## Table of Contents

- PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT ................................................................. 4
- THE STRONG CANDIDATE ......................................................................... 4
- IMPORTANCE OF DEADLINES ................................................................. 4
- TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST ................................................................. 5
- OPENING YOUR HPA APPLICANT FILE ............................................... 5
- COMPLETING YOUR FILE ........................................................................ 6
- SJP DISCIPLINARY WAIVER ................................................................. 7
- HIGH SCHOOL PARAGRAPH – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS ............ 7
- CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) ..................................................................... 8
- PRE-APPLICATION APPOINTMENT FORM .......................................... 9
- PERSONAL STATEMENT ......................................................................... 9
- LETTERS OF EVALUATION .................................................................... 10
- ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN HPA-2020 RESOURCES BOX .................. 10
- PRE-APPLICATION APPOINTMENT ....................................................... 10
- RESEARCH SCHOOLS ........................................................................... 10
- APPLICATION PROCESSING DETAILS ................................................. 11
- SECONDARY APPLICATIONS .................................................................. 12
- INTERVIEWS .......................................................................................... 12
- PART II: REQUESTING LETTERS OF EVALUATION AND VECOLLECT .... 13
- PURPOSE OF LETTERS OF EVALUATION ........................................... 13
- PROFESSIONALISM ............................................................................. 13
- REQUESTING LETTERS OF EVALUATION ........................................... 13
- SETTING UP VECOLLECT ....................................................................... 18
- VECOLLECT PROCESS ......................................................................... 18
CREATING YOUR VECOLLECT ACCOUNT .......................................................... 19
CREATING AN EVALUATOR RECORD ................................................................. 20
CREATING A LETTER RECORD ............................................................................. 20
SELECT LETTER TYPE ......................................................................................... 21
REQUEST THE LETTER FROM YOUR EVALUATOR ............................................. 21
CREATING A QUIVER ........................................................................................... 22
EDITING A QUIVER ............................................................................................. 22
LOCKING YOUR QUIVER ...................................................................................... 23
INFORM THE OAA YOUR QUIVER IS LOCKED .................................................. 23
DESIGNATING SCHOOLS IN VECOLLECT ......................................................... 23
PART III: THE ON-GOING APPLICATION PROCESS ........................................... 24
COMMITTEE LETTER AND LETTERS OF EVALUATION ..................................... 24
MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR APPLICATION .................................................... 24
SECONDARY APPLICATIONS .............................................................................. 25
ON-GOING CONTACT WITH PROGRAMS ............................................................ 25
LETTERS OF INTEREST, UPDATES OR INTENT ............................................... 26
WAITLIST ............................................................................................................ 27
TEXAS MATCH ..................................................................................................... 27
GETTING ACCEPTED ........................................................................................... 28
APRIL 30 & THE CHOOSE YOUR MEDICAL SCHOOL TOOL ............................. 29
WHAT IF IT APPEARS I WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED? .......................................... 29
CLOSING .............................................................................................................. 30
RESOURCES ....................................................................................................... 30
Part I: The Strong Candidate

Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide details and guidance about the application process to health professions schools—in particular, to schools of medicine and dentistry. Rice submits a Health Professions Advising Committee (HPAC) letter to formally introduce you to schools and provide a narrative on your candidacy. This is an optional service but a Rice tradition for over 25 years. Students are welcome to apply to schools directly.

If you would like to have an HPAC letter written on your behalf, we require that all applicants read this document carefully, follow instructions, consider guidelines and suggestions, and adhere to all deadlines. This will significantly enhance your chance for acceptance to a health professional school and reduce inefficiencies in the process. Throughout the document, we provide context and explanations as to why the required materials and information are necessary to your finalized application. On page 4 of this document, you will find a timeline and checklist for each step in the process.

The Strong Candidate

If you are planning to apply for Fall 2020 admissions, we recommend that you reflect and determine if you meet all the components for a strong applicant, which include:

- Academic Performance at Rice (overall GPA and science GPA)
- Standardized Test Scores (ex. MCAT, DAT, etc.)
- Clinical Exposure and Experiences
- Service and Community Involvement (Altruism/Empathy)
- Uniqueness: Interests, Perspectives, and Experiences
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Research (Intellectual Curiosity)
- Interpersonal/Communication Skills
- Character: Ethics, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility
- Letters of Evaluation

If you are unsure, students can make an appointment with an advisor to discuss their candidacy. It is best to apply when you are ready and feel your application is at its strongest.

Importance of Deadlines

As part of the open file process, we will need significant information from you. Without sufficient information in an organized and timely manner, our ability to best represent your candidacy is hindered, so we encourage you to commit the time and energy necessary for each task. Please also
consider that most health professional schools operate on rolling admissions, so delays in submitted materials may significantly impact your admission. Our office is typically well ahead of the timelines, but we need your help to maintain this standard.

