

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
CAREER SERVICES  
DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS' MANUAL FOR 2010 ADMISSION**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

Applying to dental school is a very manageable process, so long as you are well organized. You will need to plan ahead, and keep track of the procedures you have to follow and deadlines you have to meet.

We are here to guide you. However, you must realize that there is no magic involved in applying to dental school. You must assume responsibility and see that you follow the appropriate steps.

All dental schools expect applicants to have a letter of recommendation from their undergraduate school's pre-health committee. At Penn, this committee is called the **Health Professions Advisory Board (HPAB)**, and is composed of administrators and faculty from across the university, together with your pre-health advisors at Career Services. The committee letter at Penn (better known as the **HPAB letter**) is essentially a cover letter, and will be sent to the dental schools as part of a packet that includes other individual letters of recommendation that you will obtain from professors, TAs, research supervisors, and other mentors. As a cover letter, the HPAB letter serves several purposes: it introduces you to the dental school admissions committees, reviews all of your strengths and accomplishments, and advocates for your acceptance.

We, your pre-health advisors, are the ones who actually compose the HPAB letter, and we pride ourselves on being able to offer all Penn students and alumni a thorough, detailed, and individualized recommendation. Because of the large number of students who apply to health professions schools every year, we have developed a system of procedures that enable us to accommodate everyone who needs an HPAB letter, and meets our deadlines.

Here, in brief, are the steps you will need to take to obtain an HPAB letter:

1. Attend the mandatory Dental School Applicant Workshop on February 11 and open a Credentials File.
2. Schedule a one hour "Advisor Interview" with a Pre-Health Advisor following your Applicant Workshop (make sure to specify that you are scheduling a one-hour Advisor Interview, not a regular appointment).
3. Meet with your Health Professions Advisory Board member for an "HPAB interview" following your applicant interview.
4. Have **at least 3** appropriate letters of recommendation in your Career Services credentials file by **June 1**.
5. Provide us with a **draft** copy of your AADSAS application (see page 9) for Fall 2010 admission by **June 1**. This is just for our records; you will have to submit your completed application to AADSAS after June 1.
6. Submit to our office your **List of Recommenders** (list at least 3 and no more than 6), by **June 4**.

## **OPENING A CREDENTIALS FILE**

The Credentials Service, housed in Career Services, serves as a permanent repository for your letters of recommendation. You'll be able to complete a registration at the Applicant Workshop; otherwise, simply come to the reception desk at the front of Career Services, and ask to open a Credentials File. Alumni not on campus can print out the registration form from the Credentials Service web site and fax or mail it in. See also our section on page 6 on letters of recommendation.

## THE ADVISOR INTERVIEW

To accommodate everyone, we require each student to contact our office (215-898-1789) within 48 hours of the applicant workshop, to schedule an advisor interview. Please schedule the interview for the earliest feasible date, and certainly before the end of April. If necessary we can meet in May with alumni only. The meeting enables your advisor to get to know you and gather information that will help in writing the HPAB letter.

### **You must bring 6 items to your advisor interview:**

- 1) **TRANSCRIPT:** Unofficial copies of your Penn transcript are available for free through Penn-in-Touch. We also need unofficial copies of transcripts from any other schools where you completed college-level courses.
- 2) **EXPANDED RÉSUMÉ:** Please bring a typed copy of your expanded résumé. A sample can be found on page 21 of this manual. Note that typically an expanded résumé should fill at least 2 pages. It is essential that you write a thorough résumé that outlines all your post-secondary activities and accomplishments in detail so that we have the information we need to write a comprehensive letter. When listing jobs and activities, be sure to indicate the duration (e.g., academic years 2006-08; summers 2007, 2008; or Fall 2008) and intensity (e.g. Dr. X's Laboratory: Summer 2008: 40 hours per week, academic year 2007-8: 10 hours per week).

This extended résumé will also be helpful to you as you fill out your dental school applications, which follow a comparable format.

- 3) **PHOTO:** A snapshot or candid photo is fine. We don't need an expensive portrait photo. This is just to help us remember you as well as possible.

- 4) **PERSONAL STATEMENT:** Please bring a printed-out draft of your personal statement. For more on the personal statement, see our section on it below.

- 5) **STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE:** The questionnaire is designed to help you begin thinking about your application, and prepare for your advisor and HPAB interviews. We like to see thoughtful answers to these questions to learn more about you, and to help you organize your thoughts about yourself. **Please print out your responses on a separate sheet.**

- 6) **BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, MATH (BCPM) GPA FOR PENN COURSES:** Dental schools will be paying close attention to your BCPM (and your BCP) GPA when evaluating your application. Obviously, just about any course taken in the four named academic departments will count toward your BCPM GPA. Statistics courses will count, as will other courses that are primarily Biology, Chemistry, or Physics in terms of content. For instance, BIBB 251 (Cell Neurobiology) is essentially a Biology course, and would be best categorized as Biology. But BIBB 390 (Behavioral Medicine) is more of a Psychology course, and would be most appropriately categorized as Behavioral Science. You need to use your own best judgment, in good faith, as to whether a course is essentially a BCPM course or not.

You can figure out your BCPM GPA by using the GPA calculator on Penn-in-Touch. But please use the worksheet on page 25 of this manual to **list the courses** that you have included in your BCPM GPA, as well as the BCPM GPA itself.

