

How to Select and Approach Evaluators

Professional schools use letters of evaluation as important tools for screening applicants. These letters give professional schools valuable information about you that cannot be gained from grades or test scores.

Letters of evaluation are also important to the Pre-medical Council when writing your overall evaluation. You must provide at least five letters of evaluation, three of which must be from science or math faculty.

The Pre-medical Council will write a composite letter for your application to professional school. You should select a faculty member from the Pre-medical Council who best knows you and who will write a strong evaluation on your behalf. This letter consists mainly of five parts:

- Your waiver of rights to inspect the composite letter and evaluations as well as waiver of rights allowing the Council to gain access to your disciplinary records held in the Office of Student Affairs.
- A description of the student applying listing personal history, highlighting strong and weak characteristics, highlights of letters of evaluations.
- Verbatim reproduction of five or more letters of evaluation.
- Conclusion and summary.
- Attached letters from non-academic sources where applicable.

Evaluation letters should be solicited from people who know you well. Vague, generic, or non-committal letters are of relatively little value. Your letters should provide information about your motivation and dedication for pursuing your health career, and describe personal characteristics such as academic potential, maturity, integrity, empathy, communication skills, and leadership ability. Think carefully about who knows you best and who can write a good letter for you.

You should begin collecting letters of evaluation as soon as possible. When approaching someone to write a letter you should provide them with a photo of yourself, a resume, and a draft of your personal statement that explains why you are choosing to apply to professional school would also be useful.

Types of Evaluation Letters

- Combined Academic and Personal Evaluations:** These letters are written by individuals who can evaluate your academic ability as well as comment on your personal traits. People who might write such letters include your faculty advisor or lab supervisor. Perhaps you will approach a faculty member who can only attest to your academic potential but who cannot comment in detail about your personal characteristics. They should be able to go beyond stating what grade you received in a class or your class rank, and focus on your strengths and weaknesses on examinations, projects, classroom participation, and/or laboratory work. You need not focus only on science faculty—don't be afraid to go to professors in other areas of interest. Professors of classes in which you performed well and supervisors for independent research are examples of persons who may write this type of letter.
- Personal/Cocurricular Evaluations:** These letters are written by those who know you in a non-academic setting. They may write about your leadership potential, organizational skills, reliability, and other character traits, as they relate to your career decision and potential in a health profession. Persons who might write these letters include employers, student organization advisers, community service coordinators, or supervisors in health-related jobs and volunteer work. You may include these letters in your packet but don't overdo it!

The evaluators that you choose should present a balanced picture of you. For instance, you don't need everyone to talk about how well you perform in the sciences — make sure some of your evaluators can talk about other aspects of your personality.

Start by brainstorming a list of people you could ask for evaluations, and which of the above categories they would fall into. Combined academic and personal evaluations are the most effective, since they can speak to a number of your characteristics. If all of your evaluators do not know you in both areas, strive for a combination that will cover each aspect. For example, there is good balance in the following scenario: three Adelphi science professors (largely academic), a professor who taught you in a literature courses (academic/personal), the volunteer coordinator at a hospital where you volunteered (personal/extracurricular), and a lab supervisor where you did an internship (academic/personal). Letters from congresspersons, clergy, family physicians, or other "influential" persons are usually not acceptable unless they are based on a long-standing relationship during which you have worked for them or they have mentored you.

Approaching Evaluators

Once you have selected your evaluators, you should approach potential evaluators in a way that will make a favorable impression. Keep the following in mind:

- ✓ Ask for evaluation letters in person if possible, and as early as possible. Email or call a potential evaluator and set up an appointment to meet in person.
- ✓ Ask evaluators if they will be able to and are willing to write you a strong, positive letter of evaluation.
- ✓ Provide evaluators with additional information about your background and interests (i.e., giving them a copy of your resume, or a biographical sketch, is helpful).
- ✓ Discuss your qualifications with each evaluator and ask if they have questions for you.
- ✓ Agree on a basic timeline for completing the letters and turning them in to the Office of Pre-Professional Advising and Fellowships (OPPAF). Timing is very important when applying to professional schools.

Evaluation Forms

Obtain evaluation forms from the Office of Pre-Professional Advising and Fellowships (OPPAF). Clearly print your name and class, and the program to which you're applying (i.e., medical, dental, optometry). If you're applying to two different programs, consult with Erin Raia. It is preferred that letters of evaluation from faculty are emailed directly to Erin Raia at eraia@adelphi.edu and the original form can be sent via intercampus mail with the faculty member's signature. It is considered polite to provide any off-campus evaluator with a postage-paid envelope addressed to OPPAF, in which to return the evaluation form.

Contact

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