HPAC Group Orientation
Spring 2020

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Director | Pre-Health Advising Center
About the Pre-Health Advising Center

- **Mission:** To assist UH students interested in healthcare careers.
  - This includes medicine, dentistry, optometry, nursing, or allied-health.

- We offer guidance on:
  - Various healthcare career paths
  - Admission requirements
  - Application process and timelines, including HPAC process

- Website is under construction—email questions to prehealth@uh.edu!
About the Pre-Health Advising Center

- We are located in 215 CBB (across from Writing Center)
  - **Email:** prehealth@uh.edu
  - **Phone:** 713-743-2681

- We hope to hire **additional advisors** very soon!
  - Additional appointments in Navigate will open once advisors are hired.

- Please sign up for our **Pre-Health Student Listserv:**
  
  https://listserv.uh.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=UHPREHEALTH&A=1
Health Professions Fair 2020

HAVE A HAND IN YOUR FUTURE

HEALTH PROFESSIONS FAIR
FEBRUARY 24, 2020
10AM – 2PM
Houston Room • Student Center South
Free Admission • Open to all students

Meet with recruiters from over 60 programs across the nation, representing medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, physician assistants and allied-health.

For more information:
Pre-Health Advising Center at CBB 215
713-743-2681 • prehealth@uh.edu
uh.edu/ussc/pre-health-advising

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
Personal Statement Workshops

Presentations:
Discuss important characteristics of successful personal statements and successfully identifying the best content to include.

Upcoming Presentations:
• Monday, February 10th, 3:30-5:00
• Tuesday, February 11th, 3:30-5:00
• Thursday, February 13th, 1:00-2:15
• Monday, February 17th, 3:30-5:00
• Thursday, February 20th, 6:00-7:30

Workshops (must attend Presentation first):
Bring a rough draft of their personal statement that is substantial enough to receive feedback (1/2-page, single-spaced minimum).

Upcoming Workshops:
• Tuesday, February 25th, 4:00-5:00
• Wednesday, February 26th, 4:00-5:00
• Thursday, February 27th, 6:00-7:00
• Monday, March 2nd, 4:00-5:00
• Tuesday, March 3rd, 4:00-5:00
• Thursday, March 5th, 1:00-2:00
Orientation Outline

- Part 1: HPAC Overview
  - HPAC Application and Review Process
  - Components of HPAC Application

- Part 2: Application Overview
  - Application Timelines
  - Academics for Medical & Dental School
  - Where should I apply?
  - MCAT & DAT
  - CASPer
  - Should I take a Gap-Year?
  - What if I am not Competitive?
Part I

HPAC
Overview
What is HPAC?

- Health Professions Advisory Committee
  - 15-18 UH faculty from various colleges across campus
  - Meet to review and discuss applicants to Medical and Dental School
  - Provides committee recommendation letter to accompany application

- Am I required to complete an HPAC review?
  - Only if you are applying to medical and dental school from UH

- When do I begin the HPAC application?
  - During the Fall semester before you plan to apply to medical/dental school
Why do the HPAC Review?

- TMDSAS participating schools prefer HPAC Letter Packet
  - Currently, most Texas Medical and Dental schools prefer a committee letter if your university offers a committee.

- Helps you begin organizing application materials earlier
  - Applications open in May, but important to begin organizing materials earlier!

- Provides feedback on your application
  - HPAC committee will provide notes on your resume and personal statement.
Am I eligible for an HPAC Review?

- Must have completed required coursework:
  - Completion of freshman year science-major biology, chemistry and physics
  - Completion of Organic Chemistry I and at least current enrollment in Organic Chemistry II
  - Completion of at least 3 hours of biology coursework above the freshman level

- Must have a minimum overall and BCPM GPA of 3.0.
  - Students below this GPA threshold will not be reviewed by the committee.

- Must submit all required HPAC documents before March 16th deadline.
  - This means HPAC application, personal statement, resume, and 3 letters of evaluation.
How do I open my HPAC file?

- **Step 1:**
  - Meet with Pre-Health Advisor, or
  - Attend group HPAC Orientation Session.

- **Step 2:**
  - Complete HPAC Open File Request Form, and
  - Submit to prehealth@uh.edu ASAP

- **Step 3:**
  - Begin working on HPAC Application and associated materials
  - Submit to prehealth@uh.edu by March 16th
What are the components to my HPAC file?

