



Requesting a Letter from the Health Vocations Advisement Committee

DEADLINES

The HVAC schedules evaluation meetings and writes letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Students who would like their letters to be mailed earlier in the semester should submit their materials *before* the posted deadline. Although the HVAC will make every attempt to help applicants who miss the published deadlines, they cannot be *guaranteed* an HVAC letter.

Regular Applicants: The deadline to submit a request for an HVAC student evaluation letter is typically the first class day of the fall semester of a student's final year as an undergraduate (about 11 months before the student plans to enroll at a professional school). The Fall 2009 deadline is August 25, 2009.

Early Decision Program Applicants: The deadline to submit a request for an HVAC student evaluation letter is typically during the first week of classes of a student's second-to-last year as an undergraduate (one-and-a-half years before the student plans to enroll at a professional school). The Spring 2009 deadline is January 30, 2009. The Spring 2010 deadline will be January 15, 2010.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants for an HVAC evaluation letter are responsible for the following:

Familiarizing themselves with the guidelines listed below.

- Completing and/or obtaining all of the required materials and submitting them to Mercer's pre-professional advisor by the posted deadlines. Note that most correspondence with the HVAC will be through the pre-professional advisor.
- Inviting two advocates to join the Health Vocations Advisement Committee at the student's evaluation meeting (date and time of the student's evaluation will be announced after submission of all required materials). Advocates should be prepared to share anecdotal information about the student for inclusion in the evaluation letter (see directions below).
- Remaining cognizant of the application instructions and deadlines for each school they plan to apply to. Students are encouraged to make use of the checklist found at [HVAC Checklists Student 09 10.doc](#) to avoid overlooking any required items.
- Remaining cognizant of their application status at each school to which they applied. Applicants should contact all schools to confirm that their letters of evaluation have been received.
- Remaining accessible to the HVAC during the evaluation process. In most cases, this simply means checking their email on a regular basis.

Please note that applicants are not present at the HVAC evaluation meetings and that all HVAC proceedings are kept strictly confidential.

DIRECTIONS

I. Students Requesting an HVAC Letter for the First Time

The directions below are for students who are requesting a student evaluation letter from the Health Vocations Advisement Committee for the first time. **Students who are requesting an updated letter or a re-submission of their original letter should refer to the second set of directions.**

1. Complete the “Authorization and Waiver for the Preparation and Release of a Student Evaluation Letter” form: [HVAC Auth Waiver 09 10.doc](#).

Read this form carefully and provide the information it requests. This includes your name, the date when you hope to begin professional school, and your application service number(s).

Indicate whether you do or do not waive your right to access the HVAC evaluation letter by checking the appropriate box.

Sign the form in your own handwriting (type is not acceptable).

2. Complete the “Contact Information” form: [HVAC Contact Info 09 10.doc](#).

Read this form carefully and provide the information it requests.

If your contact information changes at any point in the semester during which you are applying to professional schools, you must let the HVAC know in writing.

Provide the information requested for your two advocates. (Each student may select two advocates who can speak to the student’s abilities in one or more of the following areas: scholastic ability, written communication, oral communication, motivation and maturity, interpersonal relations, and/or relevant medical experience. The advocates are invited to attend the HVAC meeting to provide anecdotal information about the student during the evaluation process. Advocates who are unable to attend the meeting can provide a written letter of support to the committee.)

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format: yournameCONTACTINFO.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and “Contact Info” in the title of your e-mail.

3. Complete the “Student Self-Evaluation” form: [HVACSelfEvaluation0910.doc](#)

Save the self-evaluation document on your computer.

Answer all of the questions. Type your answer to each question directly below each question in the document itself.

Include the essay you have or will use on your professional school application (either the AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, VMCAS, or AACPMAS or another application, depending on which schools you are applying to). The essay should be a brief (four-to-five-paragraph) personal statement that explains your motivation for wanting to become a certain type of medical professional (physician, dentist, etc.).

Applicants are encouraged to participate in the workshop, “Preparing Your Personal Statement”, which is conducted at least once every semester by the pre-professional advisor. Additional advice regarding personal statements can be obtained from the office of Career Services.

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format: yournameSELFEVAL.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and “Self-Evaluation” in the title of your e-mail.

