Health Professions Advising

Office of the Provost
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

HPAC Overview

(for Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental students)

Spring 2024

About Health Professions Advising

- **Mission**: To assist UH students interested in healthcare careers.

- We offer guidance on:
  - Various healthcare career paths
  - Admission requirements
  - Application process and timelines

- We are located on **2nd floor of CBB (203/205)**
  - Website: www.uh.edu/pre-health
  - Email: prehealth@uh.edu

- Appointments can be made on Navigate (under Support Services)

- HPAC is separate from our office, but we are heavily involved in the process (not the evaluation)

Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC)

What is HPAC?

- Health Professions Advisory Committee
  - Currently consists of 18 UH faculty from various colleges across campus
  - Meet to discuss and evaluate UH applicants to medical and dental school
  - Provides feedback on application materials as well as a committee recommendation letter to accompany application

Why complete the HPAC Review?

- Texas medical and dental schools like to see an HPAC committee letter

- Encourages you to begin organizing application materials earlier
  - Rolling applications- earlier is (much) better!

- Provides feedback on your application
  - HPAC committee will provide comments on your personal statement, letters of evaluation, and overall "readiness" to apply in the upcoming cycle through a ranking.
  - HPAC will also send your letters of recommendation to med/dent school applications if desired. HPAC doesn't send anything else!

- HPAC is *not* a requirement!

HPAC Eligibility Requirements for Spring 2024

- Must have completed the following required coursework with C or above:
    - Completion of Biology I and II, Chemistry I and II, and Physics I and II (including all labs)
    - Completion of Organic I with lab and completion of/current enrollment in Biochemistry
    - Completion of at least 3-hours of advanced Biology coursework (3000-level or above)
- Minimum GPA Requirements
    - Minimum Overall GPA of 3.5*
    - Minimum BCPM ("science") GPA of 3.4*
    - Students below this GPA threshold will not be evaluated by the committee.
    - You may use our GPA calculator to estimate your GPA.
    - *GPA based on TMDSAS calculations- more on that later!*
- Must have 30 completed hours at UH by close of Fall 2023
- Attendance at required orientation & workshops *(more on that in a minute!)*

HPAC Exception Request

- Exception requests were due: November 20 (11:59 pm) and decisions have been sent out.

HPAC Orientations and Workshops

To go through HPAC, students must attend:

- HPAC Orientation (this counts!)

- Personal Statement Orientation

  - Review of what a Personal Statement is, tips, brainstorming, etc.
  - Schedule your Personal Statement Workshop date for 3-4 weeks after the Orientation so you have time to write a rough draft. You can register for it in advance to save your spot.

- Personal Statement Workshop

  - Smaller sessions with group critique. Rough draft is required to attend. If you attend without rough draft, you will be asked to leave and requirement will not be fulfilled.

To register:

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HPAC Submission Deadlines for Spring 2024

- Submission opens on January 16 at 12:00 am for the following. They must be turned in by February 23 at 11:59 pm. If we reach 150 submissions prior to the deadline, we will stop accepting submissions. (We did not reach 150 last year!)
  - HPAC Open File Request
  - HPAC Application
  - Personal Statement
  - Activities/Experiences Worksheet
- Recommended deadline of March 1 for:
  - 3-5 Letters of Evaluation

What are the components to my HPAC file?

1. **HPAC Open File Request**

2. **HPAC Application (fully completed)**

3. **Personal Statement**

4. **Activities/Experiences Worksheet**

Submitted by <u>you</u>
(January 16- February 23)

5. **3-5 Letters of Evaluation**

Submitted by <u>letter writers</u>
(recommended deadline March 1)

Look for an email notifying students that documents are on the website!

Open File Request

- General information
- Acknowledgment that you meet eligibility requirements of HPAC (or that you have been granted a waiver)
- Acknowledgement of $25 non-refundable HPAC fee

Use [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to complete.

