



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Applicant:

Applying to medical (M.D. or D.O.), dental (D.M.D. or D.D.S.), or podiatry (D.P. M.) schools can be a complicated, time-consuming, and costly process. It is essential that you make informed judgments, pay attention to details, and closely follow instructions. You will be required to meet many important due dates/deadlines and to follow specific rules and policies.

These Applicant Instructions were developed to help you successfully navigate through the application process. They will provide information, offer a general timetable, direct you toward the essential elements of your application, and serve as the foundation for a separate “**Letters of Evaluation**” Packet (hereafter referred to as **Letters Packet**) from the Office of Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising (hereafter referred to as PHPL Advising).

As a function of the Letters Packet, PHPL Advising will serve as a central receiving center for your letters of evaluation. In addition, you will be able to submit a 3 ½- page Autobiography to be included in your completed Letters Packet. We will then organize and compile this supporting documentation to supplement the information you provide in your appropriate application service (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, or AACPMAS). The final deadline for Letters Packet submission to PHPL Advising is **August 1st**. Remember, your Letters Packet must be totally complete (i.e., all letters of evaluation and other forms must be received) before it will be submitted to your application service. Completed Letters Packets will be sent as one electronic document to your application service in the chronological order of completion submitted to the PHPL Advising.

To be eligible for the Letters Packet, applicants need a minimum **Overall GPA of 3.0**. Carefully read the Eligibility segment of these instructions for additional requirements.

It is your responsibility to list your schools by the correct institution name. Be sure to use current resources and websites to ensure accuracy. PHPL Advising will electronically submit your completed Letters Packet to your application service, and it will subsequently be sent to all institutions named on your finalized List of Schools form.

As this process evolves over the Spring and Summer terms, it is important that you display appropriate professional courtesy and behavior. Carefully read the Etiquette and Common Courtesies section of these Instructions. You are responsible for your attitude and behavior during this somewhat anxious and uncertain period of your educational career development. Bear in mind, you may be one of more than 250 applicants requesting and receiving this service. In order to provide this support system, we need a significant amount of time. Patience and respect for others are virtues we expect of you.

PLEASE NOTE: For ALL centralized application services (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS and AACPMAS), the applicants may, and are often encouraged to, submit their application **PRIOR** to their letters of evaluation being fully received and submitted to their application service by PHPL Advising.

We look forward to working with you as you enter the competitive arena of admission to a health professional school. Carefully reading all PHPL Advising resource materials and these Applicant Instructions should leave you very well informed. However, if you have further questions or concerns that need discussion, please visit or call the office at (407) 823-3033.

Sincerely,

The Staff in the
Office of Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising (PHPL Advising)
College of Undergraduate Studies
University of Central Florida



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APPLICATION GUIDELINES

APPLICATION TIMETABLE

Fall 2016 (August – December)

1. National Admission Test: Review and begin preparing for your national admission test. The new MCAT will now be offered 23 times between March 2017 and September 2017.
2. SLS 2311C: Register for SLS 2311C, Overview of Select Medical Careers, for Spring 2017 if not completed earlier in your career (recommended course, not required).



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Spring 2017 (January – May)

3. PHPL Advising: Make an advising appointment with a PHPL Advisor to review your competitiveness for admission to health professional schools this application cycle.
4. Fee Assistance Programs/Waivers: Research and submit any applications for fee assistance programs to application services and/or national admission tests (if needed).
5. National Admission Test: Pay attention to registration schedules for upcoming national admission tests, particularly the MCAT (MCAT dates from July-September usually open for registration in mid-February).
6. National Admission Test: Register for and prepare for your national admission test. Try to take an early offering of your specific national admission test near the end of the Spring semester, but only if you are maximally prepared; ALL SCORES COUNT.
7. PHPL Advising's Letters Packet & Autobiography: Review the Applicant Instructions for the Letters Packet on the PHPL Advising website. Begin completing the Letters Packet Application Forms and begin composing your Autobiography (optional).
8. Letters of Evaluation: Identify those individuals you wish to ask to write a letter of evaluation on your behalf. Make sure they know you well before requesting a letter of evaluation from them. Provide them with a 1-2 page resume (and possibly a photograph for a faculty member) to increase your chances for having them write you a high quality letter of evaluation. For information on how to ask for an LOE in a professional manner, please visit <http://www.studentdoctor.net/2014/04/letters-of-recommendation-for-medical-school/>
9. Personal Statement: Begin to compose a draft of the 1-1.5 page Personal Statement you will submit to the application service for your specific health profession. (Be aware of character limits for intended application.) For editing assistance, contact PHPL Advising at (407) 823-3033.
10. Transcripts: Review how to request transcripts from all institutions where you have received college credits. You will need to submit official transcripts from all institutions you have attended to your application service.
11. List of Schools: Study the admission requirements handbook (i.e., MSAR for M.D. schools, College Information Book for D.O. schools, ADEA Official Guide for dental schools), websites, and other resources for your chosen health profession and begin to formulate a tentative list of schools to which you plan to apply.
12. PHPL Advising's Letters Packet: Carefully complete the Letters of Evaluation Request Form and optional Autobiography components of PHPL Advising's Letters Packet.
13. PHPL Advising's Letters Packet: Submit all components of the Letters Packet to PHPL Advising **as soon as possible**, but **no later than** the deadline of **August 1st, 2017**.