**Timeline and Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Pay $100 Registration Fee (<a href="#">here</a>)</td>
<td>December 14, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Complete HPA Applicant Information Form (<a href="#">google form here</a>)</td>
<td>December 14, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Submit Materials in HPA -2020 Box Account</td>
<td>February 1, 2019 (by 11:59 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Submit SJP Disciplinary Request Waiver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Submit High School Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Submit Curriculum Vitae (CV)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Submit Draft Personal Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Submit Pre-Application Appointment Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Letters of Evaluation</td>
<td>February 2, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Request Letters of Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Activate veCollect account</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Schedule Pre-Application Appointment (Strongly Suggested)</td>
<td>February 11 – March 29, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Complete Pre-Application Appointment (Strongly Suggested)</td>
<td>April 5, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Start Applications to AMCAS, TMDSAS, AACOMAS</td>
<td>Beginning May 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Supporting Letters of Evaluation Received</td>
<td>May 17, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Start Applications to AADSAS</td>
<td>Beginning June 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Complete Applications in AMCAS, TMDSAS, AACOMAS AADSAS</td>
<td>Oct 1, 2019 (ASAP)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opening your HPA Applicant File**

Opening your Health Professions Applicant File is a two-step process.

The first step is to pay your $100 registration fee: [https://signup.rice.edu/2020HPFile/](https://signup.rice.edu/2020HPFile/)
The second step is to fill out your Health Professions Applicant Information form at: https://goo.gl/forms/GDPZ0D8IeH35PXzU2

The Health Profession Applicant Information form asks for comprehensive details, including contact information, health professional program of interest, academic record (major, minor, etc.), and admission test scores. All of this information is crucial to our Office’s records and organization and is required for us to know how to advise you and prepare your Health Professions Advising Committee Letter.

In addition, you will provide the following:

- Waiver to your right to access your confidential Health Professions Advising Committee (HPAC) letter of evaluation from the Office of Academic Advising (OAA)
- Waiver to your right to access your letters of evaluation from faculty and community members
- Authorization for the Office of Student Judicial Programs (SJP) to release your disciplinary record information to the Office of Academic Advising.
- Authorization to release basic information to the Rice Alumni in Medicine group

Confirmed receipt of your registration fee and completion of your Health Profession Applicant Information form officially opens your Health Professions File as an applicant for 2020. These are required steps before we provide you access to the Box account for HPA-2020 Resources, your personal Box Folder and the registration code to sign-up for your veCollect account.

Any major communication from our office will be sent via Rice email, be sure to check your Rice email regularly throughout the application process.

**Completing Your File**

Completing your file with the Office of Academic Advising includes several steps and all are necessary prior to our completion of your Health Professions Advising Committee letter and subsequent submission to the appropriate application services. Each of these steps is included in the “Timeline and Checklist” on page 5 of this document:

- Submit to your HPA 2020 Box Account (folder labeled with your name):
  - SJP Disciplinary Waiver Request
  - Paragraph outlining your high school accomplishments
  - Detailed curriculum vitae (CV)
  - Draft of your personal statement
  - Pre-Application Appointment Form

- Request letters from your evaluators

- Schedule and complete a brief pre-application appointment clarifying content of the Pre-Application Appointment Form (optional, but strongly suggested)
• Submit your application to:
  - American Medical Colleges Application Service (AMCAS)
  - Texas Medical and Dental School Application Service (TMDSAS)
  - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS)
  - American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS)
  - Or other appropriate application service

Please recognize that the Health Professions Advising Committee will draft and complete ~200 letters for health professions applicants in spring/early summer 2019. This task is not possible without your compliance with the stated deadlines. Each letter contains considerable detail specific to the candidate and requires personalization. For this reason, non-compliance with deadlines will result in a shorter and less descriptive HPAC letter or potentially a letter packet that includes a basic cover letter along with your supporting letters of evaluation. Immediately following deadlines for submission, we will check applicant drop boxes for requested materials. **Students who do not comply with the deadlines are ineligible for pre-application appointments with an advisor as well as the Rice Pre-Medical Society and Rice Pre-Dental Society mock interview programs.**

The following sections provide some basic guidelines regarding the submissions listed above, but greater details are available in Box.

**SJP Disciplinary Waiver**

The SJP Disciplinary Waiver allows communication between Student Judicial Programs (SJP) and the Office of Academic Advising (OAA) regarding your disciplinary record. If an applicant has any honor code or conduct violations, please review the SJP Website for additional information.

Please release your record to the “Office of Academic Advising” and sign the bottom of the form. You do not need to upload a copy of your ID.

**High School Paragraph – Summary of Achievements**

The purpose of this section is to provide guidelines for the paragraph summarizing your high school achievements. We have provided a few examples for your reference. Keep in mind that the Health Professions Advising Committee will use this paragraph to provide context about your high school accomplishments with respect to your transition to college and to your more recent preparation for acceptance to a health professional school. Be sure to write in third person and to include details such as your GPA, test scores and significant honors or scholarships. **Please keep your paragraph to five sentences or less.**

You are required to write and submit a summary of your high school accomplishments in a format similar to those shown below:
Sample 1: In the spring of 2016, Cindy graduated as valedictorian of her class (1/361) from Medical Scholars High School in Baltimore, Maryland with a 6.5/6.0 cumulative grade point average. During her high school years Sarah was very active, often in leadership roles. She was the President of the Student Council, the Vice President of Senior Women, the Treasurer of the National Honor Society and the Drum Captain. She volunteered in a nursing home, in the hospital emergency room, and accompanied physicians on clinical rotations in the Health Occupations Students of America Program. She was honored as a National Merit Commended Scholar, a Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership participant, and as a UIL State Solo and Ensemble musician. She came to Rice University with a 2360 SAT score and academic achievements earning her no less than four scholarships.

