

Committee Letter Request Checklist

- ATTEND INFORMATION SESSION** (this is optional, but highly recommended)
 - January 30th, 2020 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, HSC-North 2940 A&B
 - February 10th, 2020 from 4:30 – 5:30 pm, Mountainlair Rhododendron Room

- CREATE A PROFILE IN PRE-HEALTH COMMITTEE LETTER PORTAL**

- COMPLETE PRE-APPLICATION SELF-ASSESSMENT**
 - Due by 12:00 PM (noon) on February 17th, 2020

- COMPLETE APPLICATION**
 - Priority Deadline is 11:59:59 PM on March 25th, 2020
 - **Absolute** deadline is 11:59:59 PM on April 15th, 2020

- SELECT INDIVIDUALS TO WRITE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

- REQUEST INDIVIDUAL LETTERS OF EVALUATION**

- SCHEDULE INTERVIEW WITH PRE-HEALTH COMMITTEE**

- SUBMIT REQUIRED APPLICATION SERVICE INFORMATION**

- INFORMATION FOR REAPPLICANTS**

Instructions for 2020 WVU Pre-Health Committee Letter Process

The WVU Pre-Health Office and the WVU Pre-Health Committee prepares Committee Letters of Evaluation to assist students who are applying to health professional schools, including medical (allopathic or osteopathic), dental, optometry, podiatry schools, as well as physician assistant, physical therapy, and occupational therapy programs. Most health professional schools prefer to receive committee letters in addition to individual letters, because committee letters offer a substantive evaluation of students in a consistent format. Although most professional health schools do not require a Committee Letter, it is highly recommended. Therefore, obtaining a Committee Letter remains optional for the student. After you submit your application to the Pre-Health Office, the Pre-Health Committee will interview you, provide you with feedback on your interview, and submit the Committee Letter along with individual letters of recommendation in a packet on your behalf.

If you wish to receive a Committee Letter of Evaluation, please do the following:

1. ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION (not required but highly recommended)

- a. Thursday, January 30th, 2020 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, HSC-North 2940 A&B
- b. Monday, February 10th, 2020 from 4:30 – 5:30 pm, Mountainlair Rhododendron Room
- c. Schedule available online at: <https://prehealth.wvu.edu/get-started>

2. CREATE A PROFILE IN PRE-HEALTH COMMITTEE LETTER PORTAL

- a. Visit: <https://wvu.smapply.io/>
 - i. This will take you to the WVU Honors College Survey Monkey Apply homepage.
- b. Select **REGISTER** in the upper right corner of the page.
 - i. This will prompt you to create a Survey Monkey Apply account. You will be able to use this account for any application that uses Survey Monkey Apply platform. Your email does not have to be a mix email account.
- c. Once you have successfully created an account and logged in, Select **View Programs**
- d. The first time you log in, you will be asked to complete an eligibility quiz.
 - i. Leave the PROGRAM ACCESS PASSWORD box blank and click **Save my profile**.
- e. You will now see several programs, select **MORE** under 2020 Pre-Health Committee Letter.
- f. Read the description of the Pre-Health Committee Letter and Select **APPLY**.
- g. You can now begin the Pre-Application tasks.
- h. You can always use the address above to enter the portal or the Pre-Health Committee Letter specific address: https://wvu.smapply.io/prog/2020_pre-health_committee_letter/

3. COMPLETE PRE-APPLICATION SELF-ASSESSMENT – REQUIRED - DUE BY 12:00 PM FEBRUARY 17, 2020

The first step in the committee letter process is to complete a self-assessment of your preparedness to apply to health professional school. The self-assessment has two parts, a GPA calculation and questions about your experiences. These two parts must be submitted through our online portal (link below). The whole process should take no more than an hour and **MUST** be completed by noon on Monday, February 17th, 2020 to receive a committee letter this cycle.

a. GPA calculation

- Download the GPA calculator and follow the instructions.
<https://prehealth.wvu.edu/services/gpa-calculator>
- You will enter your Science (or BCPM) GPA into the online application but you will also have to upload your GPA calculator, so save your work.
- The calculator must include all of your course work (including repeated classes) exactly as it appears on your transcript.

