

Guidelines for Securing a Pre-Health Professions Advising Committee Letter of Recommendation for Graduates of Messiah College

Thank you very much for contacting the Office of Pre-Health Professions Advising to learn more about securing a PHPA letter of recommendation for your application to medical school or graduate-level allied health program. Whether it has been one year or several years since your graduation from Messiah: Welcome home!

There are three different forms that need to be completed prior to receiving advising services. Available on the PHPA website, they are:

- Personal Information Form (PIF) with attached unofficial transcripts,
- Request for Letter of Recommendation (one should be included with each recommendation letter sent to the PHPA Office), and
- Declaration of Intent to Pursue Application to Medical/Allied Health Program and Waiver of Access for Messiah College Graduates.

While I know that some of this paperwork will be tedious, it is vital that you complete it in a careful and timely manner. Thoughtful answers to the included questions will enable me to write the best possible committee letter on your behalf. It is especially important for you to account for your time since graduating from Messiah. **It comes as a surprise to many post-graduate applicants that having time off between college and medical school is often actually advantageous as long as one accounts for it in a meaningful, reflective way. Medical schools actually prefer students with “life experience” and acceptance rates bare this out.**

Please contact me, Martha Smith, Coordinator of Pre-Health Professions Advising, as soon as you decide to apply to medical school. This will enable me to plan for your committee interview and writing your committee letter. After letting me know of your plans, you will need to complete the following before our committee letter interview.

- Due to the rolling admissions policy of **most** medical schools, it is very important that you submit your AMCAS/AACOMAS application **as early as allowable**, ideally during the first week of May for Osteopathic Medical Schools and the first week of June for Allopathic Medical Schools. If you decide to apply as an early assurance applicant, let me know right away.
- I must have the following materials *in my office* prior to scheduling your committee interview and writing your committee letter of recommendation.
 - A copy of your AMCAS/AACOMAS application;
 - a(n) official MCAT score report(s) – either electronic or a paper copy of your official score report(s);

- at least two recommendation letters with the required Request for Letter of Recommendation form attached to each letter;
 - a copy of your transcript(s) that includes grades from all college and graduate courses taken to date (an unofficial copy is permissible);
 - your completed PIF including an electronic version of your PIF essay; and
 - a completed waiver the form entitled Declaration of Intent to Pursue Application to Medical/Allied Health Program and Waiver of Access for Messiah College Graduates.
 - Make sure that you keep a copy of all of these items for your personal records.
- Contact the PHPA Office to arrange for an interview as soon as you have submitted the previously mentioned paperwork.. Committee letter interviews take about 90 minutes. They are held in my office (Kline 128) and will include the applicant, myself and a faculty member. Schedules being what they are, it is best to set up an interview in May or June, if possible.
- The office of Pre-Health Professions Advising is a busy one, and it may take several weeks from the time you have your committee letter interview until your committee letter is written and finalized by the Pre-Health Professions Advising Committee. It is consequently very important that you begin the process early.
- Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. One good rule to remember when completing the PIF essays, especially, is that the committee is most interested in information that is **not** revealed by your grades or MCAT scores. Your written reflections are your chance to demonstrate to the committee your unique qualifications and experiences that make you a strong candidate for medical school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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