Sample 2: In the spring of 2016, Jeff graduated as valedictorian of his class from Rollins High School in San Diego, California with a perfect 4.0/4.0 cumulative grade point average, a perfect 2400 SAT score and a perfect 36 ACT score. He had also amassed 51 hours of Advanced Placement credit. While in high school, Jeff was also actively involved with Habitat for Humanity, and he participated in theater while competing on the tennis and golf teams. He was named a National Merit Scholar and upon his matriculation at Rice, he was given the Trustee Distinguished Brown Scholarship and the W.L. Moody, Jr. Engineering Scholarship.

Sample 3: In the spring of 2016, Anna graduated from Hundred Forest High School in Phoenix, Arizona in the top 5 percent of her class and with an outstanding 3.9/4.0 cumulative grade point average. Her strong scholastic aptitude is evidenced by her AP Scholar Award receipt, her National Merit Scholarship Qualifier status and her inclusion in the Hundred Forest School District’s Highest Honors cohort. She was very active in her community, holding membership on the math team and the International Club. Other extracurricular activities included her work as a tutor at the Canton Institute and her volunteer work at the Kissinger Senior Center. As a result of her accomplishments, Anya received the Arizona Governor’s Scholarship and the Peterson International Science Scholarship (Highest Honors).

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The HPA – 2020 Resources Box account includes the curriculum vitae template all applicants are required to use for their CV submission. Its design allows you to provide us with relevant, specific information regarding your candidacy for health professional school. Therefore, we look for academic achievement, research experience, clinical exposure, leadership experience, volunteerism and other altruistic activities, extracurricular involvement, honors and awards, etc. Please put considerable time and energy into your curriculum vitae as it is a reflection of your preparedness for your health professional goals. Be sure to list all your activities, not just medically-related activities. A general rule of thumb is never to place something on your curriculum vitae if you are not willing and able to answer specific questions about it. While the OAA provides a sample CV template for you to use, the Center for Career Development (CCD) can provide guidance regarding the creation of your CV.
Pre-Application Appointment Form

This form asks specific questions which allow you to expand upon elements of your CV, reflect on your motivations for pursuing health professional school, and articulate your views about the profession. We have designed the questions to solicit information that admissions committees want to know and will likely ask you during the admissions process, so please thoughtfully consider your answers.

For language proficiency, please refer to the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Fluency Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native/Functionally</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Personal Statement

You will find resources and guidelines about personal statements from a variety of perspectives including those of medical school admissions deans in the HPA-2020 Resources Box Account. Rice Pre-Medical Society will host workshops in the coming months. In addition, The Center for Academic and Professional Communication (CAPC) at Rice has offered to provide consultations regarding personal statements for those applying to various professional schools. As a starting point, reflect on the experiences listed in your CV and describe how they have shaped your motivation to pursue medicine. For CAPC consultations, it is recommended that students produce a list of fifteen experiences outside of the classroom that have impacted your life and future career goals or a copy of your pre-application appointment form. We strongly suggest that you start with a draft of your personal statement as soon as possible, if you have not done so already. The process takes several iterations and significant revision following feedback from a variety of individuals. Again, we suggest that you avoid topics of a nature about which you are not willing or able to answer specific questions.
Letters of Evaluation

Please refer to Part II: Letters of Evaluation and veCollect

Additional Resources in HPA-2020 Resources Box

There are more resources in the HPA-2020 Resources Box account to assist with your application processing. These resources include but are not limited to:

- Health Professions Open File Information document (i.e. this document)
- Guidelines (and template) for health professions applicants’ Curricula Vitae (CV)
- Guidelines for personal statements and optional essays
- Pre-Application Appointment Form
- Interview resources
- Guidelines for application services

Pre-Application Appointment

After meeting the submission deadline (February 1), applicants can schedule a Pre-Application Appointment with a member of our committee to clarify or expand on any aspect of your materials. The appointment also allows us to get to know you better and offers perspective about the steps you have taken to prepare for that opportunity. While the office will always support our candidates to medical school, we will also try to provide constructive feedback about the steps the candidate has already taken and additional steps they might continue to take to improve their candidacy. The tone of the meeting is relatively informal, but it is an opportunity to practice your interviewing skills. Please dress business casual. We expect professional demeanor and communication style from you. Keep in mind that every interaction is an opportunity to provide an impression.

Research Schools

Deciding where to apply is critical to your application yet challenging and time-consuming. Several important factors to consider include:

- Public school residency requirements
- Curricular approach
  - Traditional lecture or problem-based learning
  - Schedule (block class or multiple classes)
  - Basic sciences structure
  - Grading system
  - Focus on research, primary care or specialty
- School culture
- Location
• Cost of attendance: tuition and living expenses

In addition, it is costly to apply to health profession programs. Consider all costs including application fees, transportation to/from interviews, lodging, meals, etc.

There are several resources to assist applicants with their research including the Medical School Admission Requirements and Texas and Medical Dental School Application Service. American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and Associated American Dental Schools Application Service books are available during business hours in the OAA.

