VCU Pre-Health Advisory Committee
Guidelines for Writing Letters of Evaluation

The VCU Pre-Health Advisory committee will provide supportive letters of evaluation for those VCU students who are applying to medical and dental school programs and present strong credentials to the committee. Among the credentials reviewed are letters of evaluation from professionals who have a strong relationship with the applicant.

Applicants who have successfully completed the Pre-Health Advisory Committee process will have their committee letter and their individual letters of evaluation transmitted to all professional programs to which a student applies through the Office of Pre-Professional Programs Advising.

Students who do not successfully complete the Pre-Health Advisory Committee may still have their letters of recommendation collected and transmitted by the Office of Pre-Professional Programs Advising, however the student will not receive a letter from the Committee.

Confidentiality of Letters of Evaluation:

Letters of evaluation (often recommendations) are an important part of each medical or dental school application. Admissions officers and staff, admissions committee members, and pre-health advisors have a mutual responsibility in keeping the information conveyed in letters confidential, unless explicitly indicated otherwise by the letter’s writer. A confidential letter signals to the reader the letter’s writer expectation that his/her comments will be shared only with the audience for whom they are intended and not shared with the applicant or anyone else for whom the information is not intended.

Writing Strong Letters of Evaluation:

The following information is aimed to enhance the letter writing process in order to benefit both letter writers and admissions committees. The Pre-Health Advisory Committee will be evaluating pre-medical and pre-dental students on the core competencies and holistic review metrics listed below.

Core Competencies for Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Students

- **Thinking & Reasoning Competencies**
  - Critical Thinking
  - Quantitative Reasoning
  - Scientific Inquiry
  - Written Communication

- **Intrapersonal Competencies**
  - Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
  - Reliability and Dependability
  - Resilience and Adaptability
  - Capacity for Improvement

- **Science Competencies**
  - Living Systems
  - Human Behavior

- **Interpersonal Competencies**
  - Service Orientation
  - Social Skills
  - Cultural Competence
  - Teamwork
  - Oral Communication
Holistic review metrics for Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Students

- Cumulative GPA
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math (BCPM) GPA
- Grade trend
- Health care experience
- Shadowing hours
- Community service
- Leadership experience
- Research experience
- Life experience
- Diversity (broadly defined)
- Obstacles overcome
- Maturity/Respect
- Motivation
- Inquisitiveness/Intelligence
- Intrapersonal skills
- Interpersonal skills

How to use the core competencies and holistic review metrics:

Please note that letters of recommendation are not required to include information about a student’s core competencies or their metrics - these are optional. The information provided above is for letter writers to utilize in a way that makes sense to them and to each individual student. These are the measures that the Pre-Health Advisory Committee will use to evaluate each student.

Medical and dental schools do not expect any one letter writer to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant. In fact, they require multiple letters specifically because no one letter writer is expected to showcase every aspect of each applicant.

Submission of Letters of Evaluation:

You will receive an email on behalf of the student from the VE Collect, a system for collecting letters of evaluation. Details regarding the submission process are outlined in the email that you will receive. Letters of evaluation must be on official letterhead and contain a written signature.

Address letters to:

Mrs. Sara Loritsch  
Chair, Pre-Health Advisory Committee  
VCU Pre-Professional Programs Advising Office  
P. O. Box 842532  
Richmond, VA 23284

If you have any questions or concerns, please email prehealthadv@vcu.edu or call 804-827-848 for a Pre-Professional Programs Advisor.