4. Prepare a professional style resume of your work experiences, extracurricular activities, achievements, honors, etc.

Focus on your accomplishments since graduating from high school. Be as specific and concise as possible as you summarize the responsibilities and experiences you had with each job and activity listed.

List the amount of time devoted to each job or activity. You may list total hours spent on the job or activity (for example: 60 hours total), or you may give the duration of time you were involved in a given activity (for example: May of 2005 until August of 2005) and the number of hours per week or month that you devoted to the activity during that time (for example: 4 hours per week).

Check for errors, and use a format that makes the information easily accessible to a reader. Contact Mercer’s office of Career Services if you have questions about creating a resume.

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format:
yournameRESUME.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and "Resume" in the title of your e-mail.

5. Obtain unofficial copies of *all* of your transcripts.

Unofficial copies of your transcripts, such as those obtained through Mercer's BearPort, are acceptable.

Even if some or all of your credits from other schools are on your Mercer transcript, you still need to submit transcripts from each school you've attended.

6. Using the form provided ([HVACListofSchools0910.doc](#)), type a list of all the professional schools to which you intend to apply:

Include a *complete and accurate address* for each school. Be sure the addresses are those to which your evaluation letters should be sent, not just the general addresses of the various universities (i.e., include the specific office and/or contact person to whom your evaluation letter should be delivered).

Include *all* the schools to which you intend to apply. The HVAC will send out only one mailing per applicant per year.

An exception to this rule is granted to students applying to schools that do not accept letters of recommendation until AFTER the applicant has been invited to interview. Those students should indicate that the letter to that school should be HELD until further notification.

An exception is also granted to students who participate in the Early Decision Program (EDP). Applicants who do not gain acceptance through the EDP and plan to apply to professional schools through the "Regular Decision" process the following fall should follow the second set of directions below to have their letters sent.

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format:
yournameLIST.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and "School List" in the title of your e-mail.

7. For medical schools participating in the AMCAS Letters Project, obtain an AMCAS **letter request number** and provide it to the HVAC. This number is obtained in Section 6 of the AMCAS application.

For schools NOT participating in a centralized application service:

Obtain official Mercer HVAC envelopes from the pre-professional advisor in Penfield Hall. Stamp and address one envelope for each of the schools to which you intend to apply. Your evaluation letters will be mailed in these envelopes, so be sure that the addresses are correct and legible. One first-class stamp is sufficient for each envelope.

Include envelopes for all schools to which you intend to apply that do not require direct uploading of LOEs to a centralized application service website. The HVAC will send out only one mailing per applicant per year.

An exception to this rule is granted to students applying to schools that do not accept letters of recommendation until AFTER the applicant has been invited to interview. Those students should indicate that the letter to that school should be HELD until further notification.

An exception is also granted to students who participate in the Early Decision Program (EDP). Applicants who do not gain acceptance through the EDP and plan to apply to professional schools through the "Regular Decision" process the following fall should follow the second set of directions below to have their letters sent.

8. Include any additional items that the HVAC may require when preparing your evaluation letter.

Some schools have forms or coversheets that must be included with student evaluation letters when the letters are mailed. It is your responsibility to know about any such forms and to provide the

HVAC with the forms in a timely fashion. **Please complete your portion of these forms before submitting them to the HVAC.**

If you have taken the MCAT (or another standardized admissions test) and received a score report, submit a copy of the score report to the pre-professional advisor. *While standardized test scores are not required to request a letter of recommendation from the HVAC, students who have GPA's below 3.3 are encouraged to submit their scores as additional data to assist the HVAC in evaluating their readiness for professional school.*

You are welcome to submit other documents to the HVAC in support of your application (e.g., a letter of support from an advocate who cannot attend the HVAC meeting).

9. Once you have completed the items listed above and submitted electronic copies of each to the pre-professional advisor:

Submit paper copies of *all* items to the pre-professional advisor in the Office of Academic and Advising Services (Penfield Hall). That office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm.

Once you have submitted all of the required materials, your HVAC application folder will be sent to the HVAC chairman and you will be placed on the HVAC meeting schedule. Committee members will work to complete the letter of evaluation and mail out copies to professional schools within three weeks of the evaluation meeting.