- Use your unofficial transcript in STAR instead of Degree Works. It is important to use STAR because the grades reported through this system are the most accurate and will be what appears on your official transcript.
- Be sure to include any “+” and “-” next to the letter grade if present in the STAR system. These factor into the calculations.

b. Self-Assessment questionnaire

- Download the self-assessment questionnaire
<https://prehealth.wvu.edu/services/committee-letters-instructions>
- Select the responses that best describe your experiences and science (or BCPM) GPA.
- Calculate your score on the questionnaire.
- Determine your readiness to apply this semester.
- You will need to upload this document, so save your work.

c. Online pre-application submission

- Open the online portal: https://wvu.smapply.io/prog/2020_pre-health_committee_letter/
- Enter your identifying information, Science (or BCPM) GPA, and self-assessment score. **Mark as complete.**
- Upload your GPA calculator excel spreadsheet (.xlsx or .xls) and your self-assessment questionnaire. **Mark as complete.**
- Select **Review and Submit**. On the next page, you will see an overview of your application thus far. Scroll to the bottom of the page to confirm that all of the information is correct and you have attached the correct documents. Select **Submit your application**.
 - You will receive an email once we have approved your pre-application. Note, this email may appear in your junk or spam folders.

4. COMPLETE COMMITTEE LETTER APPLICATION – PRIORITY DEADLINE: MARCH 25TH – ABSOLUTE DEADLINE: APRIL 15TH

The Pre-Health Office’s Committee Letter Application is modeled after applications you will complete during your professional school application process. We decided to model our application closely to those that you will complete soon so that you will have an opportunity to gather the required information needed to apply for your professional schools; so that the Pre-Health Office will have the chance to review and offer feedback to improve your application; and so that you will be afforded the chance to brainstorm topics to discuss in your personal statement and interview with health professional schools. Feedback is guaranteed to those who submit their application before 11:59:59 PM on March 25th, 2020. Your submission is final, and feedback is meant to help you refine your application to graduate school, you will not have an opportunity to resubmit to the Pre-Health Office. Those that submit after March 25th are not guaranteed feedback on their application materials. The absolute deadline to submit your application and receive a Committee Letter for this cycle is 11:59:59 PM on April 15th, 2020.

a. Complete the Application Form

- Download the Committee Letter Application.
<https://prehealth.wvu.edu/services/committee-letters-instructions>
- Part 1 of the application is similar to the health professional school application. You should view this as a first draft of that application. We will provide feedback to those who submit before 11:59 PM on March 25th, 2020.
 - Note: Activity descriptions are limited to 700 characters (with spaces). This is the limit for AMCAS and AACOMAS. AADSAS only allows 600 characters.
 - When categorizing your experiences, you may find that some cross categories. For example, “Volunteering at Ruby” could be counted toward Volunteer Experiences, as well as Healthcare Experience. You should include the same experience in multiple places in this application and use the description section to explain why you chose to categories your experience in that way.

- Please include all PLANNED experiences in the committee letter application. You will not be able to talk about experiences in the future in your application to graduate school, but we can talk about it in our letter!
- Part 2 of the application is to help us get to know you better and to help you brainstorm topics for your personal statement and interview. We will not provide feedback on this section.
 - Note: Each response in this section is limited to 1500 characters (with spaces).
- Part 3 is only for individuals who have applied to health professional school in the past, with or without a WVU Pre-Health committee letter. This is where you will add all the improvements since your last application.

Notes about the application:

- **Request of Personal Information**
We request some family background and other information that may seem personal. We do this because health professional schools ask for this information, as well, and admissions committees frequently use it to generate a discussion during interviews. Also, it gives us an idea of who you are as a person. Your responses to these questions are purely voluntary, but please know that our office will treat your personal information with the utmost discretion and sensitivity. No one will see your submission other than those staff and faculty involved in your interview and the composition of your letter.
- **An Excellent Applicant**
Please do not be modest when filling out these forms! Health professional schools are very interested in your leadership, volunteer, research, and service experiences. And so are we! The more we know about your accomplishments, the more effective your letter will be.
- **Personal statement - optional**
If you submit your personal statement with your application by 11:59 PM on March 25th, 2020, we will give you feedback on your personal statement. Your personal statement must be an individualized expression of your experiences. There are many websites that provide advice on how to construct a personal statement for each health profession for which you are applying. We recommend: <https://www.healthcareers.umn.edu/events/online-workshops/personal-statements-health-program>

b. Submit your application online

- Go to the Pre-Health Committee Letter Portal: https://wvu.smapply.io/prog/2020_pre-health_committee_letter/
- You will upload
 - Your application (required). **Mark as complete.**
 - Signed FERPA form (required) – this can be downloaded from the committee letter instructions [website](#). You must physically sign this document. We recommend printing, signing, and taking a picture or scanning the document. We also encourage you to waive your right to view the letter because confidential letters are viewed more favorably. **Mark as complete.**
 - Personal Statement (optional) – we will provide feedback on personal statements to those who submit by (or on) March 25th, 2020. If you upload, **mark as complete.**
 - **Review and Submit.** On the next page, **submit your application.**

5. SELECTING INDIVIDUALS TO WRITE LETTERS OF EVALUATION ON YOUR BEHALF

It is imperative that you select each of your references carefully. Individual letters of recommendation will not be included in the Committee's evaluation of your candidacy. We collect individual letters as a service to

the applicants and to the letter writers. We will attach the individual letters to your committee letter and upload your entire letter packet on your behalf.