**Application Processing Details**

*Updating Required Materials in Box*

If you would like to update any of your materials after the February 1, 2019 deadline, you may upload a new copy to your box. Please do not delete old documents in your Box account.

*Application Manuals*

To prepare for the application cycle, students should carefully read the applicant manual for each application service. Applications generally open in May/June; check each service for their specific dates. Most schools operate on rolling admissions thus, it is best to apply early.

*Letters of Evaluation*

While completing your application, please use the contact information below when listing Rice. Please select committee letter.

- Letter Title: Rice_(Your Last Name)_Committee Letter
- Institution Name: Rice University
- Name: Christine Martinez
- Title: Associate Director of Academic Advising
- Email: hpa@rice.edu
- Phone: 713-348-4060
- Organization: Office of Academic Advising
- Address: 6100 Main Street MS-529
- Country: United States
- State: Texas
- City: Houston
- Zip: 77005
Transcripts

Students are required to submit transcripts for each accredited institution attended. To request a transcript from Rice, please visit the [website](#). Each service requires a Transcript Request Form to be sent with your transcript. Be sure to include your applicant ID with your form.

Study Abroad courses taken through a Rice approved study abroad program is generally accepted on a Rice transcript.

Be sure to follow the guidelines for each application service regarding transcript submission and study abroad credits.

Secondary Applications

After you submit your primary application, set your focus on secondary applications. Secondary applications vary among institutions. Certain institutions do not have a secondary application while others become available after confirmed receipt of your primary application. Check with each school for their secondary application policy. It is best to submit applications as soon as possible, it is recommended to submit within two weeks of receipt.

Interviews

To prepare for interviews, research each school's interview format (traditional vs. multiple mini interviews). Practice possible interview questions and be ready to articulate your story in a concise manner.

Rice Pre-Medical Society and Rice Pre-Dental Society will host programming for mock interviews in the spring of 2019. Mock interviews will also be conducted by the CAPC and the Center for Career Development.

Interview resources can be found in the HPA-2020 Resources Box Account.
Part II: Requesting Letters of Evaluation and veCollect

Purpose of Letters of Evaluation

Health professional school admissions committees consider letters of evaluation very carefully in their decision-making, and the supporting letters of evaluation are also invaluable when our office writes your HPAC letter. At Rice, applicants are responsible for generating letter requests and monitoring the receipt of letters in their file through the web-based system, veCollect.

We will outline: (1) requesting letters of evaluations, including email templates; (2) setting up your veCollect account; (3) using veCollect as an applicant.

Professionalism

The way in which you ask for a letter of evaluation is too often under-emphasized. This section provides guidelines about how to request letters from potential evaluators including details about timing, email correspondence, in-person communication, provision of necessary information, being considerate and respectful of evaluator’s time, and being appreciative of their commitment to your future professional goals.

Requesting Letters of Evaluation

Requesting supporting letters of evaluation from professors and other community members is a critical aspect of your application. To successfully obtain strong letters of evaluation from evaluators, you need to consider the following:

- Number of letters
- Who, how, and when to ask
- Guidelines and deadlines for evaluators
- Relinquishing your right to see letters

While there is no exact number, typically students request evaluations from three or four individuals, as less than three is too few, and there is no additional benefit from more than four letters unless a specific program makes this request. MD/PhD applicants must request evaluations from a supervisor from each research project in which the applicant has participated.

Although the ideal set of evaluators is highly dependent on the applicant, selecting the right evaluators should be considered very carefully. We suggest the following letters if possible:

- Professor in your academic major
- Professor of a science or engineering course (could overlap with major professor)
- Supervising research professor or someone related to your clinical activities
- Letter from individual who can provide a strong character reference
Most schools accept the HPAC letter in lieu of a second letter of evaluation from a professor of science or engineering. A small number of schools still require two letters from science/engineering professors in addition to the HPAC letter. Please consult specific schools’ instructions to be certain you are adhering to their requirements.

There could easily be overlap among these individuals. The character reference could come from a wide range of possible evaluators who you know well through your research, health-related positions, volunteer work, or other Rice or non-Rice related programs. The most important factors are familiarity and commitment to providing a strong letter of evaluation.

Timing is critical, so you will need to ask early. Faculty members receive many requests for letters of evaluation, and to write a thoughtful, meaningful letter takes time. Providing your prospective letter writers with adequate notification and appropriate supporting documents is a must.

Be sure to provide an evaluator the option of saying no. If an evaluator does not have time or is uncomfortable writing on your behalf, it will likely result in a shorter, less descriptive letter. It is best to have honesty from an evaluator, which will allow you to find another who is enthusiastic to support your application.

We encourage all applicants to request their letters of evaluation by February 2, 2019 to allow evaluators adequate time to write a strong letter of evaluation. Make sure your evaluator is aware that letters are due by Friday, May 17, 2019 in veCollect.