1. HPAC Application
2. Personal statement \(\text{Submitted by you!}\)
3. Resume
4. Letters of Evaluation \(\text{Submitted by your Letter Writers!}\)

- All three documents must be submitted to prehealth@uh.edu at the same time.
- Letters should be submitted to prehealth@uh.edu with LOR Evaluation Form.
HPAC Application

- Includes:
  - Biographical Information
  - Coursework (be sure all transfer credit has been submitted to UH)
  - GPA (Overall and BCPM)
  - MCAT or DATs (if you have them—otherwise scheduled test date)

- Read instructions carefully!

- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu by March 16th.
Personal Statement

- Your personal statement should respond to the following prompt:
  - Explain your motivation to seek a career in medicine/dentistry.
  - Be sure to include the value of your experiences that prepare you to be a physician/dentist.

- Your personal statement is limited to 5000 characters, including spaces.

- Participate in Writing Center Personal Statement Workshops.

- Submit to prehealth@uh.edu with HPAC application and resume by March 16th!
Your resume highlights:
- Educational Achievements
- Employment History
- Volunteer and research experiences
- Additional extracurricular experiences

A resume will **not** be loaded into TMDSAS.

Use the template included in HPAC application.
- No need to include sections if they do not apply to you.

Submit to [prehealth@uh.edu](mailto:prehealth@uh.edu) with HPAC application and personal statement by March 16th!
Letters of Evaluation

- 3 letters required for HPAC (5 maximum allowed)
- 2 Science Faculty (BCPM)
- 1 non-science Faculty or 1 physician (MD or DO)
- Additional letter from someone who knows you well enough to speak positively on the your behalf.

- Letter writers must email prehealth@uh.edu with:
  - Copy of Letter of Evaluation
  - Letter of Evaluation Guidelines Form

- At least 3 letters should be received by March 16th
I have finished the HPAC Application, what do I do now?

- Email prehealth@uh.edu with the following documents by March 16\textsuperscript{th}:
  - HPAC Application
  - Resume
  - Personal Statement

- Have Letter Writers submit their letters to prehealth@uh.edu by March 16\textsuperscript{th}.

- Be patient!
  - The HPAC committee meets every Friday to discuss applications
  - Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis—first come, first serve.
  - You will be contacted once your recommendation has been provided.

- Research list of schools you wish to apply to using the MSAR or ADEA Guide.
What is the overall HPAC Recommendation Breakdown?

- **Highest recommendation:** ~5% of students
  - 3.9 GPA+, strong coursework, substantial amount of extracurricular activity

- **High recommendation:** ~20% of students
  - 3.7 GPA+, strong coursework, decent to substantial amount of extracurricular activity

- **Recommendation:** ~60% of students
  - 3.4 GPA+, good - strong coursework, decent amount of extracurricular activity

- **Recommendation with Reservation:** ~10% of students
  - Undergraduate Example: high GPA/weak test or vice versa, strong coursework but up and down performance, little extracurricular activity, generally a weaker candidate
  - Post-bacc Example: Low undergrad GPA (sub-2.5) but strong PB GPA (3.5+), strong coursework, lots of extracurricular activity, usually a weaker candidate that needs a second look (an upgrade from a 1)

- **Do not Recommend:** ~5% of students
  - Poor GPA/coursework, incomplete coursework. Generally, should not apply because applicant lacks competitiveness
Major HPAC Takeaways!

- Your HPAC Application, Resume, and Personal Statement are due by March 16th
  - All three documents should be emailed at the same time to prehealth@uh.edu.

- You should begin asking for Letters of Evaluation now—3 are due March 16th
  - At least 3 are required to be received for HPAC review.
  - Letters should be emailed to prehealth@uh.edu and include the LOR Evaluation Form.

- You do not have to include your HPAC Recommendation or Committee Letter.
  - But, please notify me before submitting your medical/dental school application.
Thank you!

Questions?

Pre-Health Advising Center
Location: 215 CBB
Email: prehealth@uh.edu
Phone: 713-743-2681
Part 2

Application Overview
Medical & Dental Schools in Texas

Allopathic Medical Schools:
- 10 use TMDSAS
- 2 use AMCAS
  - Baylor College of Medicine
  - TCU and UNTHSC - School of Medicine

Osteopathic Medical Schools:
- 2 use TMDSAS
  - UNT - Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
  - Sam Houston State University - College of Osteopathic Medicine
- 1 uses AACOMAS
  - University of the Incarnate Word - School of Osteopathic Medicine

Dental Schools:
- All 3 use TMDSAS
Primary Applications

• Centralized Application Services
  • TMDSAS (for Texas medical and dental schools)
  • AMCAS (for allopathic medical school)
  • AACOMAS (for osteopathic medical school)
  • AADSAS (for dental school)

• Each application has an instruction manual—download it now!

