

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS:

This packet is designed to be of assistance as you apply to post-undergraduate programs. It includes information regarding policies/procedures specific to Lewis University as well as material that is pertinent to the broader application process. Please speak with your advisor if you have any questions that are not addressed in this packet.

STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Register for/take the standardized test required for admission. Not all programs have a standardized test that is required – consult your sophomore review to determine if your program requires a test. Things you need to be aware of:
 - a. Many tests have limited test dates (the MCAT, for example, only offers 20 test dates the entire year).
 - b. Many tests have limited seating on any test date/location. Do not assume that you can get into a test site/date at the last minute. Even advanced planning/registration might not give you the date or location you initially desired.
 - c. Some tests will give you an estimated score the day you take the exam (ex: GRE). Others, like the MCAT, will not give you a score until 4-6 weeks after you take the test. Please understand that letters of recommendation REQUIRE that you submit a copy of your test report. This should factor into your plans/timeline.
 - d. There are limitations on some tests. For example, you may take the DAT 3 times in your lifetime. The GRE allows you to retake once every 21 days but only 5 times within a 365 day period. We suggest that you prepare so that you only take the test once. Find and utilize test preparation materials (i.e., practice tests) at least 6 months in advance of your test date.
2. Once you have your test scores, make sure your scores and your GPA meet the minimum criteria for requesting a letter (guidelines included in this packet). Also make sure you have completed (or have a plan for completing) all the pre-requisite courses for your program(s) of interest.

3. Start the centralized application process (health professions) or individual application process to each program. Things to keep in mind:
 - a. Centralized application services have specific “open” and “closing” periods. The open date, in particular, is of great importance. The closer you submit your application to that open date, the greater your chances for success. Conversely, your chances for success exponentially decrease – especially in competitive pools – if you wait to submit your application till the deadline/close date.
 - i. Traditionally, these dates (approximately) have been followed by centralized application services; please note, these are ONE YEAR (or more) BEFORE matriculation:
 1. CASPA (PA programs) – April 15
 2. AMCAS (Allopathic Medicine) – May 1
 3. AACOMAS (Osteopathic Medicine) – May 1
 4. VMCAS (Veterinary) – May 15 (closes Sept. 15)
 5. AADSAS (Dental) – June 1
 6. PTCAS (Physical Therapy) – July 1
 7. OptomCAS (Optometry) – July 1
 8. PharmCAS (Pharmacy) – July 1
 9. OTCAS (Occupational Therapy) – July 1
 10. AACPMAS (Podiatry) – August 1
 - ii. Allied Health Fields also have specific application dates; contact the affiliate program to determine when the application cycle opens.
 - b. Once you have submitted your material to the centralized application service, it can/will take a month OR MORE for them to verify your information BEFORE they release the material to the individual programs. So, you might submit your material to PTCAS on August 1, but they will (most likely) not send your application to the schools you are interested in until September 1 or after. APPLY EARLY!!!! Admissions are offered the minute the first application is processed; waiting to apply vastly diminishes your potential for success.
4. Securing letters of recommendation
 - a. You must submit a formal request to receive letters of support from any faculty member in the Natural Sciences or Mathematics departments (refer to request form in this packet). This request can be submitted electronically (preferred) or in hard copy to the Pre-Professional or Allied Health Director.
 - i. While a formal request is submitted to the Pre-Professional or Allied Health Director, it is generally considered “good form” to ask the author(s) in person if they are willing to compose a letter for you. Let the author(s) know you have submitted your request to the Director when you have your conversation.

- b. Out of respect for faculty, a 30 day turn around period is guaranteed (that is, letters will be written/submitted within 30 days of the request, if the request is honored). While we try to submit letters sooner, sometimes schedules do not allow for this. Please do not wait till the deadline for submission to request letters of support.
 - c. Faculty do have the right to refuse a request. If the faculty does not feel he/she can compose a supportive letter or cannot meet the deadline(s), the student will be notified and asked to provide alternative name(s) for author(s).
 - d. A copy of the standardized test score (where applicable) must be submitted with the request. No letters will be written without this score report. The report need not be an original; a screen shot, photocopy, or the like is completely acceptable.
 - e. Some programs have specific forms that must be included with the letter of support. In such cases, it is your responsibility to obtain copies of the form and get them to the Pre-Professional or Allied Health Director. These forms often require your signature as well as additional information. Please fill them out before you submit.
 - f. **MEDICAL/OSTEOPATHIC program applicants** – please note that these schools **generally prefer a COMMITTEE letter** as opposed to individual letters of support. The committee, made up of two faculty from Biology, one from Chemistry, one from Physics, and one from Math, will work collectively/collaboratively to compose a single letter to submit on your behalf.
 - g. **LETTERS FROM HEALTH PROFESSIONALS** must be secured by the applicant (you) directly. Most schools require letters both from faculty as well as a professional “in the field.” It should also be noted that Allopathic (M.D.) programs prefer/require an M.D. to compose your letter while Osteopathic (D.O.) programs require a D.O. Thus, if you are applying to both Allopathic and Osteopathic programs, you will need to secure two different professional letters of support to make your application as competitive as possible.
5. Once your application is complete, the centralized service will verify your transcripts. ALL TRANSCRIPTS will be used to calculate your GPA (your Lewis GPA is only one piece of the application). Again, this verification can take a month or more.
 6. The centralized application service will then forward your application on to the programs of interested. Many (most) programs will send you secondary applications and ask for additional paperwork (and an additional fee to be submitted).

