Villanova University Health Professions Advising

Application Information for Medical, Podiatry, and Dental Applicants

2016 Application Cycle

Application programs typically open on June 1 for the next application cycle. You begin the process by first accessing the required Villanova forms and documentation either via the “Application Materials” folder on the main content page of the HPA Blackboard site (see instructions at the end of this handout if you have not as yet completed the self-enrollment process to join the HPA Blackboard site) or via the Health Professions Advising (HPA) website (www.healthprofessions.villanova.edu) and specifically the “Applying” subpage (which contains links to required forms).

Your next step is to get motivated to complete paperwork and get started on your application ASAP! Consider the following elements as critical for successful application preparation:

(1) Application submission timing: the earlier the application is submitted to the professional school online system, the better. These are rolling admissions processes therefore be prepared to have all components of the application finalized by June/July so you can get the primary application submitted by mid-summer.

(2) Completion of required forms for the HPA Office, which should be downloaded from the HPA Blackboard site (“Application Materials” folder) or the HPA website “Applying” page and typed (in as much as possible) prior to submission to the HPA Office (Mendel 143).

- You MUST submit PAPER COPIES of these forms to the HPA Office. We will not accept email copies of paperwork. Exceptions will only be made for alumni who are no longer physically on campus or students completing study abroad in spring semester.
- This paperwork MUST be submitted as a COMPLETE packet as soon as possible but NO LATER than the day of your committee letter meeting.
- If you are a re-applicant for the coming cycle you must submit all new copies of this paperwork.

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM – This simple form provides important information for the HPA Office to be able to track your progress in compilation of the entire application packet. This allows us as to know who your letter writers are and when all letters of recommendation have been received as well as tracks your submission of any required fees and documents. NOTE if you change your letter writer list, you will need to submit a NEW (updated) Personal Information Form in paper copy to the HPA Office.

2. Either the WAIVER or NON-WAIVER FORM – the HPA Office MUST have one of these forms on file prior to submission of letters of recommendation.

3. DISCIPLINARY REPORT - The top portion of this form MUST be completed by you. The HPA Office collates report request forms and sends them in bulk to the Dean of Student’s Office at the end of spring semester prior to the start of the application cycle. This form is NOT required for alumni applicants who graduated from Villanova at least one year ago.

(3) Submission of the following forms specific to medical school applicants via Drop-boxes available on the HPA Blackboard site: The deadline for submission of these forms is November 1, 2015. NOTE that we will not complete your letter packet upload into the professional school application system if we
do not have these forms on file. While the deadline is November 1, 2015 you should submit complete and accurate copies of these forms as soon as possible so as not to affect the timing of letter packet submission. We will not accept these forms as email attachments.

1. **AUTHORIZATION OF RELEASE FORM** - *For medical school applicants only*, this form should be completed once you have accessed the AMCAS or ACOMAS application systems and have an application number(s). Complete the form which asks you to identify programs to which you want the HPA Office to release your letter packet in support of your application.

   - When you upload the form in the Drop-box on the HPA Blackboard site, the information MUST be ACCURATE and UP-TO-DATE.
   - If you edit your school list after you uploaded an Authorization of Release form to the Drop-Box you will have to print a new copy of the form and drop it off in the HPA Office or send it via regular mail if changes are made over the summer.
   - **Adding osteopathic schools late in the process is not a strategy for success.** If you are considering those programs research them early because many require a letter from an osteopathic physician to be part of the letter packet. Trying to connect with a D.O. at the last minute and then asking them to write you a rushed letter of recommendation will not give them confidence that you have fully considered these schools as places that match your personal expectations and thus the letter will not be strongly supportive.
   - **You do not have to create separate letter packets for allopathic and osteopathic programs.** If M.D. schools see a letter from a D.O. as part of your packet it will not be a considered a negative. **If you do want to prepare a separate letter packet it will be considered a second application by the HPA Office and therefore you will need to pay two processing fees** since we are preparing two separate letter portfolios to upload into the online portals.
   - **If a school does not receive a letter packet upload and they are not part of the broader AMCAS school list, it was because you did not check that program on this form.** With the large number of application packets that we compile and process, it is not the responsibility of the HPA Office to verify information on this form. **It is your responsibility to provide us with accurate information as the process moves forward.**

2. **AMCAS LETTER REQUEST FORM** - *For medical school applicants only*, this form is made available to you once you have initiated an AMCAS application and designated Dr. Russo as the committee letter writer. Download the form from AMCAS and upload it via the specific Drop-box that is available on the HPA Blackboard site. We cannot upload your letter packet into AMCAS if we do not have a copy of this form.

