Collecting Letters of Recommendation for the Health Sciences Advising Letter Process

Medical schools expect letters of evaluation from both academic and non-academic evaluators, and both types of letters will be included in your Health Sciences Advising (HSA) Letter.

Use the following as a framework for collecting letters:

- Two letters from science faculty
- One to two letters from non-science faculty
- Three letters from non-academic evaluators

Academic evaluators are instructors from whom you have taken a class. You may collect letters from other postsecondary institutions you have attended, but at least two of your academic letters must be from PSU faculty in order to utilize the HSA letter service.

- The only exception is for postbaccalaureate pre-med students who did not earn their bachelor’s degree at PSU; these students can collect at least two academic letters, with at least one being from PSU (it is still ideal, however, for postbac students to have two letters from PSU faculty and one letter from their undergraduate institution).

Non-academic evaluators are individuals such as work, volunteering, and research supervisors; physicians you have shadowed; and extracurricular and/or leadership activity advisers. Character references (letters from family friends, etc. with whom you have not worked, volunteered, or shadowed) will not be accepted.

To begin collecting letters, you must register for Interfolio, our electronic letter collection system, using the link below. Evaluators submit their letters electronically via Interfolio. Note: this Health Sciences Advising Interfolio account is available to all PSU pre-medical students, for collecting letters of evaluation, whether you utilize the HSA letter service or not.

Using Interfolio to collect letters of evaluation for pre-health students

Interfolio is a convenient way to begin collecting letters of evaluation in advance for your future applications to professional programs. You can also use your PSU-affiliated Interfolio account for utilizing the Pre-Health Advising Letter Service as part of your application to medical or dental school.

Create a PSU-affiliated Interfolio account:

To create an Interfolio account that will be linked with PSU Pre-Health Advising, please use the following link: https://account.interfolio.com/dossier/signup?selected_institution=22955

- Interfolio is a pay-to-use service with an account fee of $19 for 1 year or $39.90 for 3 years. For 2015-2016, our CLAS Advising office will have discount codes for 1 free year of Interfolio service. Details on how to receive these codes will be shared through the pre-med newsletter.
- Within the Personal Information section of the account settings, please add your PSU ID# and your AMCAS and/or AACOMAS ID# (once you have obtained them).
Note: If you would like to link your previously created Interfolio account to PSU’s Pre-Health Advising, please email Melissa Yates at melyates@pdx.edu and include the email address used to create your account.

Requesting Letters of evaluation:
Be sure to ask references if they are willing to write you a letter of evaluation before entering their information into Interfolio. After they have agreed to write the letter, let them know to look for an email from Interfolio, which will include instructions for submitting their letter of evaluation.

To generate the letter request in Interfolio:
- Sign into your Interfolio account
- Click “Request Recommendation” under the Dossier section.
- Fill in the required information with their professional contact information.
- Choose a document title (such as Recommendation from J. Smith for medical school)
- Be sure to click the option to indicate “This letter must be signed.”
- We also highly recommend that you select “This request is for a confidential letter or evaluation” (This waives your right to view the letter, since professional schools prefer confidential letters of evaluation.)

After continuing to the next page:
- Select “Email” for your request method.
- You have the option to attach additional documents for your letter writer to utilize in writing the letter.
  - Note: We recommend that you discuss with your letter writer in advance whether they would find additional documents helpful (e.g., resume, transcripts, personal statement).
- You can also provide the reminders for letter writers found on our website at http://www.pdx.edu/clas/health-sciences-advising-letter-service.
- When you click “Send Request” Interfolio will send an email to your letter writer with instructions on how to submit the letter of evaluation.

You can track receipt of your letters within your Dossier. You will see the date of receipt next to the letter listed in your Dossier but you will not be able to view the confidential letter.

If you have already collected letters of evaluation in veCollect:
- Create an Interfolio account using the link and instructions above.
- Email your pre-health adviser with the email address you have used to create your Interfolio account and the list of letters you wish to have transferred to Interfolio.
  - Your pre-health adviser will complete the transfer and you will be able to see the date your letters were uploaded to Interfolio next to the letter listed in your Dossier. You will not be able to view the confidential letters.