Waiving your right to see your evaluations provides greater credibility. Non-confidential requests can make it more difficult for your evaluators to write honest, candid, and objective letters. Likewise, schools are informed if evaluation letters are non-confidential, and whether correctly or incorrectly, perceive them with less credibility.
# Checklist for Applicant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>√</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>First Contact</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request/schedule in-person meeting with potential letter writer via email or in person</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>In-Person Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend meeting on-time and in professional dress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare to talk about <strong>why</strong> you are asking that particular instructor and what your future plans are</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In an organized folder, supply hard copy versions of the following materials:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A draft of Personal Statement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unofficial Transcript</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Letter Writer Instructions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Current CV</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unofficial Test Scores (Summary of MCAT, DAT, etc.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specific program information &amp; instructions (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summary dates and deadlines (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>After Meeting</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with a ‘Thank You’ email and electronic versions of the materials provided in hard copy at meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check in to see progress and help address any questions after about a month (if there has not been communication beforehand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>After Submission</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank individual letter writers with hand-written notes after letters were submitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up with individual letter writer with results of application process via email or schedule an in-person meeting.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regardless of admission outcomes, express gratitude for their time and effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Template Email to Request an In-Person Meeting

Dear Dr. Potential Evaluator,

I am currently working on my application materials to go to Medical School/Dental School/etc. I was hoping to meet with you in the upcoming week(s) to talk to you about my future professional endeavors and academic interests.

Would you have any availability to meet in the next two weeks? I am available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1-5 pm. Please let me know what time and date would be most convenient for you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,

Name

Rice University Class of
Major
College
Rice Email address
Phone Number

Template Email after Meeting with Evaluator

Dear Dr. Evaluator,

Below is a summary of all the graduate programs I will be applying to for next year. They are all in the field of Medicine, although some have differing degree paths. Most are combined programs with a Master’s in Public Health, but a few are just stand alone MD programs. I plan on submitting all my materials by June 15th, as all of these programs operate on rolling admissions. The deadline for letters of evaluation to be submitted is May 17, 2019 to veCollect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Application Open</th>
<th>Deadline to OAA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas Tech</td>
<td>MD/MPH</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT Galveston</td>
<td>MD/MPH</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTSA</td>
<td>MD/MPH</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baylor</td>
<td>MD/MPH</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please let me know if you have any questions about these programs or how I selected them.

Sincerely,
Example Program Information with Instructions

This is only necessary if you are planning on applying to different types of health professions programs. For instance, if some programs are MD and some are MD/MPH, it is helpful for your evaluator to understand the differences between the programs and why you are applying to both. This also allows the evaluator to tailor a letter that fits both goals for MD and MPH programs.

Example:

Thank you very much for your willingness to write an evaluation on my behalf. I sincerely appreciate your help. Below I have included information on each program and specific instructions for its evaluation letter. If you have questions at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to staying in touch.

Kindest Regards,

Name
Rice Email Address
Phone Number

1) Baylor

M.D. and M.P.H

The MD/MPH initiative really demonstrates BCM’s drive to provide opportunities for future physicians to expand their understanding of health and health care. The training, resources, and faculty support truly opens up a vast array of possibilities in traditional realms such as patient care and research as well as other realms of health including community-based health programs, health policy development, and healthcare administration.

Students accepted into the program spend their first three years at BCM. In addition to medical school classes, students will take five online public health classes. The fourth year is spent taking classes at UTHHealth School of Public Health. The fifth year, it's back to BCM for the last year of medical school.

2) Vanderbilt

M.D.
The School of Medicine at Vanderbilt University is committed to the education of physicians who are firmly grounded in the basic medical sciences, will provide compassionate care to their patients based upon their evaluation and application of the latest scientific research, and will become leaders and scholars in their field.

The medical school’s major strength lies in the quality of its students and faculty. The school provides a supportive and stimulating environment where students are encouraged to pursue individualized interests in clinical medicine and research. Our graduating students traditionally gain entrance to high quality residency programs of their choice throughout the country. The faculty, which represents a variety of specialties and research programs, has a national and international reputation for excellence in the biomedical sciences and clinical care.

**Setting up veCollect**

Rice applicants’ letters of evaluation from faculty, staff, and individuals’ on-campus and off-campus are submitted through the web-based system, veCollect. It is a secure, online service where applicants can manage their letters of evaluation including requesting letters, tracking if they have been received and informing the OAA that they are ready to be transmitted to medical and dental programs.

The service allows evaluators to submit letters of evaluation electronically to veCollect.

**veCollect Process**

The veCollect process is as follows:

1. After creating your veCollect account, you will enter the contact information for your individual evaluators including their email.

2. You will send an email request to your evaluator by clicking on the envelope icon near their name.

3. Indicate if you waive your right to access your individual letters of evaluation.

4. Evaluators will send veCollect your letter of evaluation via email. Once the system verifies your letter, you will see a PDF icon to notify you that the letter has been matched to your account.

5. After all letters are received, you will bundle them into a quiver and let the OAA know that they are ready to be transmitted to medical or dental programs.

*Before beginning to request letters through veCollect, please be sure to let your evaluators know they will receive an email from veCollect requesting that they submit a letter on your behalf.*
Creating your veCollect Account

To create your account, go to: https://collect.virtualevals.net.

1. In which state is your institution? Select "TX"

2. A blue box will indicate the Rice University requires an authorization code to register. You will be provided the code in your confirmation email after completing the Health Professions Applicant Information Form and confirmed receipt of your Open File Fee.
3. Create your own username and password
4. You will follow a series of prompts. You do not need to provide your AAMC, AACOMAS, AADSAS or TMDSAS IDs.
5. When you complete the form, click “Register for veCollect”
6. After you register, you will receive a confirmation email within 24-72 hours informing you that your account is now active. Upon receipt of this email, you will have full access to your veCollect account.