• Submit your primary application early as possible—but double-check for errors.
  • You may submit without MCAT/DAT score, transcripts, or letters—they can be added later

• Takes approximately 4-6 weeks to be verified (peaks in July/August)
Important Application Dates & Deadlines

- **TMDSAS** (Texas Medical and Dental Schools only)
  - May 1: Application opens, and submissions begin
    (no need to submit right away—I recommend early June)

- **AMCAS** (Allopathic Medical Schools)
  - May 2: Application opens
  - June 1: Submission begins
  - June 30: Schools begin receiving verified applications

- **AACOMAS** (Osteopathic Medical Schools)
  - May 4: Application opens, and submissions begin
  - June 15: Schools begin receiving applications

- **AADSAS** (Dental Schools)
  - June 1: Application Opens
Key Points:

- Have your application completed and submitted by mid-June (earlier is ok, but don’t rush!)
- Do not plan to leave the country or expect flexibility with dates
Secondary Applications

• Each school you apply to will send you a secondary application.
  • Additional essays and questions specific to that school.
  • Some schools screen applicants first (minimum GPA/MCAT/DAT)

• Google secondary prompts from previous year and work on those while your primary application is being verified.

• Submit secondary applications within 2 weeks of receipt!

• Avoid repeating content from primary application essay in your secondary essays.
  • Focus on mission of each medical/dental school—how would you contribute?
ACADEMICS

- Submit transcripts from every institution that you have attended
  - Include all dual-enrollment, summer courses, study-abroad, etc.
  - Military transcripts added as “Military Service”—but not used in GPA calculation
  - International coursework and transcripts are required—but not used in GPA calculation.

- Pay attention to academic trends
  - Did you challenge yourself?
  - Did you improve over time?
  - Did you take your science courses at UH?
  - Do you have only 1-2 withdrawals?

- AP/IB credit is not always accepted—especially for pre-requisites
ACADEMICS

• TMDSAS GPA is calculated in 8 ways:
  • Overall (Undergraduate + Graduate, BCPM)
  • Undergraduate (overall, BCPM, non-BCPM)
  • Graduate (overall, BCPM, non-BCPM)

• Science GPA = BCPM
  • Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Math

• “Other science” coursework is excluded
  • Some non-BCPM can still count, if they include >50% Biology content (e.g., some Engineering, Kinesiology, Psychology, Pharmacy, etc.)
  • If you received an A and are unsure, include it as BCPM.

TMDSAS
Science GPA:
• Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math
• TMDSAS does not use +/-
• 2019 Median GPA: ~3.8

AMCAS
Science GPA:
• Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math
• AMCAS does use +/-
• 2019 Median GPA: ~3.7

AADSAS
Science GPA:
• Biology, Chemistry, Physics
• AADSAS does use +/-
• 2019 Median GPA: ~3.5
Activities & Experiences (for TMDSAS)

• TMDSAS allows you to create a personal Chronology of Activities
  • Must account for all time between high school graduation and August of application year
  • 300-character limit for each activity description

• Place activities into 9 specific categories:
  • Academic Recognition, Non-Academic Recognition, Leadership, Employment, Research Activities, Healthcare Activities, Community Service, Extracurricular and Leisure Activities, and Planned Activities
  • You may place an activity in only one category—so choose wisely!
  • No changes are allowed after you submit the application

• You can mark up to three activities as the “Most Meaningful”
  • You are granted 500 characters to describe these experiences—focus on transformative nature of experiences

• Anything you on your application is fair game for an interview!
  • Include activities in which you were actively engaged
  • Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.)
  • Try to avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).
Activities & Experiences (for AMCAS)

• AMCAS allows you to include up to 15 “Work & Activities”
  • You do not have to list 15 total, but ideally you should have at least 10
  • You will only have 700 characters to describe the activity
  • Do not fill this area with fluff
  • Can include hobbies (but try to stick to only 1 or 2 that you’re very passionate about)

• You can mark up to three experiences as the “Most Meaningful”
  • You are granted an additional 1325 characters to describe these experiences
  • You should focus on the transformative nature of these experience

• Anything you on your application is fair game for an interview!
  • Include activities in which you were actively engaged
  • Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.)
  • Avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).
Activities & Experiences (for AADSAS)

• Applicants use the Experiences section to provide detailed information about:
  • **Academic Enrichment**: Programs sponsored by colleges, universities or other not-for-profit organizations
  • **Dental Shadowing**: Time spent officially observing a health care professional at work, preferably a dentist.
  • **Employment**: Paid work done outside of the health care field (e.g., a retail or restaurant job)
  • **Extracurricular Activities**: Any sports teams and other activities through a college or university.
  • **Research**: Research projects; research should NOT appear as credit on a school transcript.
  • **Volunteer**: Volunteer work done outside of the health care field (e.g. tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser or blood drive, etc.)