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HPAC Application

- Use [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to complete. Includes:
  - Biographical Information
  - Coursework (including all transfer credit)
  - GPA (Overall and BCPM)
    - Use GPA calculation information on our website
  - MCAT or DAT (if taken or scheduled date)
    - Not required
  - Professional-looking headshot photo

Headshots

Headsheets

- Simple solid color background
- Be well-groomed
- Use your natural smile
- Look at the camera
- Dress professionally
- No selfies

- RECOMMENDATION: Have someone you are comfortable with take your picture!

GPA Calculations

- **Complete coursework tables and calculate GPA**
  - All courses from all institutions (including repeats) are counted into your overall TMDSAS GPA
  - All Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math courses from all institutions (including repeats) are counted into your TMDSAS BCPM GPA.
  - TMDSAS does NOT use a plus/minus system. Any A- you earned is calculated as an A, any B+ you earned is calculated as a B, and so on.
  - You can use our GPA calculator to calculate your TMDSAS GPAs.

- Interim Grading Notes:
  - The HPAC committee strongly encourages all S grades to be uncovered (especially if grade is B- or above), or for the course to be retaken. This is especially pertinent for grades that are specific to your med/dent pre-reqs. If AP/IB, S is fine.
  - Per TMDSAS, grades of NCR will count as F in your GPA calculations for your application.

- **Read instructions carefully!**

Personal Statement

- Your personal statement is your sole opportunity to speak directly to the admission committees prior to interviews. Make it count.

- Your personal statement:
  - Should explain your motivation to seek a career in medicine/dentistry. Be sure to include the value of your experiences that prepare you to be a physician/dentist.
  - Should be limited to 5000 characters, including spaces.
  - Should be completed using the Personal Statement template.

- REQUIRED to open an HPAC file:
  - Attend Writing Center Personal Statement Orientation
  - Attend Writing Center Personal Statement Workshop
  - Additional resources can be found on our website, and additional consultations can be booked with the Writing Center

- Personal Statement is part of the required documents due by February 23; *updates will not be accepted*.

Activities & Experiences Worksheet

- Account for all activities that you have engaged in <u>since graduating high school</u>

- Mirrors required TMDSAS section

- Please use the provided [template](#)

- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu by **February 23.**

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**Activities &
Experiences**

I. Activities & Experiences Template

Note:
- Please select one category that best describes each of your activities and experiences.
- Do not list activities/experiences in more than one category.
- The character count is limited to 300 (including spaces) for all activities descriptions.
- Include only activities/experiences that you have engaged in since graduating high school.
- Please refer to the Activities & Experiences Instructions for details about each category.
- There is no limit to the number of activities/experiences you may include, but avoid fluff.

Academic Recognition
- [Award Title] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Non-Academic Recognition
- [Award Title] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Leadership
- [Role/Title] [Organization] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Employment
- [Title] [Employer] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Research Activities
- [Role/Title] [Organization] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Healthcare Activities
- [Role/Title] [Organization] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Community Service
- [Role/Title] [Organization] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Extracurricular and Leisure Activities
- [Activity] [Date] [Description – 300 characters maximum]

Letters of Evaluation

- 3 letters required (5 max)
    - HPAC requires 1 science faculty (BCPM) and 1 physician/dentist letter
        - DO (osteopathic) applicants: need a DO letter
    - Additional letter(s) can be faculty, supervisor, physician, etc.
- Provide Letter-writers [Evaluation Guidelines Form](#)
- Letter-writers must email their Letter of Evaluations to prehealth@uh.edu:
- At least 3 letters are required for HPAC evaluation
    - We will evaluate you once your 3 letters are received; if you wish to use more than 3 letters, we will wait until all are received to evaluate you. You will indicate your choice on the letter writer form you submit to HPAC.
- Recommended deadline for letters: March 1
    - Please share this deadline with your letter writers!
    - We WILL accept letters after March 1! This deadline is intended to provide a timeline for letter writers and keep your application on track for a timely review.

