

IMPORTANT TIME SENSITIVE
INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS APPLYING
TO MEDICAL OR DENTAL SCHOOL IN 2021

THE HPO COMMITTEE PORTFOLIO REVIEW FOR THE 2021 CYCLE!

- Last year, due to the pandemic, we pivoted away from our old committee letter and interview process. The committee has been exploring this option for several years. Based on best practices from other comparable institutions, we moved to an in-depth portfolio review with qualified candidates and provided them with a generic, non-individualized letter of endorsement. This new process provides the opportunity for us to act as our students' coaches rather than as evaluators. It also helped ensure they understand the application process, as well as to address the best ways to highlight the strengths and work through any weaknesses in an applicant's portfolio. The student reviews have been very positive and so we are permanently discontinuing the writing of committee statements in favor of the portfolio review process. Please rest assured that medical schools will not penalize students whose institutions do not provide committee letters.

- To participate in the process, students must have an overall and HPOdrome science GPA of 3.4 or higher, have opened an HPO file by November 30, attend ONE of the workshops listed below, and meet all deadlines for submission of required materials.

- Again, attendance at ONE of these portfolio review workshops is mandatory to participate in this process. No preregistration is required and links for the virtual workshops will be posted on our website and via our listserv.

- Tuesday, December 22, 11am

- Thursday, January 7, 5pm

- Monday, January 11, 1pm

- Friday, January 22, 3pm

- Thursday, January 28, 4pm

Of course, regardless of whether you participate in the portfolio review process or not, the HPO will review the letters you have on file with us and create a packet of letters and upload them to the appropriate application services when you submit your release forms to us, as well as providing advising by appointment or walk-in.

WHAT TYPES OF LETTERS SHOULD YOU STORE IN YOUR HPO FILE?

The HPO can only send your letters to certain types of application services. Many application services will not accept letters from a third party but require the letters to be uploaded directly to the application service by the letter writer.

Since there are such significant differences in the way application services process letters, we recommend storing letters in your HPO file if you plan on attending medical, dental, podiatry or some graduate programs in the biomedical sciences.

Applicants to most medical, dental, optometry, and podiatry schools should use the beige HPO recommendation forms (found in our office or on our website) when requesting a letter. This form should be used whether or not your

letter writer is located on campus.

Envelopes are also available in the office for students to include with the form for the letter writer to mail their completed letter and recommendation form back in if they wish. The form and letter can also be emailed by the writer directly.

These letters can be collected over the course of the undergraduate education at Rutgers and are sent together as one packet from the HPO when students eventually go to apply to schools.

We recommend students interested in other areas open a file to be used for advising purposes and to get on our mailing list through which we send out lots of relevant information for all health professions students.

Applicants to other types of health related programs may find that these applications require your evaluators to fill out information on you as a student not available through the HPO, such as how the letter writer would rank you in a class.

Therefore, students applying to these programs should either have their letter writers submit their letters to the application directly, or obtain an email or mailing address for their programs that the HPO can mail their letters to separately from the application itself. The HPO will not submit letters through a link sent to the office that is directly part of an application.



More Tips On Letters of Recommendation

- Students must have a file opened up at the HPO in order to collect letters of recommendation and keep them on file until application time. During the pandemic, this must be done through email: hpo@dls.rutgers.edu.
- The HPO will send out letters to any type of academic program or scholarship, as long as it is not employment related. For this type of letter release, the general release form must be filled out and returned to the HPO will the addresses listed for each school or program.
- Please note, it is not the responsibility of the HPO staff to ensure that you have met the requirements for your chosen program. If applicable, please specify any letter requirements that the application may ask of you on the release form before you submit it and check that HPO has all of your letters before submitting your form.

HOW MANY LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION DO I NEED?

Many undergraduate students wonder: how many letters of recommendation do they need to be considered a competitive applicant? Well, it depends. The minimum number we recommend is 5, but most importantly, you need enough material to support your goal of getting into your top school.

Some of the letters will need to convey your aptitude for science courses because most of what you can expect to take in medical or dental schools are science courses. For this reason, at the bare minimum, we recommend two science academic letters. For them to be the most useful, they should be from upper-level courses where you would have more interaction with your instructors. If you are a science major, it is expected that you will have two letters from upper-level science instructors. In fact, the

lack of a science letter, for a science major, is a glaring omission.

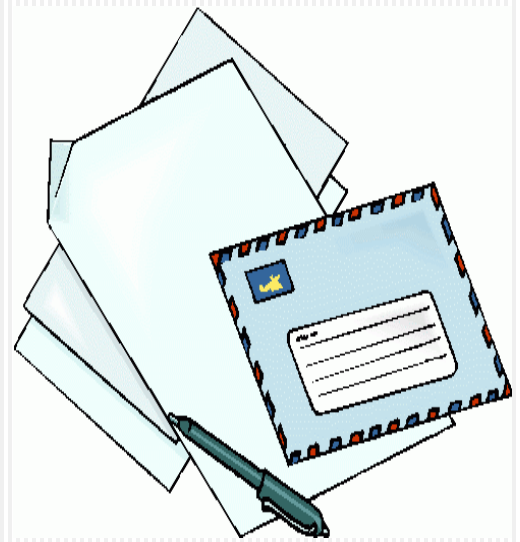
You need a non-science, academic letter to indicate that you are well rounded, and have interests other than medicine. Also, if you have done research, and you do not have a letter from your lab supervisor, it may be a red flag.

A letter from an MD or DO or DMD or OD... is an excellent addition to your file, because the doctor/dentist can explain about your suitability for the field in a way that no one else can. In fact, these letters are highly recommended for a variety of health professions.

If you are professing a love of working with children/seniors... A letter from someone with whom you have worked in this capacity would be helpful (i.e., someone who supervised paid or volunteer work). Again, this shows how you get along in different environ-

ments and emphasizes that you are a well-rounded candidate.

You need to carefully plan which letters you will seek and not just be satisfied with what you can get. They need to reflect you as a student/applicant and what you are telling the schools about yourself.



Monthly Featured Career: Nursing

Nursing offers a wide range of career opportunities—from entry-level practitioner to doctoral-level researcher. Nurses are hands-on health professionals who provide focused and highly personalized care. They are also in demand—employment of registered nurses is projected to grow 16% from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Nurses promote health, prevent disease and help patients cope with illness. They have a unique scope of practice and can practice independently, although they also collaborate with all members of the health care team to provide the care needed by each patient as an individual. Nurses advocate for their patients and patients' families. They develop and manage nursing care plans and instruct patients and their families in proper care. As educators, they help whole communities by teaching individuals and groups how to take steps to improve or maintain their health." Taken from <https://explorehealthcareers.org/field/nursing/>.

For more information about becoming a nurse, please visit: <https://hpo.rutgers.edu/explore-health-careers/nursing>.