   - **If you are using a committee letter from Dr. Russo**, DO NOT LIST NAMES OF EACH of the EVALUATORS submitting recommendations (that are part of the packet). In the AMCAS application recommendation section choose committee letter, enter only Dr. Russo as the evaluator.
   - **If someone is submitting a separate letter for you** (meaning it will not be submitted to the HPA Office for inclusion in the letter packet), then you should list that individual separately in the AMCAS recommenders section. This individual will receive an email communication from AMCAS with instructions on how to access the application system to upload their letter directly. This is ONLY recommended when a letter writer may be submitting their letter very late and you do not want to hold up completion of your letter packet submission for that one individual.

(4) Letters of recommendation: **it is recommended to have a minimum of 3 but no more than 5 letters submitted in support of your application.**

   - For professional programs such as these **it is expected that TWO letters come from science faculty.** The remaining letters can be from VU faculty who teach outside the sciences, club advisors, academic advisors, research mentors, etc. You may also consider asking practitioners
that you worked with during volunteer or shadowing activities provided that they can comment with some depth on your attributes as a candidate for a health professional degree. Letter writers should be willing and able to address your qualities as an applicant including professionalism, work ethic, suitability for the career, dedication, passion, reliability, ability to face challenges, communication skills etc. Consider your letter writers carefully.

- **Letter writers must submit both the evaluation form** (available on Blackboard in the application materials folder) and **a crafted letter printed on letterhead and signed**. If letters arrive that are not on letterhead or signed we will not include them in the letter packet. We will notify you that there is a problem with the letter so you can contact your letter writer to have it corrected. The HPA Office will not contact letter writers to ask for format changes in a letter.

- **Letters should be sent directly to the HPA Office.** Once a letter is received, we place it in your application folder and will incorporate the entire letter into a packet with the committee letter which is then uploaded by the HPA Office into your active online application.

- Consider these important suggestions/reminders as you select your letter writers:
  - **Identify your letter writers early** – be respectful of the time that faculty and other professionals must invest in writing you a letter of recommendation by making your requests as early as possible. Considering the application timeline, letters should be submitted to the HPA office by late June if you plan to submit the application by mid-summer. Some letter writers may not be able to meet that timeline. Always ask a letter writer about the feasibility of them completing their letter within this time frame.
  - **Prepare a professional resume to provide letter writers** so they can review your academic accomplishments (honors and awards) as well as enrichment activities, work experience, athletic commitments, etc. This knowledge may not change what they include in a letter but it may provide greater context for them in crafting a recommendation.
  - **Request a meeting with the letter writer** (if at all possible) and supply them with materials that they may like to review in advance (such as your resume, personal statement). Some letter writers may not need to do this, but you should always offer these materials and the opportunity for a meeting and leave it up to them to decide if it is necessary.
  - **Send a thank-you note** (handwritten is preferred, email is acceptable) to letter writers after the letter has been submitted. This is a courtesy to acknowledge their time investment and willingness to support you in the pursuit of your professional degree. Get in the habit of sending thank-you notes.....it is a professional courtesy to acknowledge the efforts of others!
  - **You can send non-VU letter writers a pdf version of the evaluation form if necessary.** The form is available as a pdf entitled “Evaluation form for Recommenders” either off the HPA website under the “Applying” sub-page or on the HPA Blackboard site under the “Application Materials” folder. **Non-VU letter writers may submit a scanned copy of their recommendation form and letter to the HPA Office via email or interoffice mail** (send to Ms. Gadonas or Dr. Russo). Simple electronic Word documents cannot be accepted unless it is on letterhead, is dated, and has a signature.

- **When completing an online dental school (AADSAS) application**, in the Evaluators Section select: electronic; enter: Dr. Louise Russo, Committee Letter, and provide her email address (louise.russo@villanova.edu). If this is done properly, Dr. Russo will receive an email from AADSAS with information for uploading your letter packet. **NOTE** DO NOT LIST EVALUATORS INDIVIDUALLY unless you are asking someone to submit their letter separately into the AADSAS system.