Summer 2017 (June – August)

14. Application Service: Complete and submit your primary application service materials.
15. National Admission Test: Take any offerings of the test if not taken already.
16. PHPL Advising: Keep PHPL Advising updated on any e-mail/phone number changes.
17. Mock Interview: As soon as you receive an interview offer from a school, contact PHPL Advising to schedule a mock interview to help prepare yourself for your actual interview.

WHEN TO APPLY

In general, it is prudent and practically necessary to wait to apply until you have maximized your academic preparation (high GPA and broad base of coursework), thoroughly prepared for your national admission test, and gained some clinical awareness/exposure/experience in your chosen field of interest. Additionally, you need to think about how well your selected references know you and how much exposure they have had to you in order for them to write you a meaningful, supportive, and comprehensive letter of evaluation.



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Students hoping to begin health professional school directly after graduation should normally begin the application process in the latter part of their junior year. The preparation and compilation of supportive documentation (e.g., letters of evaluation, personal statement, transcripts, etc.) requires several months. Furthermore, the actual application completion typically requires several weeks, and even after submission, it often takes several weeks for your application service to process your application; therefore, it will take ample time for the health professional school admissions offices to receive your application.

From the thousands of primary applications submitted to the application services, most applicants are asked to complete secondary applications for individual schools asking for further detailed information. Review of the PHPL Advising Letters Packet enters the process at this point. Admissions committee meetings tend to be on-going for months (July thru May). Acceptances typically begin to be offered in November/December and the bulk of the entering class positions are awarded by late March to early April. The national “surrender” date of multiple acceptances by applicants is usually April 30th for allopathic medical schools.

For health professional schools, the application opening dates, deadlines, and admissions processes vary widely. You must be aware of the specific application information for the health career you have chosen. Additionally, most institutions have a **rolling admissions** process whereby it is beneficial to **APPLY EARLY** and students are accepted throughout the application cycle.

While most UCF students are competitive-to-highly-competitive applicants, we recommend that students whose academic performance record (e.g., GPA) and overall credentials (e.g., credit hours per term, science background, experiences such as shadowing, volunteerism, leadership, research, etc.) are not competitive wait until their senior year or later to apply. An outstanding senior year can dramatically alter an overall academic profile and significantly improve chances for admission. Some students take the position that they have nothing to lose by applying. That is a wrong assumption! Students who apply prematurely (i.e., before their credentials are competitive) stand the risk of having less than optimal endorsements follow them in future applications.

Finally, you must apply only when you are prepared to be competitive. The “traditional time to apply” or “when all your peers are applying” may have little to do with the quality of your application. You will be better served by delaying your application by a year or more if it means the difference between a fragmented file and a solid, competitive file. On a lighter note, you might treat this process in the same vein as parachuting...you need to get it right the first time!

WHERE TO APPLY

In general, your best chance for acceptance to health professional schools will be in your STATE OF RESIDENCE.

In the state of FLORIDA, medical, dental, and podiatry schools are located as follows:

Dentistry (D.M.D. or D.D.S.) Lake Erie COM (LECOM)-Bradenton
Nova Southeastern University
University of Florida

Medicine
Allopathic (M.D.) Florida Atlantic University
Florida International University
Florida State University
University of Central Florida
University of Florida
University of Miami
University of South Florida



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Osteopathic (D.O.) Lake Erie COM (LECOM)-Bradenton
Nova Southeastern University

Podiatry (D.P.M.) Barry University

In addition to in-state schools, your next best chances of acceptance will likely be either REGIONAL (Southeastern) PUBLIC schools receptive to out-of-state, but nearby, applicants, or PRIVATE schools who accept applicants from all states.

If you have highly competitive credentials (GPA, national admission test scores, etc.), or if they are above the national averages, you should apply to reputable institutions NATIONWIDE.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen though, you will not be eligible for admission or financial aid at most public health professional schools. Therefore, international students should target PRIVATE SCHOOLS. For international students, many of these private institutions will require validation/proof of your ability to pay the four-year tuition and fees up front. This could include off-shore (Caribbean) and other international medical schools as well. If you are an international student, considerable thought should be given to your selected list of schools.

Schools' websites, admission requirements books (e.g., MSAR), and entrance statistics on national association websites (e.g., www.aamc.org) are valuable resources for formulating your primary list of schools. Whatever reasons you have for selecting your designated schools, they need to be finalized in a timely manner. This includes any foreign medical schools, off-shore medical schools, a mix of allopathic schools with osteopathic schools, etc. Most institutions have a **rolling admissions** process whereby it is beneficial to APPLY EARLY and students are accepted throughout the application cycle. In other words, the earlier in the application cycle you apply, the better.