## **THE HPAB INTERVIEW**

You will be assigned an HPAB interviewer by e-mail about a week after your advisor interview. Realize that we try to ensure that we do not assign you to someone whom you know. Within one week after receiving the HPAB assignment by e-mail, you must contact your HPAB member directly to schedule an appointment for the interview. It is **your responsibility** to contact your HPAB member to schedule a mutually convenient time. You must have completed your HPAB interview by May 1.

Please bring a copy of your résumé to your applicant interview, and dress as though you were going to a dental school interview. You will meet with your HPAB member only once. For questions about choosing dental schools and application procedures, contact your Pre-health Advisor at the Career Services office.

One last note: please remember to thank your HPAB interviewer for generously volunteering their time.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**When, how, and from whom to ask for letters:** Dental schools require that you submit letters of recommendation as a part of your application. We require that you send a minimum of 3, but you may send up to 6. This does not include your HPAB letter.

To ensure that you have at least 3 letters on file by June 1, you should ask for more than 3 letters; we suggest, therefore, that you ask a minimum of 4 recommenders for letters. You should approach your recommenders early in the process, well in advance of the June 1 deadline; try to give your recommenders at least a month's notice. One of your letters must be from a member of Penn's standing faculty (assistant professor or higher) who has taught you. Other than that, the HPAB does not regulate your letters. However, you should have at least one from someone who has taught you in the sciences. In fact, it would help to get letters from two people who have taught you in the sciences. You should also try to get at least one letter from someone who has taught you in a non-science course. If you have done an independent study, thesis, or other significant research, getting a recommendation from your advisor/primary investigator is advisable. The aim is to get a variety of letters from people with whom you have worked in different activities relevant to dental school. You might ask a professor from a small discussion course, a TA from a recitation or lab, the supervisor of your independent study project, the head of the camp where you worked, or the advisor of the organization in which you are very active, and so forth. References from famous people are not helpful unless they really have something relevant to say about you. Similarly, character references from friends or family members are not advisable.

You should ask your recommenders to submit their letters directly to your Credentials File in Career Services, along with a Recommendation Form. Recommendation Forms are available at the Career Services reception desk, or you can download them at [www.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials/recform.pdf](http://www.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials/recform.pdf). You will need to complete the form, including the waiver section. We suggest you waive your right to see the letter.

The target date for at least three relevant letters to be processed and in your file is **May 15**; the **final** deadline is **June 1**. Meeting the target date enables us to start work on writing HPAB letters earlier, and prevents the Credentials Service from being completely swamped on June 1.

The best way to check whether letters have arrived in your Credentials File is to consult the Credentials Service page on the Career Services web site: [www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials). Do not just assume that letters have arrived in your Credentials File. Please check regularly, allowing at least a week for processing.

**The HPAB packet:** In the end, a packet of letters (the HPAB packet) will be sent to AADSAS on your request (see "Secondary Applications and the HPAB packet"). The packet will consist of the HPAB letter, followed by the letters of recommendation that you ask us to include. No more than six individual letters will be included in the packet. You can have more than six in your Credentials File, but the dental schools would not welcome more than 6 letters. By **June 4**, you must designate 3-6 letters that you have on file on your **List of Recommenders form** for us to include in your packet. Make sure you keep a record of which letters you have asked us to include in your file.

**AADSAS limit on letters:** Note that while AADSAS (see page 9) states they will not allow you to submit more than 4 individual letters of recommendation, your entire HPAB packet, including the individual letters, counts as 3 letters. So, despite the limit, you can send your HPAB packet to AADSAS, with up to 6 letters, and then even one other additional letter later if you need to.

**Electronic submission of the HPAB packet:** At this point the best option for having your packet sent to AADSAS is to have it uploaded electronically via the AADSAS online service. You should list your pre-health advisor as the person to upload the letter. Note that even though you designate that person and they are sent an email, you still need to fill out the Credentials Service mailing request form and provide payment (\$6). You should indicate that you want the packet submitted electronically on the form.

We can't send a different packet to different schools for you. If there is a letter you want sent to some schools but not to others, you can request to have it mailed out separately as a supplement. Again, use the appropriate Credentials Mailing Request Form. You can have one additional letter on top of your packet sent via AADSAS, as indicated above.

**Changing your List of Recommenders:** If, once you have submitted your List of Recommenders form by June 4, you want to add letters that have arrived after June 1, or if you change your mind about what letters are to be included in your packet and add, substitute or remove letters of recommendation (always leaving between 3-6 letters), you must submit a new List of Recommenders at the time you request your letters be sent out. We won't accept a new list until you submit a request. We cannot guarantee that any letters that you select or that arrive after June 1 will be referred to in our HPAB letter.

## **THE DAT**

Dental schools require you to take the Dental Admission Test (DAT). To find essential information about the test, including how to register, visit the DAT website:

<http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp>

### **Timing**

The test is offered year round. You should take the test only when you feel fully prepared. However, it is to your advantage to take the test in the spring or early summer, before you apply. Admissions deans agree that students who take the test early have an advantage over fall test takers because their applications become complete early. It is very unusual for a student who takes a fall test to hear about interviews before the winter break. By this time, many acceptances have already been offered.