• You can mark up to six experiences as the “Most Meaningful.”
  • You can list as many experiences as you would like, but ideally you should have at least 10.
  • You will only have 600 characters to describe the activity.
  • Do not fill this area with fluff.

• Anything you add is fair game for an interview!
  • Include activities in which you were actively engaged.
  • Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.).
  • Try to avoid including things in which you are a passive participant (e.g., simply attended meetings).
Take the MCAT no later than Spring/early Summer of the year you plan to apply
  • Offered in January and March-September each year.
  • Registration opens in October for Jan-June dates and in February for July-September dates.

Courses you need before the exam:
  • Biology I and II
  • General Chemistry I and II
  • Organic Chemistry I
  • Biochemistry
  • Physics I and II
  • Recommended: Statistics, Psychology, Genetics, Organic Chemistry II, Physiology, and Cell Biology

MCAT scores range 472-528
  • Try to score at least 510 (85th percentile)

You can study for the MCAT on your own or take a MCAT prep-course
  • Key is to make a study plan and take at least 5-6 full-length practice tests!
• Take the DAT no later than early Summer of the year you plan to apply.
  • Offered nearly year-round.
  • Must wait 90 days before you can retake.

• Courses you need before exam:
  • Biology I and II
  • General Chemistry I and II
  • Organic Chemistry I and II
  • Recommended: Biochemistry, Genetics, Physiology, Anatomy, Art/Design courses, and English

• DAT scores range 1-30.
  • You’ll receive two scores, one for the first 3 sections (Academic Average) and one for Perceptual Ability.
  • Texas competitive applicants score around: AA - 21 / PA - 20

• You can study for the DAT on your own or take a DAT prep-course
  • Key is to make a study plan and take at least 5-6 full-length practice tests!
**CASPer Test**

- CASPer is an online test which assesses for non-cognitive skills and interpersonal characteristics.

- CASPer is currently required for:
  - Texas A&M University College of Medicine
  - Texas Tech University HSC School of Medicine
  - Texas Tech University HSC, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine
  - The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
  - Long School of Medicine, UT Health San Antonio

- The CASPer test is comprised of 12 sections of video and written scenarios.

- CASPer test results are valid for one admissions cycle.
  - Re-Applicants who have previously taken the test will be expected to re-take it.
Where should I apply to Medical School?

- Recommend applying to 15-20 schools.
  - Admissions committees can be fickle. Many variables affect likelihood of interview.
  - There are no true “back-up” medical schools
  - Always consider osteopathic schools as well

- Apply to every school in Texas

- Apply to private out-of-state schools
  - State institutions are very particular about residency, private schools are not.

- Use the Medical School Admissions Requirement (MSAR) handbook
  - Overview and admissions data
Where should I apply to Dental School?

• Recommend applying to ~10 schools.
  • Admissions are very fickle—many variables affect likelihood of interview.

• Apply to all programs in Texas

• Be careful applying to public, state institutions—consider private.
  • State institutions are very particular about residency, private schools are not.

• Use the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools
  • Overview and admissions data for every accredited dental school in US
  • Digital and paper versions
Gap Year

• Why take a Gap Year?
  • I didn’t get in.
  • I am not ready to apply.
  • I need a break from school.

• Work on weak spots in your application.
  • Complete post-bac or Master’s program
  • Retake MCAT or DAT
  • Increase clinical involvement and experience

• Key to Gap Year is planning.
  • Try to stay busy and do things that allow you to grow and cultivate new skills
What if I am not that competitive?

- It’s *okay* not to get in the first time! Plenty of people have to reapply.

- Take a Gap Year to work on becoming more competitive.
  - Take additional courses or complete a graduate degree
  - Re-take the MCAT or DAT
  - Seek out more volunteering and shadowing opportunities

- Apply to Osteopathic School (DO)
  - Very similar to MD program, but apply through AACOMAS
  - Three DO programs in TX

- Consider another career in healthcare:
  - Nursing, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapist, Genetic Counseling, etc.
Major Takeaways!

• Plan out each step in advance!

• Submit your application as early as you can (but don’t rush it)!

• Be positive about your chances of acceptance but have a plan for reapplying!
  • Make sure you have a gap year plan.
  • Make sure you keep up with your academic and extracurricular responsibilities after you hit submit.

• Utilize the Pre-Health Advising Office!
  • Join the Pre-Health listserv
  • Meet with Pre-Health Advisor
  • Review our website
Thank you!

Questions?

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