Some General Guidelines:

- Be aware of the in-state/out-of-state acceptance ratios at various schools; the public, state schools will automatically give you preference in admission as a state resident.
- Apply to a range of schools. Admission statistics will give you some indication of how competitive a school is likely to be. Your list should include schools where you will be competitive as well as one or two "long shots."
- Apply to multiple schools but don't go overboard. Nationally, applicants apply to an average of fifteen schools (for allopathic medicine). You can apply to more, but remember, it gets expensive. "Shotgunning" the nation is seldom successful.
- Check the specific admission requirements of the schools to which you are applying. A few schools require courses beyond the "traditional" prerequisite courses. Plan your senior year schedule accordingly in order to complete these additional course demands.
- When applying to out-of-state institutions, you need to know your status regarding tuition and fees. For example: Is out-of-state tuition for all four years? Is it only for the first year until you can establish residency? Is it a modest fee or does it seem exorbitant by comparison to tuition at other schools?
- Most schools have a general budget/financial outline for four years. You should study such estimates and carefully compare total cost/indebtedness.
- Financial aid, grants, and scholarships vary tremendously from one institution to the next. Explore all options to determine your eligibility for institutional financial assistance.



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EARLY DECISION PROGRAMS

Many allopathic and osteopathic medical schools participate in the Early Decision Program (EDP). With EDP, students file an application to only one school between June and August 1st. Admission decisions are rendered as early as possible and never later than October 1st. When applying for early decision, students may not apply to any other medical school prior to being informed of the EDP school's decision. If offered admission to the EDP school, the applicant must accept the offer. EDP applicants who violate these terms are considered to have committed an irregularity and the other schools to which they apply to are then informed. The EDP option is very beneficial to well-qualified applicants who are very sure of their choice of school. The application service will ask if you are applying to an Early Decision Program. Most early decision programs require very high MCAT scores and an overall GPA of at least 3.70. This will require that you select an MCAT administration date that will ensure availability of the scores for the Early Decision school before August 1st.

If rejected, you are free to enter the normal applicant pool (including the school to which you applied for Early Decision). There is no compromise for applying Early Decision. It simply forces you to single out the one school you would most like to attend and are prepared to contractually matriculate to without further application initiatives. However, you should formulate a complete list of schools in the event you are not accepted Early Decision. The drawback with the EDP is that if rejection comes late (near October), you have very little time to meet the application deadlines for non-EDP applicants, and are applying to other schools very late in the cycle.

APPLICATION SERVICES

Application services are centralized, non-profit organizations for processing the mass of applications generated each year for the multiple health professional schools. The student applicant submits just one set of application materials and official transcripts to the application service for their health profession. All applicant-inputted information is standardized and validated by the application service before being forwarded to each of the institutions to which you choose to apply.

The primary goal of these application services is to provide the participating health professional schools with uniform, readable information on their applicants. The major sections include: a) general biographic information, b) academic record, c) extracurricular experiences and activities, d) letters of evaluation, e) personal statement, and f) standardized test scores.

The following represent the centralized application services for each profession:

Health Profession	Application Service
Allopathic Medicine (M.D.)	AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service)
Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)	AACOMAS (American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service)
Dentistry (D.M.D. or D.D.S.)	AADSAS (Associated American Dental Schools Application Service)
Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.)	AACPMAS (American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service)

All application service activity is between you (the applicant) and the health professional schools to which you are applying. This process is totally separate from and unrelated to the supportive documentation provided by PHPL Advising to supplement your application.



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NATIONAL ADMISSION TESTS

General Information

From March to September 2017, the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) will be offered 23 times. Clearly, early dates (March to June) will be preferable for “Early Decision” applicants. The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is administered year round. Applicants should plan to be maximally prepared for the test, regardless of when you take it. Taking the test at the optimal time for the admissions process makes little sense if you have not completed the appropriate coursework and/or review necessary to perform at your best. Therefore, make sure that your academic plan assures completion of the coursework needed for the test and leaves you sufficient time to adequately prepare for the MCAT or DAT, earlier rather than later, as many schools utilize a “rolling admissions” (i.e., review applications as they are received) policy. Thus, it is to your advantage to take the test early, and therefore have a score that will be evaluated early in the cycle as well.

Registration

MCAT Administration Dates:

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-sciNhool/taking-mcat-exam/register-mcat-exam/>

DAT Registration Policies:

After your application to take the DAT has been processed, you will be eligible to take the test for a six (6) month period. Applicants are required to submit a new application and fee for each retest. Applicants must wait at least 90 days from their last attempt before retaking the DAT.

Preparation

The foundation for any national admission test and the professional school curriculum to follow is sound knowledge of and performance in coursework at your undergraduate institution. However, since that usually limits your exposure to the faculty of only one institution, their choice of texts, course content emphasis, laboratory exercises/experiments, examination styles, etc., it would be prudent to seek additional supplemental exposure to the known content areas of standardized admission tests.

There are a variety of review/preparation programs available to prepare you for the national admission tests. They range from self-study resources to professional test preparation companies such as Kaplan, Princeton Review, Dr. Putzer’s Review, Examcrackers, etc. Regardless of your chosen test preparation routes, consistent factors in test preparation include: MONTHS OF PREP TIME, SOLID TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS, SELF-DISCIPLINE, and ABILITY TO SELF-STUDY.

You are advised to maximize your exposure and preparation before you take any national admission test. It is better to have a strong score late in the application cycle than a poor score early in the application cycle, though a strong score early in the application cycle is ideal.

Strategies

Depending upon your personal history or performance record on standardized tests, you will ultimately decide on the preparation strategy that best fits your needs.