Letters of Evaluation

- How to Ask
  - Email them to ask for an appointment to discuss a letter of recommendation
  - Ask what they would like you to bring to the appt
- When to Ask
  - Never, ever last minute
  - Ask early, but know you'll need to remind them
  - Most professors will need at least 2-4 weeks in advance; some may ask for a few months.
- Who to Ask
  - Someone whose class you did well in!
  - Someone with whom you actually know, and they know you.
  - Upper level BCPM faculty
- FINAL ADVICE:
  - Have some back-ups in mind
  - Remember to select letter writers to show different sides of yourself

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**Health Professions Advisory Committee
Letter Writer Guidelines Form**

Student's Last name   *Student first name*   *PSID#*

Applying to: ☐ **Medical School** ☐ **Dental School**

I hereby waive and relinquish any right of access to this confidential letter of evaluation.

Student's signature   *Date*

To the Evaluator:

Thank you for taking the time to support the applicant listed above. You have been asked to evaluate the qualities and attributes for the student named above for their application to medical or dental school. Your letter of recommendation will be sent to the University of Houston's Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC), which will use your letter along with other academic and biographical materials to evaluate the student's preparedness for professional school. After its review, HPAC will issue a consensus recommendation on behalf of the student. Your letter of recommendation will be submitted as part of a packet to all of the professional schools of this student's choosing.

Instructions for the Evaluator:

1. Per the guidelines of the Texas Medical and Dental School Application Services (TMDSAS), your letter must be typed on departmental or company letterhead, include a date, your name, physical or electronic (not typed) signature, contact information (email or phone number), and academic/professional credentials.
2. Please submit only .docx or .pdf files. Images or photos of letters will not be accepted.
3. Your letter should be addressed only to the "Admissions Committee." Please do not address your letters to the University of Houston, Health Professions Advisory Committee (HPAC), the Pre-Health Advising Center, the UH College of Medicine or any other individual medical/dental school.
4. Please ensure you have used the student's correct name throughout the letter's body as well as the appropriate pronouns (his/her, she/he, they/them).

As a guideline, the Health Professions Advisory Committee has included a sample letter on the next page for your convenience. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please email this document along with your Letter of Evaluation to the Pre-Health Advising Center: prehealth@uh.edu

Submission Information

- Submissions will be accepted from **January 16- February 23**

- Submissions <u>will not</u> be accepted until a student has completed HPAC Orientation, Personal Statement Workshop, and Personal Statement Orientation.

- Submit your documents by emailing them to prehealth@uh.edu in <u>one email</u> by **February 23, 11:59 pm.**
    1. HPAC Open File Request
    2. HPAC Application (fully completed)
    3. Personal Statement
    4. Activities/Experiences Worksheet

Submission Information

- Submit all documents in a single email, using appropriate naming conventions
  - First 150 applications that meet all criteria (eligibility criteria/approved exemption, HPAC required documents, HPAC Orientation, Writing Center Personal Statement Orientation, Writing Center Personal Statement Workshop) will fill the available spots.
  - BMS and JAMP students have automatic spots in addition to the 150 if submitted by deadlines.
  - *We did not hit 150 last year. Submit documents done WELL, not QUICKLY.*

- Have Letter-writers submit their letters to prehealth@uh.edu as soon as possible.
  - Recommended deadline: March 1
  - We WILL accept letters after March 1! This deadline is intended to provide a timeline for letter writers and keep your application on track for a timely review.

After Submission:

- Please be patient!
  - We will provide you updates via email on which letters we have received. (We are not able to provide updates upon request, but you'll receive an update every 1-2 weeks.)
  - We will contact you to let you know your evaluation date once it is set. (Students are not present for evaluations.)
  - You will receive feedback and ranking within 10 business days of evaluation.

- Details on Committee:
  - The HPAC committee meets every Friday to discuss applications (late March – end of May)
  - Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis; they can only do so many in one week.
  - Committee will give feedback on activities, academics, personal statement, etc.

What is the overall HPAC Recommendation Breakdown?