Creating an Evaluator Record

After logging in to veCollect, the screen will display a navigation bar as shown below:

Click on “My Evaluators” to begin. When you reach the screen, click on “Create New Evaluator Record”. Complete the screen and click “Create Evaluator Record”.

You will arrive at a confirmation screen. Here, you will have a chance to review the information for accuracy. If changes are needed, make necessary edits and click “Save Evaluator Record”

Creating a Letter Record

After you have created an Evaluator Record, you can now create a Letter Record for this evaluator. Scroll down and click “Create New Letter Record”.

Need help? Instructional videos are found on the right side of the page.

This area allows you to review information for accuracy. You can click “Save Evaluator Record” at the bottom if you made any changes.

Click here to create the new letter record.
Select Letter Type

From the dropdown menu, select the type appropriate for your application.

Request the Letter from Your Evaluator

To request a letter from your evaluator, click on the envelope icon and an email will automatically be sent to your evaluator.

If your evaluator does not receive the veCollect notification email, this is primarily a result of applicants (a) creating an evaluator record but not a letter record or (b) forgetting to click on the envelope icon or (c) email was identified as spam or junk by their email provider. Please be sure to check with all of your evaluators to confirm that they have received the veCollect notification email.

When a letter has arrived, allow veCollect 48-72 hours to verify your letter. Once it has been processed, you will see a PDF icon next to the letter type. At this point, be sure to follow up with your evaluator and thank them for their time.

If for whatever reason, your evaluator submits an updated letter on your behalf, it will overwrite the original letter submission.

FERPA Statement: This describes your rights to waive access to your letters.

Schools prefer confidential letters thus students are highly encouraged to request CONFIDENTIAL letters of evaluation.

To acknowledge your selection, you must type your name.
Creating a Quiver

Create a Quiver by clicking “Create New Quiver”.

In the description, label your quiver by referencing the program to which you are applying, and include the entry year, i.e. MD 2020, DO 2020, Dental 2020.

Select all letters to be included in the committee packet then click “Create New Quiver”.

If you are interested in applying to both MD and DO programs, please be sure to create two quivers (one for each program). Select the appropriate letters for each quiver. You may need to include a letter of evaluation from a DO that should be included in the DO Quiver.

Editing a Quiver

If you would like to add or delete letters in your Quiver or prematurely created a Quiver, visit “My Quiver” and choose either Add/Remove Letters or Delete This Quiver.
**Locking your Quiver**

When all of your letters of evaluation have been received, you will click “Process My Letters” in the top navigation bar.

Review the letters that are in the Quiver to ensure it is complete and correct. Before you can lock your Quiver, you must certify that the information you entered into veCollect is truthful and accurate. You acknowledge this by entering your name into the block provided; this is considered your signature.

After you complete these steps, click on “Process and Lock this Quiver”.

**Inform the OAA your Quiver is Locked**

Go into the HPA 2020- Resources Box Account, complete the veCollect Locked Quiver Form.

Submit the completed form to hpa@rice.edu with the subject line: veCollect Locked Quiver Form – Last Name, First Name

Please allow the OAA adequate time to process all committee letters. If your Quiver is locked and you have submitted the notification form, please refrain from contacting the OAA until Friday, July 26, 2019 to check on the status of your committee letter submission.

The OAA will submit your HPAC letter along with individual letters of evaluation to the application services. After it is uploaded, you will receive an email confirmation from the OAA.

**Designating Schools in veCollect**

We do not use this feature in veCollect. It is not necessary for you to enter schools into veCollect.
Part III: The On-going Application Process

Committee Letter and Letters of Evaluation

When will my Health Professions Advising Committee (HPAC) letter be submitted to medical and dental schools?

Please allow the Office of Academic Advising (OAA) adequate time to process all HPAC letters and individual letters of evaluation. If your Quiver is locked and you have submitted the veCollect Locked Quiver Form, please refrain from contacting the OAA until Friday, July 26, 2019 to check on the status of your committee letter submission.

How will I know when my HPAC letter has been uploaded to the application services?

The OAA will submit your HPAC letter along with individual letters of evaluation to the application services. After it is uploaded, you will receive an email confirmation from the OAA.

Can I customize the letters of evaluation in my committee letter that are sent to professional schools?

Your HPAC letter along with individual letters of evaluation will be sent to all of the allopathic, osteopathic, or dental schools to which you apply. You cannot customize your letters for individual programs.

However, supplementary letters of evaluation are accepted by many schools. If you are using AMCAS, you can upload additional letters to be shared with all of your medical schools, a designated group or a single school. Additional letters are not sent through the OAA and must be uploaded directly to the AMCAS Letter Service. Please see the AMCAS Applicant Manual for details.

If I request an additional letter of evaluation after my HPAC Letter is uploaded, will it delay the processing of my application?

If you requested additional letters and schools have not reviewed your application yet, they may wait for the additional letter to arrive, therefore postponing the review of your application. For this reason, it makes sense to submit additional letters later in the process, perhaps if you are not getting interview invitations or placed on a waitlist.

Making Changes to your Application

If I decide to postpone my application, what do I do?