(5) **Committee Letter: you MUST meet with the Health Professions Advisor (Dr. Russo) to obtain a committee letter for the application.** Most medical/dental schools will not consider an application from a current or recent undergraduate student from Villanova if a committee letter is not included unless there is a compelling reason. These programs know the structure of our pre-health student support process and value the context provided by the Health Professions Advisor in the committee letter that supports each applicant from that institution.
Dr. Russo announces availability of appointment times via the HPA Blackboard site and sign-up for a meeting time for the committee letter will also be completed through the HPA Blackboard site.

**This is the MANDATORY procedure for obtaining a committee letter:**

(a) **Submission of the pre-meeting materials packet prior to the committee letter appointment:** You will be required to prepare a materials packet as a single electronic file (pdf preferred) named by your Last name. First name and submitted via the Drop-box available on the HPA Blackboard site. The **deadline for submission of this material packet is March 22, 2015** regardless of when your committee letter appointment is scheduled. **NO EXTENSIONS will be granted. Outcomes for those who miss the deadline are covered below....**

The packet is to contain all of the following items:

1. **Updated Online Resume:** each student seeking a committee letter **MUST** complete the **Online Resume Tracker.** This resume tracker is available on the main Content page on the HPA Blackboard site. One page resumes that you might use for a job application are NOT acceptable for this process. Dr. Russo requires detailed information including dates, supervisors for activities, descriptions of your work/contributions, etc.

2. **Applicant Pre-meeting Questionnaire:** The questionnaire is available in the “Applicant Materials” Folder on the HPA Blackboard main Content page. Take your time when providing answers to the questions. This questionnaire provides supplemental information that is critical for Dr. Russo when preparing the committee letter. Please provide depth in the responses...a single sentence response is not sufficient!!

3. **a copy of your most recent CAPP report and academic profile plot:** access the profile plot via the HPA Blackboard application materials folder and use the separate GPA calculator to enter the GPA values into the plot.

4. **a copy of your polished Personal Statement:** this cannot be a rough draft...it should be in near complete form.

- **If you fail to submit these items by the MARCH 22, 2015 deadline you will not be able to schedule a committee letter meeting in spring.** A new Drop-box will be made available in August for students who missed the March 22 deadline if they want to schedule a committee letter meeting at the start of fall semester. The deadline for submission in fall will be September 6. **There will be a VERY LIMITED number of meeting slots available in fall so do not count on this as a fall-back plan to receive your committee letter.**

- **Do not submit individual files....you MUST create a compendium of all of the items prior to upload.** A pdf compendium is preferred.....this is easy to do with Adobe Acrobat using the “Create” tab at the top left corner when viewing a document in Adobe:

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Click the arrow to the right of “Create” and select “Combine files into a single pdf.” A new window will open.....
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You can then select files to open and then combine them. Move the files (up or down using the arrow tools located on the bottom left) so that your Online Resume table is the top item...followed by the other items in order as listed above (ii through iv above) before you complete the combination process. If you make a mistake, the drop-box will allow repeat uploads up to the deadline date.

(b) **Sign-up for an appointment with the Health Professions Advisor through the HPA Blackboard site.** Appointments WILL NOT be made via email request or through Ms. Gadonas. Exceptions are ONLY granted for students who are studying abroad or alumni who live out of the area.

- **To get an appointment** you will need to log into the HPA Blackboard site and look for the folder on the main Content page titled “Applicant Appointments Spring 2015”. You will find subfolders titled by date and then within those folders a link to the sign-up sheets for appointment time slots on that date. You must add yourself to a time slot but be sure to only sign up for ONE appointment time.
- **If you change your mind after signing up for a slot**, the system will not allow you to un-enroll. You will have to contact Dr. Russo to ask that you be taken out of a time slot so it can be made available for another student.
- **Appointments will be available mid-March and extend into final exam week.** Slots are limited so if you hope to complete an application over the summer you should NOT wait long to grab a meeting slot in this spring semester schedule. *Slots fill quickly so procrastinators may be left with slots only during finals week!*
- **If you miss the meeting process in spring semester (which ends the first week of May)** you will not be able to schedule a committee letter appointment until the start of classes in fall semester. Exceptions will only be made for students who are studying abroad or alumni who could not make it to campus for a meeting.
- **Re-applicants** need to upload a new pre-meeting materials packet so that the committee letter may be updated however you do not need to schedule another on-campus committee letter meeting with Dr. Russo. If you would like to do so you may but it is not required.

