2015-2016
APPLICANT WORKSHOP FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

For students planning to apply to health professions programs with a centralized application service in the next cycle (spring/summer 2016) or future cycles.
WHAT PROFESSIONS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Primarily:
Pharmacy
Physical Therapy
Physician Assistant
Veterinary

Optometry – if you are applying to SUNY Optometry, see a Pre-Health Advisor as this program requires a committee letter. Other optometry programs do not.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO COVER?

Determining the best year in which to apply; is it this year?
Application Timeline
Standardized Tests
Recommendation Letters
Pre-Health Latte Page
DEADLINES
AM I READY TO APPLY???

This is the question that you need to be asking yourself as you go through this process.
ACADEMICS:

Are you academically prepared to apply to health professions programs? Please review the academic portion of your handout for questions to ask yourself.

To be a competitive Physician Assistant applicant, we recommend a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.

To be a competitive Veterinary or Physical Therapy applicant, we recommend a cumulative GPA of about a 3.4 or higher.

For Pharmacy and Optometry, we recommend a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher.

A 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA is strongly recommended for all Health Professions Programs overall.
ACTIVITIES:
GENERAL HEALTH RELATED

You need to show that you have some exposure to the health care field of your choice.

In general you should have 100 hours of patient care experience before applying.

- This can be volunteer or paid work experience.
- Does NOT need to specific to your field of interest.

Have you sought out opportunities to explore the Health Professions? Please review the activities portion of your handout for question to ask yourself.
### ACTIVITIES: SPECIFIC TO YOUR FIELD OF INTEREST

These fields expect you to have experience in their areas:
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Veterinary
- Optometry

#### Physical Therapy
- Almost all PT programs require PT Observation Hours. Check the programs you are interested in applying to for specifics
- Some will want you to shadow two different types of PT's.

#### Veterinary
- Typically Vet programs do not require a set # of hours. However…
- You should plan to have at least two different types of animal experiences (large and small animal, for example) prior to applying.

#### Pharmacy
- Not required, but strongly encouraged

#### Optometry
- Not required, but strongly encouraged
ACTIVITIES: SPECIFIC TO YOUR FIELD OF INTEREST

Physician Assistant applicants are held to a **higher standard of hours and requirements** because of the compressed nature of the program.

- **Physician Assistant Programs**
  - 500 hours of clinical/direct patient care experience is the **MINIMUM**.
  - 1000 hours of clinical/direct patient care experience is the norm.
  - Some require as many as 2000 hours or more.

- **Many PA applicants work in the field for a year or more before applying.**
  - We highly recommend thinking about this as you will learn professional and personal skills during this time.
  - You want to make sure that whatever work you do it involves direct patient contact.
  - Make an appointment with a Pre-Health Advisor if you have concerns about what this might entail or want to talk over options you are considering.
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Have you gotten to know faculty or professionals in your field of interest? Please review the letters of recommendation portion of your handout for question to ask yourself.

Are there at least three individuals that you would feel comfortable asking for letters of recommendation RIGHT NOW?

Can you think of two individuals who have taught you in a science course that you would feel comfortable asking for letters of recommendation RIGHT NOW? What about a person in your field of interest?
OTHER FACTORS

Are you 100% motivated to spend the next 10 months preparing to apply and the next 6-12 months after that going through the application and interview process?

Are you prepared to spend time preparing for standardized tests and money to apply to programs? Not to mention getting to interviews? Note: it is not cheap.

Are you applying because you don’t know what else to do after graduation?

Do you have a Plan B in case you are not accepted?

Consider your own development, strengths and weaknesses. Are your weaknesses areas that can be improved prior to your application?
GLIDE YEAR(S)

The average age of matriculants (people entering a program) tends to be about 24-25 for veterinary, optometry, and physical therapy.

The average age of matriculants to physician assistant programs tends to hover around 26.

Glide Years are NORMAL and expected.

Glide Years provide you with the opportunity to strengthen areas of weakness, to mature and grow, to explore new areas of interest, to take a break from school, to earn money and/or pay down student loans from undergrad.

Pre-Health Advising continues to work with you as an alum, typically up to 5 to 7 years post-graduation.
WHEN DO APPLICATIONS OPEN?

Many Health Professions Programs (but not all) have centralized application services where you submit your application, transcripts, and test scores for verification. Your application is then sent to the programs you choose to apply to.
WHEN CAN I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

While every health professions program is different, you are strongly encouraged to submit your application early as most programs review and admit applicants on a rolling basis.