If at any point you decide to postpone your application, please inform the OAA by emailing us at hpa@rice.edu
If I changed my fall coursework or if I am not taking a course from what I listed on my application, do I need to notify schools?

Generally, this is not an issue and you do not need to contact schools. They likely will take note of this change if you are completing a missing prerequisite course or finishing a graduate/post-baccalaureate program.

How do I update schools on plans for a gap year?

Many schools will ask about your gap year in their secondary application. You can also discuss it during an interview or in an update letter to be sent later in the application cycle.

Secondary Applications

After you submit your primary application, set your focus on secondary applications. Secondary applications vary among institutions. Certain institutions do not have a secondary application while others become available after confirmed receipt of your primary application. Check with each school for their secondary application policy. It is best to submit applications as soon as possible, it is recommended to submit within two weeks of receipt.

How much time should I dedicate to secondary essays?

You should spend a considerable amount of time working on your secondary essays. Look to your peers, family and friends to review your essays. While schools may ask the same questions, be sure to tailor your essays to each school. Proofread for spelling and grammar mistakes.

How do I approach optional essays?

Make every effort to answer all essay questions.

To address “why this particular school,” review your research and identify key features that are well-suited to your interests and you as a person.

Think carefully about the “diversity” question. It is important to acknowledge the importance of diversity and that you have learned from exposure to diverse cultures and experiences.

On-going Contact with Programs

Do grades matter after I submit my application?

Absolutely! If you do not interview by December, you will want to send updated grades for the Fall 2018 semester that demonstrate your continued academic success. Additionally, schools typically request for your final transcript prior to matriculation.

How do I complete a “Dean's Form/Certification?”
The two-step process for Dean's Certification is found in the HPA – 2020 Resources Box Account under Dean's Certification.

**What if I decide to apply to additional medical schools?**

This is not an issue. Be sure to follow the specific instructions outlined for each respective application service to include these additions.

**What if a school told me that I would hear within four weeks and it has been six weeks since I interviewed?**

Patience is key! On occasion, schools do not meet their stated timeline for notifying an applicant. No news does not always mean bad news from a school. Waiting is part of the process.

**Is it ever appropriate to notify another medical school in a city you have been invited to interview that you will be in the area?**

You should only make this request if you are travelling an unusually long distance, but schools will vary in their response. Express gratitude for their consideration and any opportunity to interview whenever that may occur.

**What does it mean when my application is "on hold?"**

Likely, admissions committees want to review more applicants before they make a decision on your application. By late February/early March, most “on hold” applicants have either been invited for interviews or have been rejected.

**Letters of Interest, Updates or Intent**

**When should I send a “letter of interest?”**

A letter of interest is appropriate following placement on a waitlist or after you have received official notification from a school that your application is on hold. Reiterate or elaborate why you feel you are a good fit for this particular school and how you can contribute to the incoming class. The letter should be concise, focused, and no more than a few paragraphs.

Include your applicant ID number. It is important to follow specific-school directions for submitting additional information. Some schools discourage the submission of additional information, so respect their policy.

**How do I update schools on new activities or accomplishments?**

While this rarely influences decisions about your application, it is appropriate to include this in a letter of interest or when solicited by a specific school.
**When is it appropriate to send a “letter of intent?”**

We recommend students only send one “letter of intent” if you are on a waitlist of your top choice school after April 30th. The letter is only appropriate if you intend to matriculate to that school. It is not appropriate to send to schools where you have not received an interview invitation.

**Waitlist**

**What does it mean to be on a waitlist following an interview?**

This simply means the medical school has not accepted you as yet but it also does not want to reject your application. Notification of a waitlist status is a good time to send a follow-up letter of interest to express your continued interest in a school. Being on a waitlist means that you have a chance of being accepted and you should not lose hope. You can stay on waitlists well into summer, even if you are accepted to other schools.

**If I am on a waitlist, when might I be admitted?**

You will only be admitted when a spot opens. This can happen any time between May and matriculation.

Schools report that they accept the highest number of waitlisted students during May and June but can accept students later in the summer. You cannot accept an offer of admission from another school after you have started orientation at a school.

Please note after 5:00 pm on June 1, no medical school in Texas may offer a position to an applicant already accepted by another medical school in Texas. This is the result of an agreement between the UT System medical schools, Baylor College of Medicine, Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences School of Medicine, and University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth College of Osteopathic Medicine.

**Are waitlists ranked?**

Some schools rank their waitlist while others do not. Remember that you have been deemed qualified for admission by being placed on the waitlist. When accepted applicants withdraw from an incoming class, the medical school will look to admit waitlisted candidates who would best balance the composition of the class.

**Texas Match**

Texas resident applicants must rank all schools at which they interviewed regardless of whether or not a pre-match offer was received. Applicants holding a pre-match offer who have interviewed at school(s) that did not extend an offer may rank one or more of those schools higher than the pre-match offer school without risk of losing the pre-match offer. If an applicant holds a pre-match offer and matches to a school s/he has ranked more highly, the pre-match offer will be withdrawn. Pre-match offers will also be withdrawn through the match process from all other lower ranked schools. The applicant can...
still be selected by schools which s/he ranked higher than the school to which s/he matched. If applicants are holding multiple pre-match offers, they will come out of the match holding only one offer. A case study provided at the end of this document illustrates these points. Applicants who do not enter their match preference ranks by the deadline will automatically be withdrawn from all medical schools regardless of whether or not an early offer has been made.