If you traditionally perform well on standardized tests (e.g., your SAT or ACT scores were in the high percentile ranges) and your academic performance record (Overall and Science GPAs) is superior (3.7+) while carrying full (15+) credit-hour loads over a sustained period of time, you are poised to do well with a thorough review of your applicable course notes and serious test preparation.



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By contrast, if you traditionally do not perform well on standardized tests (i.e., your SAT or ACT scores were moderate to low) and your academic performance record (Overall and Science GPAs) is not strong or you have not taken full-time credit-hour loads over a sustained period of time, you need to consider exhausting every review/preparation program you can prior to taking the national admission test of your selected health profession. If Kaplan, Princeton Review, Dr. Putzer's Review, or Examcrackers are cost prohibitive for you, explore test prep course scholarships, discounts, and partial fee-waiver offerings by these companies. You might also consider sharing the cost and materials of some resources with one or more fellow applicants. Lastly, both MCAT and DAT test prep books are available for review, as well as check-out, in PHPL Advising, and online Practice Tests (for students who meet eligibility criteria) are available to be taken in the PHPL Advising office (Ferrell Commons, Room 203).

ETHICAL CONDUCT

The Office of Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising is committed to assisting UCF applicants present themselves, and their credentials, in the best possible light. This presentation needs to be made with honesty and integrity in keeping with the ethical standards set forth in the University publication, the *UCF Golden Rule*. According to the *UCF Golden Rule*, we are obligated to report all cases of deliberate falsification, disruptive behavior, unethical conduct, false representation, etc.

ETIQUETTE AND COMMON COURTESIES

Being aware of and exercising appropriate etiquette and common courtesies during the application process are important. Your behavior not only involves your personal style and reputation, but also, the image and reputation of the University of Central Florida, the chances for admission of other UCF applicants, and UCF's future relationships with the various health professional schools. Your attitude, mannerisms, etiquette, and consideration of others will impact significantly on the early impressions you elicit. The following represent a few categories you may wish to focus on:

Preparation of Your Letters Packet

With the continuing increase in the number of students applying each year to the various health professional schools, the work load, logistics, and time demand necessary to maintain the thoroughness and quality control of the PHPL Advising support services continues to increase proportionately.

During this rather anxious period, you need to remember that you and all other UCF applicants are the benefactors of this process. It is to your benefit to exercise patience and respect for others as your Letters Packet is being developed. You can be assured that your materials will be finalized as soon as possible and in the order in which your completed Letters Packet Application Forms were received. You need to pay attention to details and be extremely thorough.

Having 250+ applicants stopping by PHPL Advising every few days asking, "When do you think my Letters Packet will be submitted to my application service?" simply results in unnecessary interruptions. This only slows the compilation process. You would be well-advised to avoid this compulsive tendency.

You may check on the progress of your reference letters **once per week** either by phone, e-mail (Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu), or in-person. We have also developed a webcourse for this entering 2018 application cycle by which you will be able to check the status of your evaluations online. Either method of obtaining updates regarding your letters of evaluation is appropriate and encouraged. You need to focus on getting YOUR Letters Packet Application Forms completed and turned in at the earliest possible time to try to avoid any delays.



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How to Request Letters of Evaluation

When possible, request approval in-person from those you intend to list as letter of evaluation writers. If it has been a while since you had contact with the individual (frequently the case for non-science faculty), offer to make an appointment to serve as a refresher. It would be considerate to provide them with a 1-2 page personal resume highlighting your academic and extracurricular experiences including volunteerism, community service, shadowing, leadership, and research, to name a few. Additionally, some applicants will also provide their letter writers with their comprehensive course history and grades to highlight their overall academic strength. Be sure to include your full name, e-mail address, and phone number on any documents so your letter writers can follow-up with you if they have questions. For faculty members in particular, a photo of you is helpful and can be included as well. For information on how to ask for an LOE in a professional manner, please visit <http://www.studentdoctor.net/2014/04/letters-of-recommendation-for-medical-school/>

When letters from letter writers are slow to arrive in PHPL Advising, use diplomacy in follow-ups with the letter writers' assistants or with the individuals directly. A polite reminder note may be less likely to be overlooked than a phone call. Finally, a note of thanks is always appreciated by those who give of their time to assist you (and frequently many other applicants). Some applicants combine this thank-you note with a final action report (where interviewed, rejected, alternate list, accepted, and final choice of matriculation) for their letter writers. This can be quite late in the process, but should not be overlooked.

Choosing Your List of Schools

You need to give careful consideration to your list of schools. Before settling on your final selections, you should conduct a thorough investigation of potential schools you feel would make the "right fit" for you, your credentials, and your budget. As a general guideline, you should not apply to a school you would not be willing to either 1) complete a secondary application for, 2) visit for an interview, or 3) would not be willing to attend if it was the only school to accept you.

In your pre-planning, you also need to give serious thought to the limits of your travel budget. For each school you choose, calculate the estimated cost to get there for an interview. For each interview trip you may need a rental car, cab, lodging, meals, flight, etc.

