



## **Application Tip #1: Competencies**

Grades and test scores, often referred to as indicators of academic competency, are important to being a competitive applicant; however, academic competencies are only part of what makes a skilled dentist, physician or veterinarian. Personal competencies, the personal qualities that are important to making you a competent care giver, are equally if not more important. In this series of *AppTips*® we will be covering the core personal competencies that professional schools are looking for in an applicant.

First of all, let's examine what the term "competencies" really means. What does it mean to suggest that an applicant displays evidence of academic or personal competence? The word "competence" can be defined as "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently." Perhaps a more enlightening definition: "possession of required skill, knowledge, qualification, or capacity." So, to suggest that an applicant to professional school exhibits academic competence, would imply that the applicant displays the knowledge presented in her courses in college as well as the skill to be a good student. These competencies are typically indicated by the metrics of grade point average and/or standardized test scores.

This series of *AppTips*®, however, is concentrated on personal competencies. Medical, dental and veterinary schools are very interested in your behavioral characteristics that indicate you will be a strong member of the team of students in their school both academically and personally. Ultimately, of course, they are interested in your ability to be an excellent care giver in the clinical setting. A good example would be your capacity to exhibit compassion toward others.

As you prepare for the application process, start to think about how these personal competencies apply to you, how you exhibit them to others, and how you will convey them through your application information, personal statement, and interviews.



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*AppTips*® are a collection of concise essays produced by the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service and meant to assist students who are intent on applying to medical, dental or veterinary schools on how to improve their applications. These essays should not replace a one-on-one advising relationship with the pre-health advisor at your undergraduate institution.