(6) **Standardized test scores:** to have your application completed in a timely fashion, you should plan to take the MCAT or DAT exam no later than late spring (first time date in April or May or early June) so that you have a set of test scores available BEFORE you submit the primary application. It’s important to know where things stand with the application exam before you commit to submitting an application. Once you push the submit button, you can’t take it back! Note that you can re-take the exam later in the summer if desired. You are advised NOT to wait until
early fall (September) to take the exam for the first time because that will delay submission of your application until late fall and some schools will not consider applicants whose first time exam date is after September 1. While a late date won’t absolutely doom your chances of getting an interview, it will impact your success because you entered the applicant pool very late.

(7) **Transcripts**: you must make a request through the Registrar’s Office to have your official transcript sent to the appropriate application system. In some cases you have to download a form from the application system that must be completed and forwarded to the Registrar’s Office to be sent along with the transcript. **Transcript requests at Villanova should be done through the Registrar’s online request process (through their website).** The additional form from the application service may be uploaded as an attachment when you submit the request. **NOTE that you will have to submit an official transcript from ANY university where you took classes.** The application system provides details on how to manage study abroad courses.

(8) **Processing fee**: a **$20.00 processing fee must be paid to the HPA Office** (cash or a personal check made payable to Villanova University) prior to uploading your letter packet into the professional school application system. If you are not on campus, you may mail a check to the following address:

Health Professions Advising Office  
Mendel Science Center, room 143  
Villanova University  
800 Lancaster Avenue  
Villanova, PA 19085
**Spring Semester Timeline for the Application Paperwork and Committee Letter Process for the 2016 Application Cycle:**

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<tr>
<th>Deadline Date</th>
<th>Item(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 22, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-meeting materials packet for the committee letter</td>
<td>Compilation of the following in ONE electronic file <strong>uploaded via the Drop-box on Blackboard:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Online resume&lt;br&gt;CAPP report&lt;br&gt;Academic plot&lt;br&gt;Pre-meeting questionnaire&lt;br&gt;Polished Personal Statement&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>If these items are not submitted by the deadline date you will not be able to arrange a committee letter meeting in spring semester. NO EXTENSIONS will be granted.</em></td>
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<td>ASAP but <strong>NO LATER than the day of your committee letter meeting</strong></td>
<td>Portfolio Basic Forms required by every applicant receiving a committee letter including:&lt;br&gt;1. Personal Information Form&lt;br&gt;2. Waiver or Non-Waiver Form&lt;br&gt;3. Disciplinary Report Form (not required for alumni who have been out of VU for at least one year)</td>
<td><strong>Print copies of the forms (typed) must be submitted to the HPA Office as soon as available but NO LATER than the date of your committee letter meeting.</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Failure to submit these in advance of the meeting will result in cancellation of your appointment forcing you to re-schedule at a later time.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1, 2015</td>
<td>Authorization of Release for medical applicants&lt;br&gt;AMCAS letter request form for medical applicants</td>
<td>Items are uploaded into the appropriate Drop-box on the HPA Blackboard as soon as they are complete/available ...but NO LATER than November 1.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>NOTE</em> that even though you have until Nov. 1 to submit these forms, we CANNOT upload your letter packet into the application portal(s) without them!</td>
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How to Enroll in the HPA Blackboard Site:

Log into Blackboard

Look for a folder on the right side of the mainpage entitled “Organization Catalog” and select the subfolder entitled “Available for Self Enrollment”

You will see the Villanova HPA course appear on the organization list. DO NOT click directly on the name of the course (this will give you an error message), click on the arrows adjacent (or below) the course title and then select the “enroll” option to get into the course.

Once you are enrolled, you can then click on the course name to access the site. You arrive at the Information page where we post announcements. To access content items, you have to select the Content page.

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Mendel Science Center, room 143
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Dr. Louise Russo: Health Professions Advisor (louise.russo@villanova.edu)
Ms. Christine Gadonas: administrative assistant (christine.gadonas@villanova.edu)