When Appropriate to Request an Interview

In general, it is inappropriate to request an interview (discouraged by most health professional schools). However, if your travel plans make it possible to be in a particular location at a certain time (i.e., one interview in close proximity to one or more other schools you have applied to, winter break holiday travel, a family wedding or reunion, a professional seminar/conference, etc.), it is within proper protocol to inform the schools you have applied to that you are in the area and to inquire of the possibility of scheduling an interview at that time if they are planning to interview you.

Email and Phone Inquiries Concerning Admissions Status/Decisions

If you have reason to suspect any serious problems relative to your application, one precautionary phone call or email to the admissions office would be reasonable.

Making repeated phone calls or emails because the uncertainty/unknown is getting to you (perpetuated by fellow applicants receiving decisions!) is not likely to help your cause. Excessive contact with an admissions office can prove to be detrimental to your ultimate goal of acceptance.



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Do your best to remain calm, cool, and collected. Said bluntly, avoid becoming annoying to hard-working, overwhelmed admissions personnel.

Electronic/Email Updates to Application after Submission

Often, applicants will continue (and are encouraged!) to add extracurricular and/or curricular experiences in the year after their application, but before gaining acceptance. If you have not received notification from a school regarding your admissions status and have added some *significant* experiences that are not in your primary or secondary applications, you are safe to update the school either via email or through their electronic portal (if they have this type of portal). Again, electronic/email updates should be reserved for significant experiences only.

Handling Multiple Acceptances

Highly qualified applicants will frequently receive multiple acceptances. For allopathic medical schools, you are officially permitted to accept several offers until approximately April 30th, although we strongly encourage you to hold only two acceptances at any one time. The only sound reason to hold multiple offers of admission is to evaluate/compare financial aid opportunities at various schools.

Prioritizing your list of schools will help you make sound decisions and conduct yourself in a professional manner. Should you then receive an offer of admission, but you are holding an acceptance from a school you are sure you prefer, withdraw (in writing) immediately. This helps make the entire process run smoother. It helps the admission committees, and it helps all applicants yet to be accepted.

Concerns about Cost/Financial Aid

If finances will play a significant role in determining your choice of schools, it is in your best interest to complete and submit all applications as early as possible. Each health professional school usually has its own specific guidelines regarding disbursement of institutional financial aid. Most health professional schools will provide you a financial aid overview or information during their interview day. The most accurate source of information about your future educational debt obligation will be the principal financial aid officer at the school where you have been admitted. For an overview of financial aid for medical school, go to the AAMC's FIRST (Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools) website at <https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/>.

Adding Your Name and School to Our "Acceptances List"

Professional etiquette would suggest that in return for the Letters Packet support system provided to you cost-free by PHPL Advising, it is reasonable to ask that you provide accurate summary data regarding the schools you were accepted to and where you ultimately plan to attend. As an incentive to providing this helpful information, we will place your name (with your permission) and the school you plan to attend on the "Acceptances List" housed in the PHPL Advising waiting room for you, your peers, and fellow UCF students to view.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How high do my GPA and test scores have to be for me to be competitive for admission to health professional schools?

Your GPA must be high – **approximately 3.5 or higher** – to be competitive for admission to most health professional schools. Test scores vary, but are typically also high (see chart below).

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National matriculant averages are:

Health Professions	Overall GPA Averages (Matriculants)	Test Score Averages (Matriculants)
Allopathic Medicine (M.D.)	3.70 (2016)	31.4 (MCAT, 2016)
Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)	3.55 (2015)	27.3 (MCAT, 2015)
Dentistry (D.M.D. or D.D.S.)	3.54 (2015)	20.2 (DAT, 2015)
Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.)	3.30 (2014)	21.4 (MCAT, 2014)

2. When should I apply to health professional schools?

Typically, students will apply to health professional schools during the Summer before their Senior, or final, year. Most health professional schools will recommend students **apply as early as possible during the application cycle**. Therefore, if the application service opens for submission in June, students should try their best to apply in June or as early as possible thereafter.

3. When should I take the national admission test for my chosen health profession?

Generally, students apply to health professional schools during the Summer before their senior year (or just over a year before they plan to enter health professional school), so they should plan to take their national admission test during the Spring of or the Summer after their Junior Year. These national admission tests often require months of preparation. PHPL Advising encourages applicants to be as prepared as possible for their test the FIRST time they take it.

4. What schools should I apply to?

Start with applying to the schools in your state of residence. Read information on school websites, admissions resources (e.g., MSAR), national association websites (e.g., www.aamc.org), and multiple other resources to help determine which schools you can be most competitive at and are a “good fit” for you. Your academic performance record, national admission test scores, and overall credentials will influence where you should apply. Also, re-read the “Where to Apply” section of these Applicant Instructions for additional assistance. Wherever you ultimately decide to apply, you must do your investigative analysis and homework on the schools early on in the process.

5. Can you offer some direction on the types of individuals I should request letters of evaluation from?

First, consider those who have had significant exposure to you and know you well; you need to select those who are willing to write on your behalf. It helps to have a variety of individuals (e.g., science faculty, non-science faculty, other/character) describe both your professional and personal qualities. Other/character references can most importantly be from, for example, employers, research supervisors, and practicing health care professionals, in addition to volunteer supervisors, sorority/fraternity officials, athletic coaches, club sponsors, clergy, role models, etc. See also the Letters of Evaluation section of these Applicant Instructions for further guidance.