### **Preparing for the test**

The DAT is not an aptitude test, but rather a test of your knowledge. It is divided into four sections: Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), Perceptual Ability, Reading Comprehension, and Qualitative Reasoning. Many students take review courses, which are quite costly. Others make use of software or study guides (there are several in the Career Services office) that can prepare you equally well but require you to be disciplined. Whatever route you choose, plan to spend time preparing for the test. If you do not do well, and if you are uncertain about whether or not you should retake the test, speak to your advisor.

### **Tests for joint degree programs**

Those applying to DMD/PhD and some other joint degree programs may need also to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE, like the DAT, is a computer-based test that can only be taken at a Thomson Prometric Testing Center. It is offered frequently throughout the academic year. For information about the GRE, visit [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org).

### **Getting your scores to dental schools**

All U.S. dental schools require an official copy of DAT scores for each applicant. Official DAT scores are **NOT** reported through AADSAS. You can request that an official transcript of your DAT scores be sent to each school that you are interested in through a request on your Dental Admission Test application form.

### **Special accommodations**

If you plan to request any special accommodations, plan well in advance and apply for them early. Instructions for applying are available at the DAT website.

## THE PRIMARY APPLICATION: AADSAS

The central application used by most of the dental schools in the country (51 out of 55 schools) is known as AADSAS (Associated American Dental Schools Application Service). AADSAS asks you to provide demographic information, your academic record, information about your experiences (dental-related activities, activities requiring manual dexterity, research, community service, honors and awards, and so forth).

AADSAS is a web-based application. To activate the application, you will need to register and create a username and password. The earliest you can actually begin filling out the application will likely be in min-May 2009, for admission to dental school in fall 2010. For information about how to register for AADSAS, and an instruction booklet, visit: [www.adea.org/AADSAS/default.htm](http://www.adea.org/AADSAS/default.htm)

Note that, in addition to completing and submitting your AADSAS application, you will need to ask the registrar to forward your transcript(s) to AADSAS; you can do that any time after mid-May.

### Demographic Information and Activities

The first portion of the application, which asks for basic information, is fairly straightforward; answer concisely. The two most commonly asked questions about this page involve state of residency and listing of activities. As a full-time student you are a resident of the state where your parents or guardians reside. Your activities should be listed carefully, including years of involvement and any leadership positions held. If you cannot fit all of your activities in, try to abbreviate where possible, and be sure include the ones you consider most important.

### Academic Record

You must list all your courses according to the standards outlined by AADSAS. You will need a copy of your transcript(s) and this **course unit conversion guide** below:

You must convert the course units on your transcript to credit hours. In general, a one semester course earning one course unit is converted to 3 semester hours. However, science courses which incorporate a lab are converted to 4 semester hours. Listed below are the proper conversions for the pre-health requirements. Follow the general principle outlined above to convert other courses. Remember: the number of times the course meets each week is irrelevant to the conversion.

Chemistry 101 and 102 (1 c.u.) - 3 hours each; Chemistry 53 and 54 (0.5 c.u.) - 1.5 hours each  
Physics 101 and 102 (1.5 c.u.) - 4.5 hours each; Physics 150 and 151 (1.5 c.u.) - 4.5 hours each  
Biology 101 and 102 (1.5 c.u.) - 4.5 hours each  
Chemistry 241 and 242 (lectures) - 3 hours each  
Chemistry 245 (laboratory) - 4 hours  
Independent Study courses – 4 hours

A few more key points about completing the Academic Record section:

- 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 GPA’s for you, based on the information you enter—a BCP (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) GPA, a BCPM (science) GPA (BCP plus math), a non-science GPA, and an overall GPA.

### **Designating Schools**

When you submit your AADSAS application you will indicate the schools to which you wish to apply. You can add schools at a later date using an additional designation form. See “Developing your list of schools” in this manual.

### **Personal Statement**

The personal statement is like a “pre-interview” for dental school—it is your opportunity to present yourself to admissions committees. Although there is no specific question given on the application, you should use the personal statement to point to those things that distinguish you as an applicant.

The personal statement should not be used simply to summarize all of your college experiences. Instead, use the personal statement to discuss in depth one or two first-hand experiences that illustrate some of the qualities you have that make you a strong candidate for dental school. Ideally, the personal statement will both have a unifying theme, and also provide detailed and concrete examples of things you have done. Although you may be tempted to discuss your childhood, it is your experiences and choices as an adult that are relevant to admissions committees.

You are welcome to submit a draft of your personal statement to your pre-dental advisor for review—but no more than twice. It is important to get started on the personal statement during the spring semester, for we will not be able to read any drafts after May 15. After that date, we must turn our attention to writing the HPAB letters, in order to have them all completed on time. To submit your personal statement for review, you can bring it to your Advisor Interview and let us know you want us to review it, or, later, e-mail it to your pre-dental advisor or drop off a hard copy at Career Services.

### **Recommendations**

When you complete your AADSAS, you can indicate that you will be submitting your letters electronically or by regular mail. You can indicate that your letters will be submitted electronically, and list your pre-health advisor as the sender. Indicate that this will be a “committee letter”—for these purposes, the “committee letter” means the whole HPAB packet, including the individual letters you have put on your List of Recommenders Form; so you should not list those recommenders individually. Only list another recommender if you are submitting an additional letter that will not be included in your HPAB packet.

