Health Professions Advisory Board (HPAB)

...individualized HPAB Committee Letter that highlights an applicant’s academic achievement, intellectual strength....

Many undergraduate institutions offer a letter from a pre-health committee in support of dental school applicants. At Penn, this committee is called the Health Professions Advisory Board (HPAB), and it is comprised of the Pre-Health Advising Team as well as University faculty and staff, to provide a holistic overview of each candidate who completes our process. Dental schools value the personalized insights the letters provide.

Penn has a large number of applicants to dental school every year, so we have developed a systematic process that enables us to write a comprehensive Committee Letter for those who meet our deadlines.

After meeting with each applicant, the Pre-Health Advising Team writes a thorough, detailed, and individualized HPAB Committee Letter that highlights an applicant’s academic achievement, intellectual strength, non-academic accomplishments, communication skills, maturity, fit for health care professions, service orientation, leadership and community engagement.
DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE

Spring

- Take DAT by the end of June
- Request official transcript
- Begin completing primary application
- Obtain at least 3 appropriate letters of recommendation

Summer

- Submit primary applications in July
- Submit secondary application in July/August

Fall & Winter

Attend dental school interviews
**IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

- ✔ Attend a Dental School Applicant Workshop
- ✔ Open a Credentials File
- ✔ Complete Advisor Interview by **April 14**
- ✔ Obtain at least 3 appropriate letters of recommendation in Credentials File by **May 15**
- ✔ Submit LOR Form by **May 22**
- ✔ Submit a draft of the Professional Experience section of your primary application by **June 20**

**Credentials Request Date**

**July 20 @ Noon EST**
Your Credentials File, housed in Career Services, serves as a permanent repository for your letters of recommendation for dental school. You can open a credentials file in person, in the Career Services Office, or by visiting the Letters of Recommendation tab in the Grad School Study section of our website.

*Letters kept in your Credentials File can only be used for the purpose of applying to dental school.*
The HPAB Documents page allows you to upload each of the required HPAB documents (page 7). Detailed instructions on how to upload documents can be found at the bottom of the checklist.

**HPAB Documents Checklist**

- Attend Workshop and Open a Credentials File (Registration Form)
- Upload Photo
- Upload Expanded Resume
- Complete HPAB Essays
- Upload BCPM GPA
- Provide at least 3 Letters of Recommendations by May 16
- Provide a List of Recommenders Form by May 20
- Provide a List of Recommenders Form
- Upload an Application Draft
Spring Workshop Attendees: contact within 2 business days of attending workshop

ADVISOR INTERVIEW

Contact Ferrell Townsend in Career Services at 215-898-1789 to schedule the one-hour interview

Please upload your HPAB Documents (page 7) prior to your one-hour Advisor Interview. Failure to upload documents is not a reason to cancel your Advisor Interview.

Due to the high volume of applicants, you will not be able to reschedule.
PHOTO
You should be recognizable and prominent in the photo.

EXPANDED RÉSUMÉ
A sample can be found in AMS.

BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, & MATH (BCPM) GPA
List of courses and grades that comprise your BCPM GPA, in addition to the GPA calculation. Follow the format provided in AMS.

Include the grades earned in any course taken in these four disciplines, as well as other courses whose content falls primarily in these areas.

You can calculate your BCPM GPA by using the GPA calculator found in your Worksheet on PennInTouch.

HPAB ESSAYS
This is an opportunity for reflection that will help your pre-health advisor know you better and prepare you for dental school applications and interviews.
1. How has your background shaped your decision to pursue medicine as a career? (500 word max)

2. As the landscape of health care is changing, what are the two most important characteristics a health care provider should possess and why? (500 word max)

3. Describe a time when you failed and what you learned from it. (500 word max)

4. What is the biggest ethical challenge you have ever encountered? How did you handle it? (500 word max)

5. Medicine in today’s society is often considered to be a team effort. When were you a member of a team and things did not go as planned? How did you respond? (500 word max)

6. Do you believe your grades accurately reflect the strength of your candidacy for dental school? If not, please explain. You must answer this question if your BCPM GPA falls below a 3.1. (250 word max)

7. Were you ever the recipient of any institutional action by any college or university for unacceptable academic performance or conduct violations? If “yes,” please explain in detail here and plan to discuss the matter fully with your pre-health advisor. (No max)
LATE BATCH

You will be assigned to the Late Batch if:

1. You don’t attend a workshop or let us know you cannot attend one by **March 31**

2. You don’t have at least 3 letters of recommendation in your Credentials File by **May 15**

   OR

3. You are re-applying or went through our process in previous years but fail to notify us by **April 15**

   If you are assigned to the Late Batch, you must still complete the HPAB Process by **July 1**, or **you cannot receive an HPAB letter for this cycle**

LATE BATCH
HPAB PACKETS WILL BE READY BY SEPTEMBER 15
DENTAL SCHOOLS
If you are applying to dental schools (DMD), use the ADEA Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS). The AADSAS application contains the following:

Applicant Information
Education
Professional Experience
Personal Statement
Letters of Evaluation

Activate the AADSAS application by registering online. The earliest you can begin filling out the application for 2018 will be in early June 2017. Submissions begin in early June and we suggest submitting by the mid-July.

TEXAS DENTAL SCHOOLS
Public Texas dental schools belong to a separate state application service called Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS).

*For the other non-AADSAS Schools, contact the school directly for application instructions*
TRANSCRIPTS
Only Penn’s Office of the University Registrar and any other college or university’s registrar’s office where you have taken coursework can send your official transcript(s) to AADSAS.

Request an official Penn transcript online via PennInTouch and make the addressee the application service(s) you are using. Then email the AADSAS Official Transcript Matching Form (the Academic Record section of AADSAS explains how to obtain the form) to the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office will then attach the form before sending it to AADSAS.

We recommend that you wait to request your transcript until your spring grades appear on it, with the exception of study abroad grades. In addition, review your unofficial transcript for errors before you place a request.

ACADEMIC RECORD
List all your courses according to the standards outlined by AADSAS. You will need a copy of your transcript(s) and the semester hours conversion instructions provided on page 12.
SEMESTER HOURS CONVERSION

In general, a one semester course earning one course unit is converted to 4 semester hours. However, science courses which incorporate a lab are converted to 6 semester hours. Follow the general principle outlined below to convert other courses. Remember: the number of times the course meets each week is irrelevant to the conversion.

0.5 c.u. = 2 credit hours
1 c.u. = 4 credit hours
1.5 c.u. = 6 credit hours

If you have questions about converting your courses to credit hours, please contact the Office of the University Registrar.

A few more key points:

• Use your best judgment in assigning a “course code” to each of the courses you have taken, based on the primary content of the course.
• Make an educated guess about the courses you will take the next year.
• List courses for which you received AP credit as if you took them in your first semester of college; make sure you designate them as AP in the “special designations” section.
AADSAS will calculate several GPAs for you, based on the information you enter — a BCP (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) GPA, a BCPM GPA (BCP plus math), a non-science GPA, and an overall GPA.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SECTION
List and describe up to 15 of your most important extracurricular and co-curricular activities and awards. Do not include high school activities without consulting your pre-health advisor.

TIPS FOR WRITING DESCRIPTIONS
- Explain your role, accomplishments, responsibilities and contributions
- Provide what you learned and why it’s meaningful

PERSONAL STATEMENT
You will write an essay that details one or two adult, not childhood, experiences, in which you were an active participant, and illustrate qualities that make you a strong candidate.

- Strive for a unifying theme
- Provide detailed and concrete examples
- Convey your maturity and capacity for self-reflection
- Convey your commitment to dentistry and your “fit” for the profession
- You may submit a draft of your personal statement via email to your pre-health advisor for a critique, prior to May 18
LETTERS OF EVALUATION
Penn applicants must indicate that they will be submitting a “Committee Letter / Report” (not “individual letter”). List your pre-health advisor as the Contact/Author. Do not list the individual letters of recommendation in the packet on your AADSAS application. Later in the application, you will select the schools to which you are applying, and then assign your Committee Letter to each individual school.

RELEASING YOUR INFORMATION
When AADSAS asks if you want your information released to your pre-health advisor, please say yes. The aggregate information will help us assemble Penn-specific statistics for future applicants, just as past information helped you.
Take no later than the end of June in the year you apply.

**PREPARATION**
- The DAT is divided into four sections: Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), Perceptual Ability, Reading Comprehension, and Qualitative Reasoning
- You can discuss your preparation plan with your pre-health advisor. Applicants have had success with a variety of approaches
- The ADEA provides guidance and resources for DAT preparation online (See Useful Links page 26)

**FEE REDUCTION**
Apply for Fee Assistance through the ADEA: [http://bit.ly/2kS3ljV](http://bit.ly/2kS3ljV). Please inform us if you receive the fee waiver.