6. Is it okay to take a national admission test “just to see what it’s like?”

Short answer: No. Although you can take the test more than once, each set of scores remains a part of your permanent record. While some schools may average all scores, others will honor your best set of scores. Most schools are suspect of those who have to take tests two and three times in order to obtain an acceptable score, and therefore, multiple testing attempts do not instill confidence in your abilities.



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We advise you to 1) take multiple practice tests prior to taking the “real” test, and 2) never take any national admission test until you are prepared to deliver your very best performance your first time. Prepare for this national admission test more than you have prepared for any previous test in your life! Your admission status may depend on it.

7. How do admissions committees use the essay/narrative section (Personal Statement) of applications, and what are they looking for?

The Personal Statement section of an application should not be underestimated and can be used for a variety of assessments about you and your motivation for this career. A writing prompt is given (except in AACOMAS), and your Personal Statement often affords you the opportunity to express unique aspects of your background and/or motivation for a career in health care that may not surface anywhere else in your application. Additionally, most admissions committees like to see your use of the language to express your thoughts and to see how well you communicate in written form, including your attention to detail for spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors. The content of these entries can frequently trigger questions to be asked in your interviews.

8. How important is clinical experience/exposure in my health care field of interest?

Short answer: extremely important. Employment, volunteer experiences, research experiences, shadowing health care professionals, and extensive conversations with practicing professionals can provide insights into the realities of the training and practice years. The value of gaining clinical experience/exposure is not to learn techniques or medically-related facts. Instead, the real value is to learn the pros and cons of the profession and to be sure you really want to pursue this career. When it is time for interviews, it is imperative to showcase your knowledge of the profession. Awareness and reality of the profession will certainly help convince others that you have a fair idea of the field you plan to enter. Currently, allopathic medical schools are placing increasing importance on research exposure as evidence of having the fundamental knowledge needed for effective health care, as well as in developing valuable analytical thinking and problem-solving skills.

9. If I have to settle on a second-choice school, can I transfer after my first year if I have good grades?

The rule of thumb on transferring is the approval of the deans of both schools and a student in good standing. Schools are not obligated to accommodate your wishes and most frown on the practice. The exceptions tend to be related to marriage and family illness/dependency cases. In any case, transfers after the first years are extremely rare, whereas those during the clinical years (third and fourth years) may be more common, but still very rare.

LETTERS PACKET PREPARATION

PREPARATION OF THE LETTERS PACKET

Following the receipt of 1) all completed components contained in the Letters Packet Application Forms (i.e., Confidential Background Form, Letters of Evaluation Request Form, and List of Schools), 2) Autobiography (optional), 3) Waiver/Non-Waiver Form, 4) Photograph, and 5) all of your individual letters of evaluation, the resulting completed Letters Packet will be electronically submitted as one pdf document to your application service.



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

An Overall GPA of 3.0 or better is needed to qualify for the Letters Packet service.

One additional important eligibility requirement for the Letters Packet is that an applicant must have completed or will complete at least 30 credit hours of academic credit at UCF by Spring 2017.

DUE DATES

Your goal is to submit your Letters Packet Application Forms to PHPL Advising **ASAP**. Again this year, we staggered the due dates in an effort to help you aim for an early submission date. The **Gold Zone** submission deadline is **May 15th**, the **Silver Zone** submission deadline is **June 15th**, and the final **Bronze Zone** submission deadline is **August 1st**. Any applicant unable to complete the Letters Packet Application Forms by **August 1st** must apply independently. Your actual letters of evaluation from your letter writers do not need to be received by August 1st, but you should encourage your letters writers to submit their letter as early as they can. **Remember, your Letters Packet will not be uploaded to your application service until ALL of your letters are received in PHPL Advising.**

RE-APPLICANTS

If you have previously submitted a Letters Packet to PHPL Advising, and therefore have existing letters of evaluation on file with us that you may wish to reuse, it is still required that you complete a new set of Letters Packet Application Forms for the current application cycle. The final deadline of August 1st for the Letters Packet Application Forms applies to all re-applicants, as well.

To submit a Letters Packet as a reapplicant, go to PHPL Advising's website (phpladvising.ucf.edu) and download a current set of forms. We can use your headshot from a previous application cycle, but we will need you to submit a current and signed Waiver/Non-Waiver form. If you choose to include the optional Autobiography, please submit a new document, even though you may not have made changes from a previous cycle's Autobiography.

It is your choice whether to reuse or replace any or all of your letters, but keep in mind the maximum number that PHPL Advising is able to upload on your behalf is five (5). Some reapplicants choose to replace a letter writer depending on additional coursework they've taken over the past year. IF this is not the case for you, and you choose to use the same letters from a previous cycle, simply type the evaluator's name on our Letters of Evaluation (LOE) Request Form and indicate that you will be "USING LETTER ON FILE." All other information needs to be updated, i.e. your list of schools and confidential background info.