### **Transcripts**

**Please note that Career Services only sends out letters.** You must arrange separately to have the Registrar at Penn, and any other college or university you have attended, send your transcript(s) to AADSAS.

When you request the Registrar to send your transcript to AADSAS, you should give them two forms: the Registrar’s own form, and the AADSAS Official Transcript Matching Form, available on the AADSAS home page. The reason you use that second form is to ensure that AADSAS has no difficulty matching up your transcript with the right application. You should indicate to the

Registrar's office that you would like the AADSAS matching form included with your transcript. To have the form included, you'll have to make the request that your transcript be sent out in person or by mail—online requests would not work for those purposes. For more information on Penn transcript requests, visit: [www.upenn.edu/registrar](http://www.upenn.edu/registrar)

You can have your transcript sent in before you actually submit your AADSAS, provided you have registered and begun filling it out. You should also wait for your spring grades to be submitted (except for study abroad grades). AADSAS will not accept transcripts before May 15. It's a good idea to check over an unofficial transcript before you have it sent in, to make sure there are no errors.

### **Fees**

The charge for the AADSAS service is a base fee and an additional fee per school that you designate. A fee reduction program is available. Realize that you must allow time to collect the appropriate information, submit a fee reduction application, and wait to see if it is approved. The form and instructions are available here: [www.adea.org/AADSAS/default.htm](http://www.adea.org/AADSAS/default.htm)

**Non-AADSAS Schools:** You must write to these four schools (Louisiana State University, Medical College of Georgia, University of Mississippi, and University of Tennessee) directly for their application and catalogue. If you write in late spring, you should receive them in the summer. Most non-AADSAS schools will ask you to mail your recommendation packet when you mail your application. It is then that you submit your mailing request to have your recommendation letters mailed. Keep thorough records of everything that you send out and receive.

## **DEVELOPING YOUR LIST OF SCHOOLS**

You can decide on your final list of schools in June, when you have your spring grades and your DAT scores. Prior to that, you should compile a tentative list, which you can discuss with your Pre-Dental Advisor. While ultimately you will choose the schools to which you will apply, your advisor can offer guidelines and suggestions. The ADEA's *Official Guide to Dental Schools* (available in Career Services) is a valuable resource in choosing your list of schools.

### **Some things to consider:**

- Consider each school's in-state/out-of-state ratios; your state schools usually give you preference. It is in your interest to apply to dental schools in your state.
- Apply to a range of schools; rankings and statistics will give you some indication of how competitive a school is likely to be; your list should include your most likely acceptances as well as your reach schools.
- Apply to multiple schools but don't go overboard. Nationally, students apply to an average of roughly 7 schools. You can apply to more schools, but rarely do you increase your chances of acceptance by applying to more than 15 schools. Realize that it can become very costly to apply to a lot of schools, since each AADSAS school charges a secondary application fee *in addition to* the primary AADSAS fee. If you are having trouble developing a reasonable list, please ask your pre-health advisor for help.

## **SECONDARY/SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATIONS AND SENDING OUT HPAB PACKETS**

Once AADSAS notifies schools that you have applied to them, you will likely start being invited to complete “secondary” or “supplementary” applications (“secondaries”). These applications ask for material that you have not yet provided through AADSAS. Each school is different, but the secondaries often ask you to write additional essays, and to list the courses you have taken that satisfy requirements. You will also be asked to pay another fee, this time directly to the school. At this time, you will often also be requested to have your letters of recommendation submitted—in your case, your HPAB packet.

The time it might take after you submit your AADSAS to receive a request to complete a secondary (assuming the school requires you to complete one) varies from a few days to a few months. You should try to be as diligent and timely as possible in completing and returning secondaries.

### **Requesting your HPAB packet be sent out**

Your HPAB packet consists of the HPAB letter we write, and also the 3-6 individual letters of recommendation that you have listed on your List of Recommenders Form.

To have your packet sent out, you must not only list your advisor on AADSAS as submitting an online “committee letter.” (Again, in your case, this comprises the whole HPAB packet, including the individual letters of recommendation.) You must also complete and sign the Penn Career Services mailing request form—“Credentials Mailing Request Form for Medical, Dental or Veterinary Schools”—found in the lobby of Career Services, or online at the Credentials Service website: [www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/credentials)

You can bring the request and payment to the Career Services front desk, or send your request in by mail, or online requesting may be available at the Credentials web site. If sending in your request by mail, you must enclose a check for \$6 for each recipient (usually just one, AADSAS), made out to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. This administrative fee is the same whether your packet is being sent out by mail or (as is more usual) being uploaded electronically.

In completing the form, simply write “AADSAS” and check the box for “HPAB packet.” Note also that you want the letter sent electronically (assuming that is the case). We will automatically include letters on file you have listed on your List of Recommenders form.

You should request your packet be uploaded to AADSAS only after August 1. That is the first date by which we can have your HPAB letter ready—and we have chosen it because it is nice and early in the season.

You can have letters sent directly to dental schools, if you need to for some reason; you will need to provide a mailing request form, list each school, pay \$6 for each one, and provide mailing labels.

Remember that if you want to amend your original List of Recommenders form, you should submit a new form with your “Mailing Request Form.” Make sure that you draw our attention to the fact that you have submitted a new LOR form (e.g. by making a note on the top of your Request Form), so we do indeed include the correct letters. See also “Letters of Recommendation” on page 6 of this manual.

