

Noteworthy Characteristics Bullet Points

The purpose of this section is to showcase your unique activities and/or achievements *primarily during medical school*. You may also use it to highlight unique aspects of your background (e.g. unusual experiences, research, Peace Corps, etc.).

The SOM Career Advisors recommend using your CV as a starting point for selecting content for your bullet points and going through the following steps:

1. Review each section of your CV such as Leadership, Awards, Community Service, Research, Professional Experience, Mentoring, etc.
2. Choose 3 entries that you are proud of that represent the scope of your experiences across 2-3 sections of your CV.
3. Draft your bullet points accordingly.

In general, it is not advisable to use a bullet point to explain extenuating circumstances that affected your medical education. If you are thinking of doing this, please discuss it with a career advisor or a mentor.

The list of do's and don'ts below is not exhaustive, but should be used as a guide. Student Affairs reserves the right to edit your points for grammar/spelling, style, clarity, and appropriateness. The character count for bullet points is **300** for each, including spaces. You do NOT need to include your name in this count; Student Affairs will populate your name within the document.

DO:

- Write in a 3rd-person format (see below for guidance).
- Be succinct: 1-2 sentences, and no more than 2-3 lines for each bullet point. (**300 character** limit)
- Write points that are **factually based**, rather than ones focusing on your beliefs, ideas, or goals.
- Include the following types information or activities that occurred *while* you were in medical school:
 - Research
 - Service learning
 - Leadership roles
 - Awards
 - Committees
 - Pathways
 - Ill/Carmel
- Include unique experiences prior to medical school if you are short on unique activities during medical school and/or have an outstanding experience to share. E.g. Peace Corps.
- Feel free to link pre-medical-school experiences with related medical school experiences. (e.g. ongoing work with underserved)

DON'T:

- Include AOA or Gold Humanism, as they will be included in the Summary section.
- Include religious/political identifiers. Your MSPE is permanent and cannot be changed throughout your career. There are other places in your application to include this information if you feel it is essential.
- Mention specific specialties; you may not get into the specialty you want or may change specialties later. Instead, include activities related to specialties you are interested in without announcing your plans to apply within that specialty.
- Assess your own medical school performance. E.g. "Maintained an outstanding level of performance throughout his time in medical school."
- Include quotes from your evaluations.
- Include anything you would not feel comfortable talking about extensively in a residency interview. For example, health/family issues, disability, etc.
- Focus on future plans/goals. This is not the place for that.

Bullet Point Examples

Good:

- _____ co-founded a service project assisting refugees in navigating healthcare appointments and volunteered at free clinics for the homeless.
- _____ was an active member of the Wellness Council, advocating for student mental and physical health. He organized multiple activities and led an ongoing mindfulness group.
- _____ received community service awards from LMSA and UWSOM for mentorship and youth outreach, and a leadership role in the Annual Latina Health Fair.
- _____ was an active member of the Medical Student Technology Advisory Team. Projects she worked on include innovative note-taking resources for incoming students and a comprehensive technology guide for clinical training.
- _____ served as a mentor to several underrepresented undergraduate students interested in pursuing a medical career.
- _____ spent six months volunteering at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya, prior to medical school. During medical school, he completed a Global Health Clinical Elective in Guatemala.

Needs Revising:

- I developed my leadership abilities through interest group leadership, teaching positions, and academic presentations. *ISSUES: first person, vague about specific experiences.*
- _____ strongly believes in advancing healthcare availability for underserved populations. *ISSUES: as a belief, this is not a particularly strong or unique bullet point. It would be better to demonstrate your dedication by providing supporting evidence, such as activities related to healthcare availability for underserved.*
- _____ is a husband and father of 2 young children. He brings a wealth of experience from his prior career in social work and from working in a group home for adults with physical and mental disabilities. *ISSUES: first sentence is not really relevant to second, and is not unique. Would be better to highlight elsewhere in your residency application.*
- _____'s hobbies include literature, hiking, and participating in marathons. *ISSUES: this isn't the best space for general hobbies not related to medicine. You can mention these elsewhere in your application, or in your residency interviews. Would you list your hobbies at the top of your resume?*
- _____ plans to pursue a career in academic medicine after residency. *ISSUES: focused on future goals instead of on what student has already accomplished.*
- _____ expanded his second-year curriculum due to a significant health issue that required treatment. *ISSUES: comes across as a red flag. While you technically can use a bullet point to explain extenuating circumstances, remember that the letter will be a permanent part of your record. Putting it in your MSPE opens it up for discussion, whether you want to talk about it or not. Keep in mind that if you change specialties later, your letter will follow you. It may be better to explain your circumstances elsewhere or leave it for your interviews.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Would it be better to include an activity I did during medical school or something significant I did prior to matriculating?

That depends. Do you feel that your pre-medical school experience is comparatively stronger and/or more unique than something you did while in medical school? If so, go for it.

Another alternative would be to find a way to combine the experiences in one bullet point. Can you find a common thread? For example, do they demonstrate your leadership, commitment to _____, teaching experience, or another shared theme? If so, try putting them into one bullet point to highlight the longitudinal quality of your activity.

Will I be able to revise my bullet points after I submit them?

Submit your bullet points to catalyst once you consider them finalized—just as you would with an assignment for a class. Student Affairs will review them, correct any obvious spelling/grammar issues, and verify pathways before putting them in the MSPE.

You will receive a draft of your MSPE to review toward the end of August and may correct errors at that time; however, due to time limitations we will be unable to make significant changes to your bullet points, so please plan accordingly.

I'd really like to include my hobbies in a bullet point to show how well rounded I am.

Are your hobbies unique/unusual in a way that you think will make you stand out? If so, feel free to include them. Better yet, include activities/experiences related to those hobbies to show your involvement.