Students are encouraged to schedule a meeting with Dr. Steve Brown (brown_sr@mercer.edu) in Career Services to discuss strategies for doing well in interviews with admission officials from professional schools.

II. Students Who Have Previously Requested an HVAC Letter

Students who have requested an HVAC letter of evaluation in the past (either for an Early Decision Program application or for regular applications) may request that the HVAC mail out copies of their letters in subsequent semesters. These students will not receive a new committee evaluation, but may request that their letter be updated to include new information as necessary. These students should follow the instructions listed below.

1. Complete the "Authorization and Waiver for the Preparation and Release of a Student Evaluation Letter" form: [HVAC Auth Waiver 09 10.doc](#).

Read this form carefully and provide the information it requests. This includes your name, the date when you hope to begin professional school, and your application service number(s).

Indicate whether you do or do not waive your right to access the HVAC evaluation letter by checking the appropriate box.

Sign the form in your own handwriting (type is not acceptable).

2. Complete the "Contact Information" form: [HVAC Contact Info 09 10.doc](#).

Read this form carefully and provide the information it requests.

If your contact information changes at any point in the semester during which you are applying to professional schools, you must let the HVAC know.

Advocate information is not required.

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format:

yournameCONTACTINFO.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and "Contact Info" in the title of your e-mail.

3. Using the form provided ([HVACListofSchools0910.doc](#)), type a list of all the professional schools to which you intend to apply:

Include a *complete and accurate address* for each school. Be sure the addresses are those to which your evaluation letters should be sent, not just the general addresses of the various universities (i.e., include the specific office and/or contact person to whom your evaluation letter should be delivered).

Include *all* the schools to which you intend to apply. The HVAC will send out only one mailing per applicant per year.

An exception to this rule is granted to students applying to schools that do not accept letters of recommendation until AFTER the applicant has been invited to interview. Those students should indicate that the letter to that school should be HELD until further notification.

An exception is also granted to students who participate in the Early Decision Program (EDP). Applicants who do not gain acceptance through the EDP and plan to apply to professional schools through the "Regular Decision" process the following fall should follow the second set of directions below to have their letters sent.

When you have completed the form, save it as a Word document using the following format: yournameLIST.doc. E-mail this file to Bokros_c@mercer.edu. Include your name and "School List" in the title of your e-mail.

4. For medical schools participating in the AMCAS Letters Project, obtain an AMCAS **letter request number** and provide it to the HVAC. This number is obtained in Section 6 of the AMCAS application.

For schools NOT participating in a centralized application service:

Obtain official Mercer HVAC envelopes from the pre-professional advisor in Penfield Hall. Stamp and address one envelope for each of the schools to which you intend to apply. Your evaluation letters will be mailed in these envelopes, so be sure that the addresses are correct and legible. One first-class stamp is sufficient for each envelope.

Include envelopes for all schools to which you intend to apply that do not require direct uploading of LOEs to a centralized application service website. The HVAC will send out only one mailing per applicant per year.

An exception to this rule is granted to students applying to schools that do not accept letters of recommendation until AFTER the applicant has been invited to interview. Those students should indicate that the letter to that school should be HELD until further notification.

5. Include any additional items that the HVAC may require when preparing your evaluation letter. For instance, some schools have forms or coversheets that must be included with student evaluation letters when the letters are mailed. It is your responsibility to know about any such forms and to provide the HVAC with the forms in a timely fashion. **Please complete your portion of these forms before submitting them to the HVAC.**

If you have taken the MCAT (or another standardized admissions test) and received a score report, submit a copy of the score report to the pre-professional advisor. *While standardized test scores are not required to request a letter of recommendation from the HVAC, students who have GPA's below 3.3 are encouraged to submit their scores as additional data to assist the HVAC in evaluating their readiness for professional school.*

6. Write a cover letter to accompany the materials listed above.

Briefly explain your request.

Include information about any academic, work, or extracurricular activities you've participated in since your first application for an HVAC evaluation letter. Focus especially on activities that are relevant to your application to medical school. Include any scores for standardized tests earned after the original HVAC letter.

Once you have completed the items listed above, submit them to the Academic and Advising Services office on the upper level of Penfield Hall. That office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm.

CB 5-15-09