## INTERVIEWS AND DECISIONS

### The Interview

The interview is an extremely important factor in the dental school application process. The invitation to interview generally means that you are academically qualified to be admitted; however, schools cannot admit all those who are qualified. The school wants to take a closer look at you and determine if you have the personal qualities they consider important. Qualities such as enthusiasm, integrity, leadership ability, decision-making skills, honesty, and concern are important in a health professional.

The interview provides the school with a chance to evaluate you. It also provides you with a chance to learn about the school. Your interview should be a conversation in which you both answer and ask questions, as opposed to a firing line where you wait for the interviewer's next question. Some guidelines to follow:

**Appearance:** Since you are seeking admission to a profession, you should appear comfortable in that role. You should dress and act professionally. For men, that means a suit or sports coat and dress pants; for women, a suit, dress or skirt with blazer. Being clean and well-groomed is of great importance. Remember that body language is a powerful form of non-verbal communication. Gestures and movements can give as much information, if not more, than words. Be conscious of slouching back in a chair (boredom?), playing with a pen or paper clip (nervousness?), and crossing your arms (hostility?). Try to look relaxed and poised.

**Preparation:** You should prepare to discuss yourself, the dental school, and general issues about health care.

1. Think about your goals and your background. What leads you to apply for this program? How have you prepared yourself - academically and in other ways? What strengths do you bring to your application? Reread your application. If you find any inconsistencies or problems, how would you explain them?
2. Read the school web site carefully before your interview so that you are aware of its curriculum, affiliated clinics, etc. Another good source of information is the Official Guide to Dental Schools, which is available at Career Services.
3. Be aware of the major issues facing the health care system. Questions concerning national health insurance, the high cost of health care, health education, are all issues of concern to health professionals. Your stand on a particular issue is not important as long as you can discuss it intelligently and articulately. It's a good idea to start reading the newspaper and/or news-oriented web sites every day.

The key to success in an interview is to relax and be yourself. Try to answer questions honestly—do not try to second-guess the interviewer. Maintain a positive attitude and use the opportunities given to you to point out your accomplishments and strong points. Try to make eye contact with your interviewer and establish rapport. Assume that your interviewer is on your side; there is no need to get defensive at every question that is asked of you.

You may want to contact a Penn alumnus who is currently studying at that school to get additional information or to arrange to meet him/her after your interview. If you have a serious problem at an interview you know to have been unfair (and not just challenging), you should let someone at the school know right away, as the same day would be the easiest time to arrange a re-interview.

**These are some of the questions you may be asked in an interview:**

- Tell me about yourself.
- Where do you see yourself in ten years?
- Why have you chosen dental medicine as a career?
- What field of dentistry most appeals to you?
- Why did you choose to go to Penn?
- What has been the most rewarding (or challenging) experience of your life?
- What have you read recently?
- Why do you want to go to this dental school?
- Why do you think you are a good candidate for dental school?
- What do you consider your greatest weakness?
- What would you do if you did not get into dental school?
- What do you see as the greatest problem facing the health care system today?
- How might the restructuring of the health care system change your dental practice?
- Tell me about your research.
- What was your most enjoyable course in college?
- What extracurricular activity have you found most rewarding?
- Why didn't you take more science courses? Why didn't you take more liberal arts courses?
- Can you explain these terms: DNA, HMO, PPO?
- The interviewer might provide a hypothetical situation in detail and ask you how you would respond if, as a dentist, you were in that situation.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but it may give you some idea of what to expect.

From September through February, most schools interview applicants; acceptances can be offered as early as September or as late as the following August. Each school has its own procedures so there is no standard procedure for the number of weeks it takes them to make a decision, for the date(s) of announcing decisions, or for notifying rejected candidates, etc. You can clarify some of these points at an interview, if it's appropriate.

**Decisions**

The ADEA recommends that dental schools not notify applicants of provisional or final acceptance before December 1 of the academic year prior to the academic year of matriculation. Should you be so fortunate as to have more than one acceptance, try to make your choice as quickly as possible (think of your classmates). If financial aid is an issue, contact the specific financial aid offices to get some sense of what your package might be.

## DEADLINES—AND WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T MEET THEM

### Important Deadlines, 2009

April 30	Deadline to have advisor interview and HPAB interview.
May 15	Target date for submission of letters of recommendation to your Credentials File.
June 1	Final deadline for at least 3 appropriate recommendations to be in your Credentials file.
June 1	Deadline to submit a draft copy of your AADSAS application to Career Services.
June 4	Deadline to submit your List of Recommenders form to Career Services.

If you fulfill all these requirements, we will have your packet ready for you to request on August 1.

If you fail to meet these deadlines, but have everything in by July 1, you will be in the “late batch”—we will have your packet ready for you to request by September 15.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Even after you have submitted your applications, we continue to serve as your pre-dental advisors and are available to answer questions or concerns at any point in the process. Please call 215-898-1789 if you have questions or want to set up an appointment. You can also find our email addresses on the Career Services web site.