Following the match, rolling admissions will continue through the beginning of orientation at each medical school. Medical schools will continue to make offers from their alternate pools which may include applicants who are currently holding an offer at another Texas medical school. However, the Texas medical schools have agreed that after June 1, no school may make an offer to an applicant already holding a place at another Texas medical school.

Texas resident applicants must rank all schools at which they interviewed regardless of whether or not a pre-match offer was received. The deadline for applicants to submit their match preference rank list online is January 18 by 5:00 PM (CT). Results of the match are announced on February 1 by 8:00 AM (CT). For more information on the match, please watch the following video.

**Getting Accepted**

I just received an acceptance letter. What do I do?

Congratulations! Celebrate this achievement. If you receive and hold multiple acceptances, you have until April 30th to narrow it down to one school. After this point, you are in danger of having offers rescinded. Once you have decided on your school, follow their instructions for submitting a deposit and any other steps they require.

Are there any advantages to interviewing at a school after I have already been admitted to my top choice?

No. If you continue to interview after being admitted to your top school, you are taking up valuable interview slots for candidates who may be interested or seriously considering that medical school. If you have been admitted to your preferred school, you have an ethical obligation to notify the remaining schools that you have accepted an invitation to attend elsewhere. It is never acceptable to no-show for an interview. This is a poor reflection of you and of Rice University. The OAA is typically notified of this behavior.

I am thinking about deferring admission for a year. Can I do that?

Each school has its own deferral policy. Some will only allow students to defer if they have received a significant opportunity, where others will allow you to defer with no issue. Check with each school regarding their policy. In general, we do not recommend students apply to medical or dental school if your intention is to defer your admission.

What do I do about schools that require a deposit? Will I get that money back if I choose not to matriculate?
Most medical programs have deposits of $100 or greater. The deposits are usually refundable before April 30 or will be applied toward your tuition if you ultimately attend the school. For many DO schools, the deposits are between $500-$1500 and are typically not refundable.

**What if I am accepted but my preference is to attend a school where I am waitlisted?**

You can stay on a schools’ waitlist until classes start. Keep in mind Texas medical schools will not offer positions after June 1 if you have already been admitted to another Texas program.

You should give a deposit to a school where you have been accepted. At some point in late spring or early summer, you should move forward with plans to attend the accepted schools because you will need to find housing, roommate, etc.

**April 30 & The Choose Your Medical School Tool**

**Why is April 30 important?**

AMCAS has Application and Acceptance Protocols that outline deadlines, policies and responsibilities. One policy states that applicants can hold multiple acceptances until April 30th of the year of matriculation. By April 30th, all applicants must select one school. Students must notify all schools of their decision or they risk having all offers of admission rescinded. Once schools know how many students will be matriculating, they may begin using their waitlist to fill any open spots.

**What is The Choose Your Medical School Tool?**

AMCAS created this tool to help applicants communicate their decisions about which schools they plan to attend and to support the schools’ enrollment management. Schools will only be able to access information about their accepted and alternate-list applicants. For more information on the tool, please see here.

**What if it appears I will not be accepted?**

*If I am not accepted this cycle, should I make alternative plans for next year and/or consider reapplying?*

This is a difficult decision that involves weighing how long to remain available for a medical school offer versus making alternative plans for the fall and beyond. Re-applying right away is not always the best strategy. You want to make sure your application is as strong as possible, which may mean you need additional time to address any areas of weakness in your application before applying again. Your second application should feature new and different experiences. These can range from additional coursework, volunteer work, research or more. Developing a new personal statement also helps demonstrate the additional experience and maturity you have gained since the last time you applied. While waiting before applying again may be frustrating, it often means the difference between being
accepted and not. Commit to spending the time to become the most competitive applicant as possible.

**When is the appropriate time to meet with the OAA staff if I'm not hearing from schools?**

You are advised to keep in touch with the OAA throughout the process, however if you have not received interviews by the end of December, you should contact us in the spring. Likewise, if you are on waitlists or on hold in May, you should speak to an advisor.

**Closing**

Please remember that the application process is long and challenging. Prepare ahead of time by reading the application service manuals when they are released in late spring. We understand it can be overwhelming but have patience. We wish you luck as you pursue your academic and professional goals.

**Resources**

Questions regarding your application should be directed to each application service.

- **American Medical College Application Service**
  - [https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/](https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/applying-medical-school-process/applying-medical-school-amcas/)
  - 202-828-0600
  - amcas@aamc.org

- **Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service**
  - [http://tmdsas.com/homepage.html](http://tmdsas.com/homepage.html)
  - 512-499-4785
  - info@tmdsas.com

- **American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service**
  - [https://aacomas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login](https://aacomas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login)
  - 617-612-2889
  - aacomasinfo@liaisoncas.com

- **AADSAS**
  - [https://www.adea.org/GoDental/The_application_to_dental_school__ADEA_AADSAS.aspx](https://www.adea.org/GoDental/The_application_to_dental_school__ADEA_AADSAS.aspx)
  - 617-612-2045
  - aadsasinfo@aadsasweb.org