If you have questions about this, contact Susie at (407) 823-3033 or Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

FERPA provides you with an interesting choice/tradeoff decision regarding your letters of evaluation in your Letters Packet. First, it provides you with the **right of access** to your evaluation letters and complete applicant file (housed in PHPL Advising, in this case). On the surface, **RETAINING** your right to view your letters might seem appealing because it would eliminate any suspense or uncertainty of what your letter writers wrote about you. However, you need to realize that your choice (which must be indicated to all parties contributing letters to your Letters Packet) may invite an abbreviated or shallower letter by your letter writer in order to avoid any possible conflict, emotional confrontation, blame, or accusations should you be rejected.



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

On the other hand, by **WAIVING** your right, you surrender your access and will not be permitted to examine the content of your Letters Packet. You now must live with the uncertainty, curiosity, etc. All authors of letters of evaluation forwarded for your file are free to express their feelings about your strengths and weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, mannerisms, personality traits, work ethic, maturity, integrity, emotional stability, etc., without the threat of possible challenge to their observations and opinions. You should, therefore, know your evaluators well, and vice versa, before asking for their letters of support.

In general, 99% of the content of letters is benign-to-positive. It is seldom that damaging information is recorded in this manner. Occasionally, a letter of evaluation writer will write a less than supportive letter. In the final analysis, the choice is yours! However, when you make the choice, you must be consistent. You can expect to see forms addressing this issue in all of your application materials. While rare, some institutions will not offer you a choice.

One final note...admissions committees have rights, also. Some may choose not to deal with letters and inputs that are not confidential.

LETTERS OF EVALUATION WRITERS

We suggest that you solicit letters from three (3) populations for five (5) total letters to be used in PHPL Advising's Letters Packet:

2 Science Faculty Members (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics)

1 Non-Science Faculty Member (All Other Disciplines Not Listed Above)

2 Character/Other References (Non-Academic)

The three (3) faculty (2 Science, 1 Non-Science) letters of evaluation must be completed in a letter format written on institutional letterhead, signed, and mailed/mailed/delivered to PHPL Advising when completed. The two (2) other/character letters of evaluation may be obtained from a broad variety of sources (e.g., employers, research supervisors, health professionals, etc.) and are to be completed on their letterhead, signed, and mailed/mailed/delivered to PHPL Advising as well. In order for the letters to avoid contact with you, the applicant, all letters of evaluation will be officially requested from the letter writers by PHPL Advising and submitted directly from the letter writers to PHPL Advising.

As the applicant, you identify your letter writers on the Letters of Evaluation Request Form (after you have discussed with them and they have agreed to write you a letter), and we will send them a standardized cover letter either via email (or regular mail, if needed) to solicit their letter of evaluation for you. In this cover letter, we will address some of the qualities we would like them to comment on, and with an open invitation, to describe you as they see fit. The received letters of evaluation will be scanned and will become a part of the Letters Packet sent to your designated list of schools.

Remember, it is your responsibility to follow-up on your letters of evaluation and to ensure your Letters Packet is completed in a timely fashion. Checking on the return of completed letters of evaluation (preferably by e-mail to Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu) in PHPL Advising should not exceed once per week. Inquiries by phone or in-person are also acceptable. Additionally, PHPL Advising has developed a webcourse so that you may check the status/progress of your evaluations online.

The individuals who will be writing letters on your behalf will be made aware of your choice about whether to **waive** or **retain** your right of access (regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]) in our cover letter to them, so they will be aware of your choice before submitting their letter to us.

APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

FINAL LIST OF SCHOOLS

Of all the steps involved in the application/admissions process, selecting your final list of schools will be one of the most important decisions you will make. It is imperative that you exhaust all consultations, publications, websites, and personal inputs EARLY in the process. You will need to finalize your list of schools, to the best of your ability, prior to returning the Letters Packet Application Forms to PHPL Advising.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY (OPTIONAL)

PHPL Advising suggests that the Autobiography section of the Letters Packet should be used to describe yourself in a “uniquely you” style. Please remember that the Autobiography is limited to three and one half (3 ½) pages in **font size 12**. You must be concise, yet accurate and sufficiently detailed.

- Don't forget to enter your full name at the top of the Autobiography page (in the shaded box).
- Your Autobiography may be single or double-spaced (your preference).
- E-mail your completed Autobiography to Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu **at the same time as your Letters Packet Application Forms** rather than after the fact.

If you have any questions about the preparation of your Autobiography, please contact PHPL Advising at (407) 823-3033 or phpladvising@ucf.edu for editing assistance.

We would like to share a quote from a recently-accepted applicant to medical school. She used PHPL Advising's Letters Packet and chose to write the optional Autobiography.

“I think doing the autobiography on my Letters Packet was an excellent decision and highly recommend other students to do it even though it is more work. Two out of three of my interviews asked me about things I mentioned in my autobiography and it helped them get to know me better.” -Jitzely Rodriguez, 2017 Applicant

Differences: Autobiography vs. Personal Statement

It is imperative to note that the autobiography is NOT an expansion of your personal statement. Therefore, you should avoid overlapping information in the personal statement and autobiography; you want two, separate, individual works. In general, the following guidelines will help to differentiate the purpose of the two and will give a basic idea of what to include (you are not restricted to the information and topics):

Autobiography:

- What to consider:
 - Create a timeline. (What stands out to you during each of these time periods?)
 - When/where were you born? And to whom?
 - Early childhood events
 - Middle childhood
 - College years
- Your life story: hobbies, childhood, school, influences/inspirations.
- Demonstrate, with events, the person you have become.
- Focus on experiences up until entering college, though you can include some college experiences as well.
 - Make sure information is different from what is included in the personal statement.