**ACCOMODATIONS**

**JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS**
Applicants to some joint degree programs might be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), in addition to the DAT. For information about the GRE, go to [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org)
ADEA’S OFFICIAL GUIDE TO DENTAL SCHOOLS

Available in the Career Services library, as well as online at: http://www.adea.org/officialguide/.

- Statistics on the range of GPAs and DAT scores for admitted students
- Admission ratios and tuition for in-state vs. out-of-state applicants
- Detailed information on school curricula

Penn-specific admissions statistics

Available on the Career Services website. You can discuss your tentative list of schools with your pre-health advisor.
Some key points:

- Apply to a full range of schools in terms of selectivity and use the national statistics in the ADEA’s Official Guide to Dental Schools for some indication of how competitive a school is likely to be.
- Consider in-state vs. out-of-state admit ratios. State schools often give preference to residents, and generally charge residents less for tuition (found in the ADEA’s Official Guide to Dental Schools).
- Consider the number of schools to which you are applying. Though you can apply to more schools, up to 12 is a reasonable number.
- If you are having trouble developing a reasonable list, please speak with your pre-health advisor for help.
You will start receiving secondary applications ("secondaries") from most dental schools after your primary application has been verified. **Secondaries often ask you to write additional essays, list the courses you have taken that satisfy a school’s requirements, and pay an additional fee.** Be as diligent and timely as possible in completing and returning secondary applications.

Schools will also request that you submit letters of evaluation — in your case, the **HPAB Packet** — which consists of the HPAB Committee Letter and your 3-6 letters of recommendation.
LETTERS OF EVALUATION

In addition to your HPAB Committee Letter, dental schools require that you submit letters of recommendation as a part of your application. The HPAB Committee requires that you send a minimum of 3 letters, and though you may send a maximum of 6, most dental schools prefer 4 letters of recommendation. Many dental schools like to see a letter from a dentist whom you shadowed.

ASKING FOR A LETTER RECOMMENDATION

🚀 Give your recommender at least 4 - 6 weeks’ time for them to write your letter

Letters of recommendation from famous and/or well-known people and character references from friends or family members are not advised

🚀 One, or better two, letters of recommendation should be from a science professor or TA

If possible, at least one letter of recommendation from a non-science professor or TA demonstrates a well-rounded background

🚀 One letter must be from a member of the standing faculty at Penn
LETTERS OF EVALUATION

HOW TO SUBMIT LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION?

☑ Complete and sign a Confidentiality Agreement (available in Career Services and on our website)

☑ Mark your letter CONFIDENTIAL or NON-CONFIDENTIAL, sign, and date your form. Note that dental schools value confidential letters.

☑ Give the Confidentiality Agreement to your recommender who will return it along with their letter of recommendation

☑ Instructions for your recommender as to where to send their letter are in the bottom-right corner of the Confidentiality Agreement (page 21)
# LETTERS OF EVALUATION

**Letters of Recommendation**

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

No letter of recommendation will be processed without a completed and signed agreement!

Note: Not intended for use by students enrolled in an LPS Post-Baccalaureate program. If you are an LPS student please discuss your credentials file options with your advisor.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

"ALL FIELDS TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT"

<table>
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<th>PENN ID:</th>
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| LAST NAME: | | FIRST NAME: | | MI: | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------|

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<tr>
<th>GRAD YEAR:</th>
<th>EMAIL:</th>
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### INTENDED USE OF LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:

- [ ] ALLOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOL (MD)
- [ ] OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL SCHOOL (DO)
- [ ] MD / PHD PROGRAM
- [ ] DENTAL SCHOOL

### RECOMMENDER INFORMATION

"ALL FIELDS TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT"

| LAST NAME: | | FIRST NAME: | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|

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<tr>
<th>TITLE:</th>
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### INSTITUTION:

As per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), I understand that I may view this evaluation unless I explicitly waive my right to do so below:

- [ ] CONFIDENTIAL: I waive my right to view this evaluation
- [ ] NON-CONFIDENTIAL: I do not waive my right to view this evaluation

Applicant Signature: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

### ATTENTION RECOMMENDERS:

Please ensure the letter is signed, dated, and on official letterhead.

Unless explicitly asked by the student, address all letters to the attention of a general medical school admissions board.