- **Highest Recommendation**:
  - Very strong GPA and coursework, substantial amount of extracurricular activity and compelling letters/statement.
- **Highly Recommend**:
  - Strong GPA and coursework, decent to substantial amount of extracurricular activity, solid statement/letters
- **Recommend**:
  - Competitive GPA and coursework, some extracurricular activity, letters or statement may be mixed
- **Recommend with Reservation**:
  - Competitive GPA and coursework but up and down performance, little extracurricular activity, generally a weaker candidate. May consider not applying until weaknesses are addressed.
- **Unable to Recommend**:
  - Poor GPA/coursework, incomplete coursework. Should not apply because applicant lacks competitiveness

What is included in the HPAC Letter?

- The HPAC Recommendation Letter outlines:
  - UH's HPAC Evaluation Process
  - Applicant's Consensus Recommendation Level
  - Justification for Recommendation Level

- Your letters of evaluation from your chosen letter writers are also included with HPAC recommendation letter into a packet <u>if you want them to be</u>.

- You <u>are not obligated</u> to include the HPAC Letter in your packet.
  - Indicate on the Letter Submission Form that you wish to replace with "HPAC General Cover Letter" which indicates only that you completed the required HPAC evaluation.
  - This option is typically taken by students who still wish to apply, but were evaluated as Recommend with Reservation or Unable to Recommend

I've been evaluated. I am ready to submit my med/dent school application. What do I do now?

- Proceed if:
  - You completed the HPAC evaluation and received results
  - You completed the letter section of the professional school application(s)
  - All your evaluation letters been received by our office
- If yes to all of the above, submit HPAC Letter Submission Request to prehealth@uh.edu.
- You are not required to include HPAC letter.
  - Select your preference in the Letter Submission Request
- We will upload letter-packet to each application service.
  - Please be patient!

Important Application Dates & Deadlines for 23-24 cycle (last year)

- **TMDSAS** *(Texas Medical and Dental Schools only)*
  - May 1: Application opens
  - May 15: Submission begins

- **AMCAS** *(Allopathic Medical Schools)*
  - May 2: Application opens
  - May 30: Submission begins

- **AACOMAS** *(Osteopathic Medical Schools)*
  - May 4: Application opens, and submissions begin

- **AADSAS** *(Dental Schools)*
 - May 9: Application Opens
  - May 30: Submission begins

- Complete and submit by mid-late June. Earlier is ok, but don't rush!
- Do not plan to leave the country or expect flexibility with dates during interview season.

Major HPAC Takeaways!

- HPAC isn't required, but strongly recommended and helpful for feedback and recommendation letter.
- HPAC materials from student can be submitted starting **January 16**. Deadline to submit is by **February 23.** Documents will not be accepted if students have not attended an HPAC Orientation, Personal Statement Workshop, and Personal Statement Orientation.
    - All four required documents should be emailed <u>at the same time</u> to prehealth@uh.edu.
- You should ask for Letters of Evaluation as early as possible
    - Encouraged deadline of March, but at least 3 are required to be received for HPAC evaluation.
    - Letters should be emailed by letter writer to prehealth@uh.edu.
- After receiving HPAC evaluation results, you can complete an HPAC Letter Submission request so we can send recommendation letters as part of your medical/dental school application. We can't send anything without this request.
- Do not view HPAC as a hurdle!
    - The committee are not gate-keepers—they simply want to provide honest feedback and assistance.
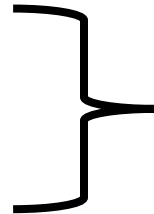
FINAL VISUAL REMINDER

1. **HPAC Open File Request**
2. **HPAC Application (fully completed)**
3. **Personal Statement**
4. **Activities/Experiences Worksheet**
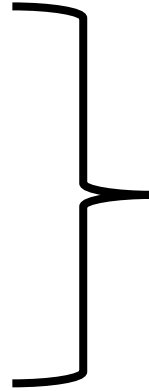
*Submitted by <u>you</u> by **February 23** using appropriate naming conventions*

- Submit all four documents to prehealth@uh.edu <u>in the same email</u>.

5. **3-5 Letters of Evaluation**

Submitted by <u>Letter-writers</u> as soon as possible

- Letter writers should submit letters to prehealth@uh.edu.

Questions?

Attendance

HPAC
Orientations
& Workshops

✉ prehealth@uh.edu

🖥 www.uh.edu/pre-health