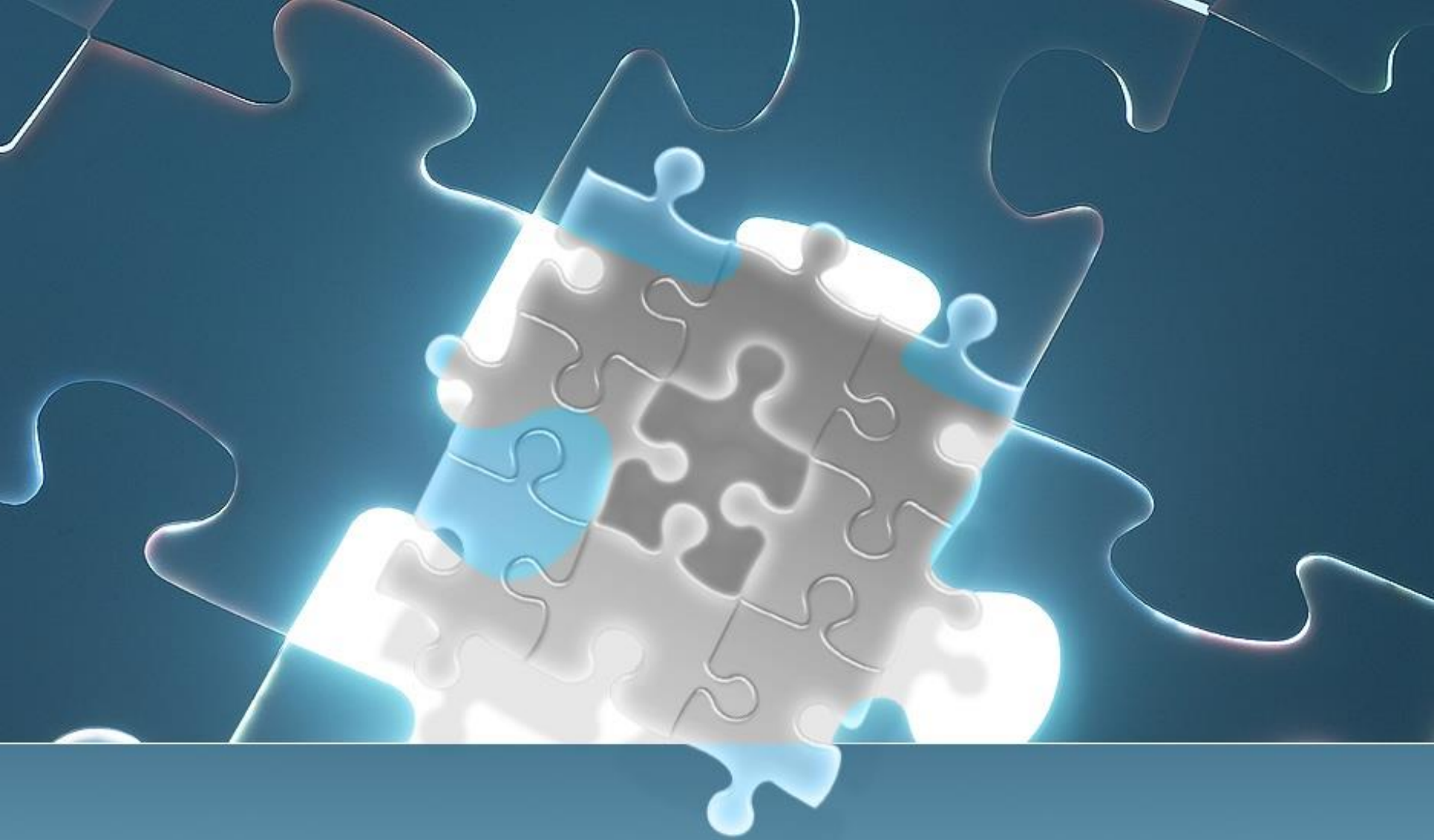
Wednesday, February 21st from 6-9 pm in Natural Science





Tips

- Reasons for narrowing down your choices:
 - Cost
 - Time
 - Willingness to attend
- Look at the schools' websites
- Try to talk to both admissions officers and currently attending students
- Visit when possible
- Consider schools both in and out of state



Questions?