For more information:

http://www.upac.penn.edu/careerservices/faculty/please.php

### PLEASE ATTACH FORM TO LETTER AND SUBMIT VIA EMAIL (PDF) OR MAIL:

letters@pobox.upenn.edu

Career Services Attn: Letters
University of Pennsylvania
3518 Locust Walk
McNab Building, Suite 20
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6209

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**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks qualified students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam Era Veteran or disabled veteran in the administration of its educational policies, programs or activities, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs, employment and opportunity policies and practices.

Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to: Director, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Sansom Place East, 960 Chestnut Street, Suite 230, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6156 or by phone at (215) 898-6615 (Visa) or (215) 898-7603 (TELE.)
REQUESTING YOUR HPAB PACKET

- Requests, placed through AMS, begin at: Noon EST on July 20
- One-time flat fee of $95

You must complete the **HPAB Document Checklist** (page 5) and ensure your Letters of Recommendation are on file before placing your request

**LIST OF RECOMMENDERS FORM (LOR)**

- Designates the 3-6 letters to be included in your HPAB Packet
- Submit your LOR Form (available in AMS) by **May 22** - you can always update or amend later
- Submit a separate LOR Form *for each program* to which you are applying: DMD, DMD/PhD, etc
- Letters included on your LOR Form must be in your Credentials file
- **We will use the most up-to-date LOR Form**
- **We will have to cancel your request if you request before all of your letters of recommendation are not on file**

**APPLICATION ID**

- The AADSAS ID has 11 digits
HPAB PACKET

• The packet includes your Committee Letter and up to six letters of recommendation
• The author is your Pre-Health Advisor

SUPPLEMENTAL LETTERS

• There is an additional fee of $5 for sending out a supplemental letter of recommendation
• The author of the supplemental letter of recommendation is the person who wrote it
• The supplemental letter of recommendation will have its own, unique Letter ID, which is different from that of the HPAB Packet

VIRTUALEVALS (VE)
VirtualEvals is the online letter submissions system for AADSAS and TMDSAS
REQUESTING YOUR HPAB PACKET

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLACING YOUR CREDENTIAL REQUEST

1. Choose the appropriate program type and enter the Application ID
2. Choose Recipient (Electronically):
   - DMD – AADSAS LOE
   - Texas DMD – TMDSAS
3. Choose Recipients (Manually)
   - Non-AADSAS participating or Caribbean School
     Enter address or email address of school
4. Choose “HPAB Packet” or “Supplemental Letter”
5. Proceed and pay with Debit/Credit Card
6. Allow 7-10 business days for your packet or letter to be uploaded
7. You will receive a confirmation email from VE

Please email Ferrell Townsend with questions: ferrellt@upenn.edu
INTERVIEWS & DECISIONS

Interviews begin at the end of August and can run through the beginning of March. Acceptances might be offered as early as October or as late as the following June (off the “wait list”). Each school has its own system and timeline, so there is no standard timeline for interviews and acceptances.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

✔ Visit the interviewing section of our website

✔ Pre-Health Interview Workshops are open to all and offer helpful tips

A mock interview in the traditional format can be scheduled after you have accepted an interview invitation from a dental school. To schedule, call 215.898.1789 or email Ferrell Townsend at ferrellt@upenn.edu

Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) Workshops are offered to applicants who have scheduled an MMI with a school. Please email Ferrell Townsend at ferrellt@upenn.edu to inquire about dates and sign-up
Officially, you are only permitted to hold one acceptance after April 5. You may remain on the waitlist of other schools, however.

Once you have made your decision, please contact dental schools to release your other acceptances.

Accepting an early offer does not mean you are committed to that school. You can release the acceptance later.

Contact the schools’ admissions and financial aid offices to be clear on the cost of attending each school.
USEFUL LINKS

Requesting Transcripts: www.upenn.edu/registrar
Penn Credentials Service: www.vpul.upenn.edu/career-services/credentials
Interview Practice: http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradprof/healthprof/healthinterview.php#practice

AADSAS
ADEA: http://www.adea.org
ADEA Official Guide: http://www.adea.org/officialguide/
AADSAS Contact Information: aadsasinfo@aadsasweb.org or 617-612-2045
DAT Registration: http://bit.ly/2kS7hBg
DAT Fee Assistance Program: http://bit.ly/2kS3ljV

TMDSAS
TMDSAS General: www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas
CONTACT

215.898.1789

3718 Locust Walk
McNeil Building, Suite 20

http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/currentapplicantsden

Penn
Career Services