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

Personal Statement (General):

- What events will demonstrate that you are well prepared for this next chapter?
- Choose you 2-3 most significant reasons/experiences
- Characteristics that will highlight you are a good candidate.
- Make the reader feel your passion:
 - Through your characteristics, qualities, and your drive for continuous learning
- Do **NOT**:
 - Simply list your experiences as you would on a resume
 - Try to include everything you have done
 - Lecture the readers

PHOTOGRAPH

To help us put your name with your face, you are asked to email a photograph of yourself along with your Letters Packet Application Forms. This photograph will not be forwarded to any schools, but is simply for our use in recalling your identity. The photo should be mainly of your head and face and your appearance should be professional. Appropriate “selfies” are acceptable because it is just for our use. E-mail your photo to Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu **at the same time as your Letters Packet Application Forms** rather than after the fact.

AMCAS APPLICANTS: LOE INSTRUCTIONS

(Disregard if NOT applying via AMCAS to M.D. programs)

In the AMCAS Letters of Evaluation section:

STEP 1: Choose “**Letter Packet**” as the type of letter being forwarded to AMCAS. Select “Continue.”

STEP 2: Choose UCF as the school providing the letter. Select “Continue.”

STEP 3:

- a) Enter Letter Title. The Letter Title is designed so that you can easily identify the letter of evaluation if you come back to the section later (i.e., UCF PHPL Advising Letters Packet).
- b) Enter Dr. Erin Myszkowski’s information as the primary contact/author information:
 - Primary Contact’s Name: Dr. Erin Myszkowski
 - Primary Contact’s Title: Director, Pre-Health & Pre-Law Advising
 - Primary Contact’s Email: ErinM@ucf.edu
 - Primary Contact’s Phone: (407) 823-3033
 - Organization Name: University of Central Florida
 - Address: Office of Pre-Health & Pre-Law Advising
 - Address 2: Ferrell Commons, Room 203
 - City, State, Zip: Orlando, FL 32816-0166
- c) Leave the additional authors section blank. Select “Continue.”

STEP 4: Either 1) Print the **Letter Request Form** and turn it in to PHPL Advising or 2) Save and E-mail it to Susan.Yantz@ucf.edu. **NOTE:** This step is **ESSENTIAL** in order for the letters we send to be matched properly to your AMCAS application.

STEP 5: Assign letters of evaluation to medical schools. Before you can designate letters to be



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

received by medical schools, you must first add the medical schools (under Section 6 in the AMCAS Instruction Manual) to your AMCAS Application and verify that they participate in the AMCAS letter program by looking for the LOE Icon. If a school is not participating, PHPL Advising can send letters to the schools directly via VirtualEvals or postal mail.

AACOMAS APPLICANTS: LOE INSTRUCTIONS

(Disregard if NOT applying via AACOMAS to osteopathic medical schools)

In the AACOMAS “Evaluations” section:

STEP 1: Click on “Create Evaluation Request”

STEP 2: Fill in Evaluator’s Information as follows:

First Name: Erin

Last Name: Myszkowski

Email Address: ErinM@ucf.edu

Due Date: Enter an arbitrary date 4-8 weeks in the future, but know that this date is not a firm deadline for letter submission. Because you are using the UCF Letters Packet, Susie will upload your letters to AACOMAS after all of your letters are received in PHPL Advising.

Personal Message/Notes: Type in “Letters Packet Request”

Waiver of Evaluation: Click the appropriate box. (99.9% of you will select “Yes”.) This choice must match your selection on the Waiver/Non-Waiver form that you submitted to PHPL Advising as part of your Letters Packet forms.

Permission to Contact Reference: Click on the box to allow

Permission for Schools to Contact Reference: Click on the box to allow

AADSAS APPLICANTS: LOE INSTRUCTIONS

(Disregard if NOT applying via AADSAS to dental programs)

In the AADSAS Letters of Evaluation section:

STEP 1: Under the Letters of Evaluation section of the AADSAS application you will select “add a new entry.”

STEP 2: Select Waiver Choice. This must be consistent with your choice on the Waiver/Non-Waiver Form which you submitted to PHPL Advising.

STEP 3: Enter Evaluator’s Information:

Reference’s Title & Name: Dr. Erin Myszkowski

STEP 4: Select YES for “Is this a Committee Letter.”

STEP 5: Enter Evaluator’s Address:

School: University of Central Florida



APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

Email: ErinM@ucf.edu
Address: 4145 Pyxis Lane
Ferrell Commons 203
Orlando, FL 32816-0166

Once you have entered and submitted Dr. Myszkowski's name and email address, an e-mail request will be sent to the AADSAS Evaluator's Portal, which will allow for the submission of your Letters Packet when completed.

PLEASE NOTE: For ALL centralized application services (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS and AACPMAS), the applicant may, and are often encouraged to, submit their application **PRIOR** to their letters of evaluation being fully received and submitted to your application service by PHPL Advising.