7. Completion of the secondary application will allow your file to be reviewed and, if your application is deemed competitive, you might be extended an interview. Interviews are often granted on short notice (a few weeks out from the interview date) and will require you to provide your own transportation, food, and (where applicable) accommodations. Think about this when you are considering where you will be applying as this can add substantial cost(s) to an already expensive endeavor.

We hope this provides you with information and insight that will be of use as you begin your application process. As always, please work with your advisor on any issues that might arise.



Pre-Professional Recommendation Request:

All students seeking letters of recommendation for post-undergraduate education IN ANY FORM need to complete this form and submit it, along with an official copy of standardized test scores (*ie*, MCAT, OAT, GRE, PCAT, DAT, or other) to the Health Professions Advisor no less than 30 days prior to the due date of the letter. Late requests may not be honored.

NAME: _____

MAJOR(S): _____

GPA: Cumulative _____ **GPA in the Major (majors classes only):** _____ **Hours completed toward degree:** _____

Program(s) to which the student will be applying: Since centralized application services are the “norm” for most programs, please list the service (e.g., PharmCAS, AMCAS, etc), the method of submission that the student will use (on-line to service, Interfolio, etc), as well as pertinent deadlines for submission (keeping in mind the 30 day turn around period). For our record keeping purposes, we ask that you also include the specific institutions you will be submitting your application to via the centralized service.

Centralized Service(s) – if applicable:

Programs (what specific program(s) are you applying to?):

Faculty member(s) requested by student to write letter(s): Please fill in the blanks ONLY as needed (i.e., if your school requires two letters, fill in two faculty requests).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

**Please be mindful that individual letters are generally not preferred for Medical/Podiatric School applicants. In these cases, the applicant is encouraged to request a committee letter (committee members – Pre-Professional Director, Biology faculty/chair, Chemistry faculty/chair, Physics faculty/chair, and Mathematics professor).

Has the student included a copy of standardized test scores (where applicable)?

YES

NO (no letter will be written without scores)

Other useful information we need:

- 1. What professional experience have you accumulated or extracurricular activities have you been involved in that you will be listing on your application? (ex: shadowing hours, volunteer service, work experience, etc)** a resume can be submitted in lieu of this information**

- 2. What courses are REQUIRED for the programs you are applying to? What grades have you earned in those courses? If you have not taken a course yet, please just put TBD as the grade.**

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- 3. Is there any other information you feel might be valuable to share with the faculty as they compose their letters?**

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Recognizing the central importance of standardized scores as well as undergraduate GPA in the health professions application process, letters of support from faculty in the Natural Sciences and Math require that students achieve the following minimum criteria. These criteria do not reflect “competitive” applicant scores but, rather, “threshold” scores to meet minimum expectations.

MEDICAL (Allopathic/M.D. and Osteopathic/D.O.):

1. MCAT - 24 (three 8s on the past test); 497 on new exam (40th percentile composite; subsections of 125 - roughly 50th %tile - or higher in the “science” components)
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

PODIATRY:

1. MCAT - 20 (no score less than a 6); 492 (25th percentile; with “science” subsections 123 - roughly 33rd %tile - or higher)
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

PHARMACY:

1. PCAT- 40th percentile or higher (or 35th percentile with Science subsections 60th percentile+)
2. GPA - 2.75 or above

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

1. GRE - 40th percentile or higher (preferred 150+ in each subsection)
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

DENTAL:

1. DAT - 17 on Academic Average as well as Total Science
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

VETERINARY:

1. GRE - 150 or higher on all subsections
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

OPTOMETRY:

1. OAT - 290 or higher (300 = 50th percentile; competitive = 315 or above)
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT:

1. GRE - 40th percentile or higher (preferred 150+ in each subsection)
2. GPA - 3.0 or above

CHIROPRACTIC:

1. NO standardized test is required
2. GPA - 2.75 or above