Our tips for selecting letter of evaluation writers:

- You are required to receive a minimum of 3 individual letters and a maximum of 7. We recommend 3-4 letters.
- You should request letters of evaluation from individuals who can provide a strong, positive recommendation. Your references should have thorough knowledge of your academic, intellectual, interpersonal, ethical, and/or leadership capabilities.
- We do not recommend you solicit letters from important people who barely know you or from family friends unless they interacted with you in a supervisory capacity.
- Review websites of programs you are applying to for information on the types of letters they prefer (e.g. science professors, character reference, etc.). Make sure to have these types of letters.
- If you are a *science major*, we **recommend** (but do not require) choosing at least two science faculty members and at least one non-science faculty member for your letters of evaluation. One of these letters should be from a professor in your major.
- If you are *non-science major*, we **recommend** (but do not require) choosing at least two faculty members from your major and at least one science faculty member.
- In addition, you may include a letter of evaluation from someone who is not a professor but who is in a position of authority over you, if this person is very familiar with you. Volunteer coordinators, advisors, research faculty, and employers are all good choices. So are healthcare professionals who you have shadowed, **IF** you have worked with them extensively. You could also choose a character reference.

6. REQUEST INDIVIDUAL LETTERS OF EVALUATION THROUGH ONLINE PORTAL

You must contact individuals about writing your letter of recommendation in advance either in person or through some other personal correspondence. If they agree to write a strong, positive letter of recommendation on your behalf, let them know you will submit their name and email through an online portal to upload their letter of recommendation. Ask for which email address they prefer to use for logging in to the portal.

- a. Go to the Pre-Health Committee Letter Portal: https://wvu.smapply.io/prog/2020_pre-health_committee_letter/
- b. Request Letters of Recommendation.
 - i. You will need to enter the letter writer's name and email address.
 - ii. You will also have the opportunity to write a quick note that will be emailed to them.
- c. We recommend following up with an email to this recommender at the email address you provided in the recommendation form. Tell them that you have submitted the request and if they have not received the request email, to check their spam or junk folder. The email's subject line is "Request for recommendation" sent from WVU Honors College <Honors@mail.wvu.edu>.
- d. You can send letter request reminders to letter writers through the portal. To do this, select the ... symbol next to the letter request and select "resend request".
- e. You can also delete requests. To do this, select the ... symbol next to the letter request and select "withdraw request". You must select the ... symbol again and select "delete request".
 - i. If you ever see "reset form" as an option, DO NOT select that option.
- f. You will not be able to submit this task until all letters have been **received**. **DO NOT mark this form as complete until all the letters you wish to have included in your packet are received**. You will not be able to add, edit, or delete letters after you mark as complete.
 - i. It is okay if this stage is not complete at the time of your interview. We cannot submit your letter, however, until you complete this step and the next in the online portal. The next, and last, step in the online portal is to enter your application service information.

- g. Once all of your letters are submitted, **mark as complete**. Then select **Review and Submit** and **Submit your application**.

7. PRE-HEALTH COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

An important aspect of the Committee Letter process is the Pre-Health Committee Interview. Each student will have the benefit of interviewing with two professionals [West Virginia University faculty, Honors College staff, and/or the Pre-Health Office staff]. The Interviewers will select questions specific to the health professional school for which you are applying to simulate the interview as realistically as possible to the actual interview.

a. The Pre-Health Office Will Schedule A 30-minute Interview

A representative from the Pre-Health Professional Development Office will reach out to schedule a 30-minute interview with the Pre-Health Committee beginning mid-April. Interviews will begin in **mid-May** and continue through **mid-July**. Interviews will be scheduled based on the order in which students complete their application, along with consideration of other factors. Please ensure that the contact information [telephone number and email address] you provide is the best way to reach you during the summer.

b. Special Scheduling Accommodations

If you are not in town over the summer, it is likely that you will have to travel to Morgantown. We will attempt to accommodate **special** situations, but the Pre-Health Office cannot guarantee that we can accommodate scheduling requests. Email special scheduling accommodation requests to prehealth@mail.wvu.edu.