**On behalf of the Pre-Health Advising Staff, the Health Professions Advisory Board, and the Career Services office, we wish you success in all of your endeavors. Good luck!**

## APPLICANT CHECKLIST

### Spring 2009:

- ❑ Open a Career Services Credentials File.
- ❑ Attend the Dental School Applicants' Workshop on February 11.
- ❑ Meet with your pre-health advisor. Schedule this within two days of the Applicant Workshop. (Bring to this interview your transcript, expanded résumé, personal statement draft, questionnaire, picture, and BCPM calculation.)
- ❑ Meet with your HPAB interviewer. It is your responsibility to contact him/her.
- ❑ Give letter of recommendation forms to a minimum of 3 potential recommenders. Make sure that they understand that they must return the recommendations by June 1 to the Career Services Credentials Service.
- ❑ Take the test (DAT, possibly the GRE) appropriate to your application.
- ❑ Check Penn-In-Touch to ensure that your grades are accurate.
- ❑ After your spring grades are complete, have the registrar send to AADSAS (and other services or schools where appropriate) transcripts from all your undergraduate schools.
- ❑ Write, call, email or check the web sites of any non-AADSAS schools to get applications.
- ❑ Begin working on the AADSAS application, available at [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org).
- ❑ Check that your minimum of three recommendations reached your Credentials File before the semester ends and faculty leave campus—and at the very latest by June 1.
- ❑ Submit and sign your List of Recommenders form by June 4.
- ❑ Submit a draft of your AADSAS application to your Career Services Credentials File (preferably by hard copy, though you can email it) by June 1.

### Summer 2009:

- ❑ Determine the list of schools to which you will apply (it's a good idea to consult with your pre-health advisor).
- ❑ Complete and submit your AADSAS application, and any other applications.
- ❑ Keep copies of ALL of your application materials.
- ❑ Develop a good record-keeping system. Keep records of when you submitted your application and when you sent in your supporting materials. It is particularly important to record the date that each school's application is complete. Schools differ in their methods of acknowledging receipt of materials. If you do not receive acknowledgment from a school, call the admissions office and ask whether they can confirm whether your file is complete.
- ❑ Submit a Credentials Mailing Request Form once you begin returning your secondaries, though no sooner than August 1. Note that you must submit this form, and payment, before we will send out any letters.
- ❑ **Refer to this manual first for questions about applications.** AADSAS also has a very detailed instruction booklet, which you should download and read.

### Fall 2009:

- ❑ Attend an interview workshop, conducted by the Career Services pre-health Advisors.
- ❑ Call admissions offices only as appropriate. For example, you might need to inquire about the following: (a) to ensure the completeness of your file or (b) to try to arrange an interview in a city you will already be visiting
- ❑ If your applications were complete in the summer and you haven't heard anything by December, talk with your pre-health advisor.

- ❑ You might want to update schools with your fall semester grades. Please respect individual school preferences since some schools prefer that applications send no additional information or recommendations.
- ❑ Search for sources of financial aid. Consult the financial aid information in the *Official Guide to Dental Schools*, available in the Career Services Library, along with other books on the subject.

# SAMPLE EXPANDED RÉSUMÉ

## ***JANE APPLICANT***

E-mail: jane.applicant@seas.upenn.edu

### Campus Address

3600 Locust Walk  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
215-898-0000

### Permanent Address

225 Columbus Avenue  
New York, NY 10023  
212-888-8888

## **EDUCATION**

**University of Pennsylvania**, School of Engineering and Applied Science  
Bachelor of Science of Engineering, May 2008, Cumulative GPA: 3.55  
**Major:** Bioengineering; **Minor:** Chemistry

Philadelphia, PA

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

**Al Giandomenico Award**, Department of Bioengineering, University of Pennsylvania, Spring 2008

I was nominated by faculty and selected among 10 finalists by Committee for this award for distinguished undergraduate research in the field of Bioengineering.

**Dean's List**, Academic Year 2005-2007.

**Professional Citation** in Rex, E., Molitor, S.C., et al. (2006) Tyramine receptor (SER-2) isoforms are involved in the regulation of pharyngeal pumping and foraging behavior in *Caenorhabditis elegans*.  
*Journal of Neurochemistry*. 91: 1104–1115.

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

**Pre-Med Volunteer**, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania  
October 2007-Present (Unpaid, 5-6 hours/week during semesters)

Philadelphia, PA

I am responsible for keeping patients in a comfortable environment and supporting the nursing staff, transporting and discharging patients on a regular basis. I chose the pre-med volunteer program at HUP because it gives students first-hand experience with how a hospital floor functions, as well as providing one-on-one interaction with patients. I worked on a fast-paced recovery floor, the energy of which I enjoyed, but it was the exposure to the inner-workings of a hospital and the basics of patient care that was most exciting.

**Volunteer**, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center  
June-August 2007 (Unpaid, 20 hours/week)

New York, NY

Volunteering at Memorial Sloan Kettering offered a hands-on experience dealing with cancer patients in the thoracic, head and neck, and colon cancer units. I worked closely with the staff and learned about their diseases, treatments and side effects, and the emotional impact upon the patients and their families. As the summer progressed, I became increasingly aware of individual patient's needs, interests, complaints, feelings and fears, which ultimately allowed me to form more personal relationships with them which I believe proved, at times, to be beneficial to their feelings of comfort and well-being.

