

To Individuals Writing Letters for Preprofessional Health Students:

The Division of Undergraduate Education, through its Prehealth Committee, collects letters of recommendation now through the veCollect system and establishes files for students desiring careers in the graduate health professions (allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, veterinary or chiropractic medicine). Students are explicitly informed that the Prehealth Committee packet inclusive of all individual letters may be used only for the purpose of applying to the professional health schools as listed above. Letters will not be forwarded to support research opportunities, other scholarship options, honors/awards or internship opportunities or potential employers unless it is a post-bac program or military Health Professions Scholarship Program.

Letters of recommendation written by individual faculty members are of particular importance to this file. A detailed, highly individualized letter can be of enormous assistance to a student. The point of this letter is to assess the student intellectually and personally as a potential contributor in the health professions. If the faculty member does not know the student well, he or she should either talk with him or her briefly, co-sign a teaching assistant's recommendation or decline to write the letter. Letters from individuals who know the students are the most helpful.

The letter of evaluation/recommendation is an important component of the application for the professional health schools. Letters of recommendation are traditionally written by individuals who have taught or who have worked with applicants in an instructional, laboratory, research or service setting. In selecting authors of letters of recommendation, applicants should seek out individuals who know them well, can speak to their abilities and have a good sense of their suitability for a doctoral level health career. The letter of recommendation, along with the professional school interview and personal essay, is generally regarded as a crucial source of information about an applicant's personal characteristics. On behalf of the applicants, thank you for taking the time to prepare a thoughtful evaluation for our students.

Most helpful content:

- explanation of the relationship between the applicant and the letter writer
- personal characteristics of the applicant such as integrity, reliability, determination, motivation, professionalism
- applicant's leadership qualities
- contrasted strengths and weaknesses
- descriptions of the applicant's social and interpersonal skills
- any academic performance of the applicant not included in the application
- knowledge of scholarship activities that go beyond the classroom
- interest in humanity
- commitment to service
- comparison to other applicants

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
Office of Prehealth Advising

Least helpful content:

- indicators of a lack of a strong relationship between the applicant and letter writer
- repetition of information from the applicant's resume
- unsubstantiated superlatives, vague generalities or lack of specific examples
- comments regarding grades in one particular class
- inclusion of information irrelevant to the professional health school application

The Prehealth Committee will then write a composite letter of evaluation for each student. Excerpts may be taken from individual recommendations as they depict characteristics that are useful to professional school admission. Letters of recommendation and the committee letter will be sent in their entirety to the designated professional schools at an applicant's request. The Prehealth Committee prepares letters for students applying to the Early Assurance Program or for regular admission. Your letter for a UB Medical Early Assurance candidacy is required by DECEMBER 1; a letter for a student applying to the committee in the spring is required by APRIL 15, and in the fall by SEPTEMBER 1. These dates are important because the Prehealth Committee must review a candidate's application before preparing the committee letter.

Since your letter is sent to each school to which the student applies, it is imperative that the letter be neatly typed and signed in full by the recommender. Please be sure to include your title. If any information is missing or in error, we will attempt to notify you. No letter is altered in any way by this office. The student must indicate whether or not the letter is to be confidential. If the student indicates that the letter is not confidential, then he or she has retained the right to review the letter at a later date. **Please use letterhead stationery and fax or email your letter as an attachment to veCollect.** If you choose to fax your letter please include the cover sheet/waiver form so that all are aware of the student's confidentiality intent (the cover sheet will be given to you by the student). If you use e-mail, no cover sheet is necessary as this information is already included in the e-mail instructions you receive from veCollect.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the application process or our program, please direct them to the Coordinator of Preprofessional Advising at (716) 645-6020. Or, for procedural questions, call Student Advising Services at (716) 645-6012.

To transmit letters:

By fax: The student will provide you with a two page cover sheet. Please fax both the cover sheet and the letter to 866-456-1794. Please do NOT include your own departmental/office cover sheet.

By e-mail: You will receive an e-mail from veCollect with instructions on how to e-mail your letter as an attachment.

A hard copy is NOT required for our office in 109 Norton Hall.