We would recommend applying by August and no later than September 1st for best consideration in the application process. Just because a program has a later deadline does not mean that you should aim to meet that deadline. BE EARLY. Applying just before the deadline can still be “late” in the process.
STANDARDIZED TESTS

What about...
 WHICH TESTS FOR WHICH PROGRAMS?

**DAT**: Dental School

**GRE**: Veterinary School, Physician Assistant Programs, Physical Therapy, Speech Pathology, etc.

**MCAT**: Medical School, Podiatric Medical School

**OAT**: Optometry School

**PCAT**: Pharmacy School
WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE [TEST] FOR THE FIRST TIME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>We recommend prior to your application but no later than August or September of the year you plan to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE</td>
<td>For PA Programs no later than April; For other programs we recommend no later than August or September of the year you plan to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAT</td>
<td>We recommend prior to your application but no later than August or September of the year you plan to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCAT</td>
<td>We recommend prior to your application but no later than August or September of the year you plan to apply.</td>
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LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

What about…
You need at least three letters of recommendation for all of these health professions programs.

LOR = Letter of Recommendation

- Two LORs should be “science” letters.
  - Both LORs needs to be from a science faculty who taught you.
    - Graduate student TA’s are acceptable; preferably the letter will be co-signed by the faculty member leading the course.
    - At least one LOR should ideally be from a biology or chemistry faculty member.

- If you have a non-science major or minor, you may want to consider having a LOR sent from someone in that department. This is not required.
The Health Professions Programs represented in this presentation ALL strongly encourage or require a letter of recommendation from a practitioner in the field.

Even if not “required” you would enhance your application by including one and it may be detrimental to your application to not.

Those programs that strongly recommend a letter from someone in the field:

- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant
- Veterinary
THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN AND YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science Faculty/Academics</th>
<th>Extracurricular activities/leadership</th>
<th>Work Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Experiences</td>
<td>Volunteer Experiences</td>
<td>Health Profession specific</td>
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You should have a minimum of three letters of recommendation (see green boxes). Some schools will allow more; that maximum is usually between four and six letters of recommendation (LORs).
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST

Required:
- Biology or Chemistry faculty member who taught you in a course.
- Science faculty member who taught you in a course.
- Health Profession practitioner (Vet, PA, PT, OD, PharmD)

Optional (check for maximum guidelines):
- Other:
- Other:
- Other:
You need to familiarize yourself with the...
WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE PRE-HEALTH LATTE PAGE?

You will find helpful information for applicants.

- Such as a copy of this PowerPoint and the handouts you received.
- Links to application services and other information
If you wrote your name and email address legibly on the sign in sheet, you will be automatically added to the Pre-Health Applicant Latte Page and Applicant Listserv.

READ THE EMAIL that comes to you from Pre-Health Advising.

- We will send you important information via emails, such as
  - Scheduled dates for information sessions and workshops in the Spring semester geared at helping you to prepare for your application.
  - Notification of visits by recruiters from various health professions programs.
  - Reminders of when to send updates to the schools to which you have applied
DEADLINES

Most importantly, be aware of…
You are responsible for juggling the moving pieces of your application.

We strongly recommend starting a spreadsheet that lists the names, application deadlines, and other pertinent information for each school.

- Keep track of when you submitted your application. Again, aim to BE EARLY in applying. Many programs start interviewing in early Fall.
- You may also want to keep track of whether supplemental/secondary applications are required and when you received/submitted it.
- Keep track of the application fees.

Your Letters of Recommendation will be submitted directly to the Application Service your program uses.

- You will be responsible for making sure that your recommenders are aware of the process and timeline in which they need to submit letters.
WHAT CAN PRE-HEALTH ADVISING DO?

✓ Review personal statement (see the personal statement workshop slides & Latte for tips).

✓ Attend Personal Statement Review drop-in appointments or peer-review workshops.

✓ Discuss application timeline

✓ Discuss health related experiences and/or glide year options

✓ Discuss letters of recommendation and how to ask (see the Recommendation Letter Workshop slides for tips).

✓ Provide guidance and advice regarding your application journey.
The centralized application service websites for each health professions field has a number of different resources for prospective students and applications. You are encouraged to explore the sites for yourself to familiarize yourself with the application as well as the resources available.
Questions or Concerns??

CONTACT PRE-HEALTH ADVISING
PHA@BRANDEIS.EDU

FOR APPOINTMENTS
SCHEDULE ONLINE OR CALL ACADEMIC SERVICES AT 781-736-3470

QUICK QUESTION DROP IN APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE MON-FRI, 1:30-2:30PM IN ACADEMIC SERVICES (USDAN 130)