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Research Assistant** to Kevin Hogarty, MD, Department of Oncology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
May 2006-Present (Paid, 10-15 hours/ week during semesters; 40 hours/week during summers)

I collaborate with an attending physician in an ongoing study of a chemotherapeutic that induces mitochondrial apoptosis via synthetic BH3 domain peptides for neuroblastoma cells lines. I perform cell culture experiments, determining if Bak and Bax genes have anti-apoptotic isoforms in neuroblastoma cell lines. My responsibilities also include assisting in translational research, ranging from therapeutics to the biology of neuroblastoma (PCR, gel electrophoresis, cell culture, DNA/RNA extractions). I have learned a lot about the research process and the dedication it requires to accurately develop effective treatments. More than anything though, this research experience has uncovered a passion for applied research and a great interest in oncology; it even inspired me to audit a Cancer Cell Biology class last semester. I feel particularly gratified that I am helping to develop possible treatments that may one day help sick children.

**Research Assistant** to Scott O'Brien, Department of Bioengineering, University of Connecticut (Storrs Campus)  
May-August 2005 (paid, 40 hours/week)

As part of a comprehensive research study, I identified and recorded the correlation of electrophysiological responses when nematode cells were perfused with a variety of pharmacological agents/solutions. I also gained my first exposure to a bench research setting and assisted in laboratory preparation activities as well.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

**Workshop Leader and Tutor**, University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA  
September 2007-Present (5 hours/week)

I teach a ninety-minute Calculus Workshop, twice a week, to a class of between 10 and 35 students. The Workshop provides students with a brief overview of new information from their most recent class, as well as shortcuts or different approaches to problem-solving. After assigning students approximately fifteen problems, I assist them in tackling the challenging questions by leading a guided discussion towards the correct solution to the problem. This experience has not only strengthened my calculus knowledge base, but it has dramatically improved my communication and presentation skills as well. I suspect that the ability to simplify complex material to a group of students will prove useful in my future, especially as I try to communicate difficult dental information to patients with little to no dental background.

**Member and Tour Guide**, Hexagon Senior Engineering Society Philadelphia, PA  
September 2007-May 2008 (1 hour/week)

My primary responsibility was to lead tours of the School of Engineering and Applied Science to prospective Penn students and their families. It was very rewarding to represent the School and serve as a resource in this capacity, particularly because I have enjoyed my experience as a student here so much.

**Volunteer**, Ronald McDonald House Philadelphia, PA  
January 2007-Present (2 hours/week)

My responsibilities involve playing with the resident children, as well as general maintenance tasks for the House. From Legos and playing "dress-up" to watching videos and talking to the children about what was on their minds, this was always a rewarding activity. Not only could I help take their minds off of their condition for a few hours, but I was also able to give their parents and caregivers a chance to rest and relax.

**Member**, Biodental Engineering Society, University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA  
September 2005-Present (2 hours/month)

I attend biweekly meetings of this student-run, professional development-oriented organization to discuss current events and ideas related to biodental engineering.

## APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your background and to describe your most significant experiences for us. Write a minimum of one paragraph on each question (except perhaps 6 & 7). Print out your answers on a separate sheet.

1. Describe the academic program that you have selected at Penn. What have you gained from your studies?
2. Describe your most valuable intellectual experience and explain why you appreciated it. (This could be a class, a research project, or another significant experience.)
3. Identify your most significant healthcare-related experience. How has this influenced your decision to pursue a dental career?
4. Discuss your most rewarding extra-curricular or community activity not directly related to dentistry.
5. What strengths and characteristics do you believe set you apart as a candidate for dental school?
6. Do your grades and/or DAT scores accurately reflect your preparation for dental school? If not, please explain the circumstances. (You must answer this question if your BCPM GPA falls below 3.2)
7. The following question appears on the AADSAS application:  
"Were you ever the recipient of any action (e.g., dismissal, disqualification, suspension, etc.) by any college or dental school for unacceptable academic performance or conduct violations? If `yes" explain fully in the `Personal Comments' Section (Page 2)."

If you must answer "yes" to this question, please explain the particulars of the situation and discuss the matter fully with your Pre-Dental Advisor.

## HPAB APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES - STUDENT COPY

### Responsibilities for Penn Students and Alumni Requesting HPAB Letter for Fall 2010 Health Professions School Admission:

- 1) Attend the mandatory **HPAB Applicants' Workshop**.
- 2) Meet with your **Career Services Advisor**. (Schedule this appointment immediately after your Applicants' Workshop.) Bring to the appointment:
  - Unofficial transcript (from Penn and other colleges)
  - Expanded Resume
  - Personal Statement draft
  - Applicant Questionnaire
  - Photo
  - Penn BCPM GPA Calculation
- 3) Meet with your **Health Professions Advisory Board interviewer**. (Schedule this appointment after receiving your HPAB assignment by e-mail.)
- 4) Ask for letters of recommendation and make sure that a **minimum** of 3 appropriate recommendations reach your Career Services Credentials File by the **target date of May 15 and no later than June 1**.

It is **your** responsibility to make sure that the recommendations reach your Career Services Credentials File. You should start the process by asking for additional recommendations to ensure that you meet the minimum requirement by June 1. If your file does not contain these recommendations by June 1, the HPAB cannot prepare your HPAB letter.
- 5) Sign the Health Professions Advisory Board Notice and Waiver.
- 6) Submit to your Credentials File a draft copy of your primary application by **June 1**.
- 7) Submit to your Credentials File your **List of Recommenders form** (designate 3-6 letters of recommendation you have on file) by **June 4**.
- 8) Ask the Credentials Service to mail your HPAB packets to the dental schools by completing and submitting the Credentials Mailing Request Form and payment.