8. SUBMIT APPLICATION SERVICE INFORMATION

When you apply to professional school, you will need to complete an application through an application service. Each type of health professional program has a different application service: Allopathic Medical School [AAMC-AMCAS application]; Osteopathic Medical School [AACOMAS]; Dental School [ADEA AADSAS], Podiatry School [AACPMAS]; Optometry School [OptomCAS]; Physician Assistant Programs [CASPA]; Physical Therapy Programs [PTCAS], and Occupational Therapy Programs [OTCAS].

We upload your committee letter packet (which includes the individual letters) through the application service. To accomplish this, we require some information from your application to submit your committee letter.

You will need to start your application through the application service, indicate that you are receiving a committee letter (use application service instructions to determine how to do this), and complete the last step in the Pre-Health Committee Letter portal. Note, that you will not be able to access this last step until all of your letters are received and you submit.

- a. Use the following information to complete your letter request in your **application service**
 - i. Indicate that you are receiving a committee letter
 - ii. **Letter author:** WVU Pre-Health Committee (preferred) or Victoria Sanchez (if necessary)
 - 1. Note that you do not need to list all of the letter writers. We will include the individual letters in our packet.
 - iii. **Contact email:** prehealth@mail.wvu.edu
 - iv. **Contact address:**
 - Pre-Health Professional Development Office
 - West Virginia University
 - 650 Price Street, Arnold Hall
 - PO Box 6702
 - Morgantown, WV 26506

- b. Once you have requested a committee letter through the application service, go to the Pre-Health Committee Letter Portal: https://wvu.smapply.io/prog/2020_pre-health_committee_letter/
- i. Complete the Application Service Information form and **mark as complete**. Select **review and submit** and **submit your application**.
 - ii. You will be able to edit this form after you submit, in case you need to add information for another application service (e.g. you can send us AMCAS information and then AACOMAS information later).
 1. To edit Application Service Information, select the ... symbol and select "edit".
 - a. DO NOT select "reset".
 2. Select **previous**. Edit your responses and select **next**. Edit your responses and select **mark as complete**. You do not need to submit. The Pre-Health Office will be notified automatically that you have made changes.
 3. Once the Pre-Health Office is notified that you have submitted your letter request, we will process your letter. This can take, on average, between 10 and 14 business days (depending on time of submission and demand) to complete.
 - a. Note: We have verified that an outstanding Committee Letter request will not hold back your application from processing or being distributed to your selected schools. We will have your letter finalized and submitted within 14 business days.

9. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

prehealth@mail.wvu.edu

Reapplicant definitions

In the WVU Pre-Health Committee letter process, there are several types of reapplicants.

1. Those who have applied to health professional school in the past with a WVU Pre-Health Committee letter.
2. Those who have applied to health professional school in the past without a WVU Pre-Health Committee letter
3. Those who have not applied to health professional school in the past but completed the committee letter process up through the interview.
4. Those who have not applied to health professional school in the past but started the committee letter process and did not interview with us.

Are you a WVU Pre-Health Committee Letter Reapplicant?

- We require all reapplicants to complete the entire committee letter process. You can download instructions from the WVU Pre-Health website: <https://prehealth.wvu.edu/services/committee-letters-instructions>
- Reapplicants in categories 2, 3, or 4 (above) must follow the standard deadlines and are not eligible to apply using the Reapplicant: 2020 Pre-Health Committee Letter Portal. Please refer back to the [committee letter instructions for on our website](#).
- Reapplicants in category 1 are invited to use our Reapplicant Committee Letter Portal and follow the directions provided in the 2020 Reapplicant Committee Letter instructions document.
 - You **must** ask permission to use the Reapplicant Committee Letter Portal

Benefit of using the Re-applicant Committee Letter Application Portal

- **Extended Deadlines:** We are offering you the option to submit your materials later in our cycle.
 - If you would like feedback:
 - Pre-Application: March 23rd by 12:00 pm (noon)
 - Application: March 25th by 11:59:59 pm (midnight)
 - If you would like to forego feedback:
 - Pre-Application: April 22nd by 12:00 pm (noon)
 - Application: April 29th by 11:59:59 pm (midnight)
- **Earlier meeting with Pre-Health Office:** We will schedule a meeting with you in mid-May to finalize your letter. You do not have to interview with the committee over the summer.
- **You can still practice your interviewing skills:** If you would like interview practice, we can schedule that with you for some time after August 3rd.

How to ask permission to use the Reapplicant WVU Pre-Health Committee Letter Application?

You must email prehealth@mail.wvu.edu to ask permission to access the portal.