I certify that I have read and understand the statement of responsibilities for registrants applying to dental schools. I agree to abide by the policies set forth in this manual and in the Applicants' Workshop and understand and accept my obligations with regard to the dental school application process.

**LIST OF RECOMMENDERS**  
Health Professions Advisory Board

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 digits of SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Program to which you are applying (i.e. MD, MD/PhD, DO, Vet, Dental): \_\_\_\_\_

Please list those recommenders whose letters you would like to have included in your HPAB packet for health professions schools. You must choose a minimum of three letters and may include no more than six. This form must be submitted to the Career Services Office no later than **June 4, 2009**.

Recommender	Relationship to you	Institution/Organization
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

(please print)

I hereby authorize the Health Professions Advisory Board to release letters of recommendation from the individuals listed above to health professions schools.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit this form (hard copy or fax) to:**

Career Services Office (Credentials Service)  
University of Pennsylvania  
Suite 20, McNeil Building, 3718 Locust Walk  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6209  
Fax: 215-898-2687



## HPAB APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES – CAREER SERVICES COPY

### Responsibilities for Penn Students and Alumni Requesting HPAB Letter for Fall 2010 Health Professions School Admission:

- 1) Attend the mandatory **HPAB Applicants' Workshop**.
- 2) Meet with your **Pre-Health Advisor**. (Schedule this appointment immediately after your Applicants' Workshop.)  
Bring to the appointment:
  - Unofficial transcript (from Penn and other colleges)
  - Expanded Resume
  - Personal Statement draft
  - Applicant Questionnaire
  - Photo
  - Penn BCPM GPA Calculation
- 3) Meet with your **Health Professions Advisory Board interviewer**. (Schedule this appointment after receiving contact information for your assigned interviewer by e-mail from Lindsay Mapes.)
- 4) Ask for letters of recommendation and make sure that a **minimum** of 3 appropriate recommendations reach your Career Services Credentials File by the **target date of May 15 and no later than June 1**.  
  
It is **your** responsibility to make sure that the recommendations reach your Career Services Credentials File. You should start the process by asking for additional recommendations to ensure that you meet the minimum requirement by June 1. If your file does not contain these recommendations by June 1, the HPAB cannot prepare your HPAB letter.
- 5) Sign the Health Professions Advisory Board Notice and Waiver.
- 6) Submit a draft copy of your primary application by **June 1**.
- 7) Submit your **List of Recommenders form** (designate 3-6 letters of recommendation you have on file) by **June 4**.
- 8) Ask the Credentials Service to mail your HPAB packets to the medical schools by completing and submitting the Credentials Mailing Request Form and payment.

In signing below, I certify that I have read and understand the statement of responsibilities for registrants applying to medical schools. I agree to abide by the policies set forth in this manual and in the Applicants' Workshop and understand and accept my obligations with regard to the health professions school application process.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISORY BOARD NOTICE AND WAIVER

The Health Professions Advisory Board (the "Board") agrees to release its letter of evaluation only to those schools or scholarship programs designated in writing on the mailing request form. Included with the Board's letter will be all evaluations or recommendations that you have listed and that are part of your file.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, gives you the right to inspect certain records, including letters of recommendation placed in your file after January 1, 1975. However, you may waive this right in writing. Letters of recommendation written in confidence may be given more credence by the recipient. Therefore, although you are not required to do so, we invite you to waive your right to access your Health Professions Advisory Board evaluation. You should be aware that if you have already waived access to a specific letter of recommendation, you will not be able to inspect it by declining to waive access to the Board's letter of evaluation. You must choose one of the options below:

I waive any rights I may have to have access to the Board's letter of evaluation under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

I do not waive the rights to have access to the Board's letter of evaluation under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

By signing below, you are requesting the Board to send a letter of evaluation to the school or scholarship programs designated on your mailing request form. If you request a letter of evaluation, the Board is permitted to review student records relevant for the preparation of its letter of evaluation and is permitted to disclose information from such records to schools or programs which you have designated. After you have requested a letter of evaluation, your written consent is not required for the Board's review of records and disclosure of information. This applies to all of your student records at the University, including but not limited to, any records created prior to your graduation from the University, and all records of the University Student Judicial System and Judicial Inquiry Office.

For further information on the review and disclosure of your records, please consult the University's Policy on the Confidentiality of Student Records; if you have questions, consult a pre-health counselor in the Career Services office.

I have read and understand the above information and hereby request and authorize the Health Professions Advisory Board to send letter of evaluation to the schools or scholarship programs I have designated.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET**  
*PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last 4 digits of SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ Penn ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Intended program:     Medical     Dental     Veterinary

Seeking Admission for Fall 20\_\_\_\_\_

Standardized test date (MCAT, DAT, GRE, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Please list at least three individuals from whom you are considering requesting a letter of recommendation, including their name and relationship to you:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

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**FOR CAREER SERVICES OFFICE USE ONLY**

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Int. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ HPAB interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_