

The Application Process

Marist College Pre-Health Professions Committee (also see “**Committee Letter of Evaluation**”)

It is the **student’s responsibility** to know the requirements (coursework, entrance exams, practical experience, application deadlines, costs, etc.) for the health professional programs to which they are applying. Frequent visits to your academic advisor and the Advisor to the Health Professions (Dr. Joseph Bettencourt, Jr.), as well as interactions with other Marist pre-med and pre-health students can help you meet these responsibilities.

Although application processes vary a bit among programs, medical schools are primarily addressed here. Other programs may have different deadlines, but the key take-home message – **that getting started early is a great advantage** – applies to all applicants to graduate and professional schools!

Timing

For most students, the process of applying **begins during the Fall of the Junior Year**, if you anticipate starting medical school in the fall after you graduate. If you plan to sit out one year after graduating, then you must start the application process during the Fall of your Senior Year. If you will be studying abroad during Fall of your Junior Year, then you should discuss (with Dr. Bettencourt) ways in which you should start part of the application process early.

Each Fall, Dr. Bettencourt will hold a **mandatory meeting for all juniors** who intend to apply to medical, dental, veterinary, and other health professional schools at the start of their senior year. **Seniors** who intend to take a year off prior to starting professional school also must attend this meeting. At this meeting, we will review the timing of the application process, emphasize the critical nature of solid preparation for admissions exams, and distribute the necessary forms and information you will need to undergo the application process.

By the time you start the application process (i.e., by Fall of the Junior Year), ideally you should have completed all the pre-requisite coursework (two semesters each of general biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and general physics, all with laboratory, as well as two semesters of English and any other requirements that are listed by schools to which you plan to apply).

Also, **by Fall of your Junior Year**, you should be making plans to take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test), the DAT (Dental Admission Test), or other required exams in April of your Junior Year, if you have not already taken it in August preceding your Junior Year. If you delay taking these exams until the August prior to your Senior Year, then you will severely compromise your likelihood of acceptance.

The Pre-Health Professions Committee, as well as the College’s Pre-Med/Pre-Health Advisory Board, very strongly recommends that students enroll in an MCAT review course prior to taking the MCAT.

Registering With the Pre-Health Professions Committee

If you have not already done so, you must register with the Pre-Health Professions Committee. You also must inform the Committee Chair, Dr. Joseph Bettencourt, Advisor to the Health Professions, of your intent to apply. You can do both by visiting his office (DN 109B) or via e-mail at Joseph.Bettencourt@marist.edu. Dr. Bettencourt will maintain a file for you. This file will contain:

1. Your **Autobiographical Information Form**, available on this web site or from Dr. Bettencourt. This form asks you for information as well as essay answers to several questions. The form must be completed and submitted to Dr. Bettencourt no later than March 1 of your Junior Year (or March 1 of your Senior Year if you plan to take time off after graduation).

2. At least five (5) substantive [Letters of Evaluation](#) from professors, research advisors, practitioners in the medical field, and/or professional mentors. Letters from friends, family, coaches, clergy, etc., are not helpful.
 - At least 2, and ideally 3, letters should come from faculty in the sciences. If your major is outside the sciences, then at least 1 additional letter should come from a faculty member in that discipline.
 - In addition to non-science faculty, at least 1 letter should come from a practicing physician (or dentist, or veterinarian, etc., depending upon the type of school to which you are applying).
 - If you are applying to osteopathic schools, remember that most require that 1 letter comes from a DO.
 - It is **ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE** that you request Letters of Evaluation from faculty, etc., during the Fall of your Junior Year. Faculty members, health care professionals, and others are often asked by several individuals to write letters of recommendation, and they have to fit this activity into an already very busy schedule. It is common courtesy to provide plenty of advanced notice to those who have agreed to help you, and to thank those who have written letters for you.
 - These letters must be received by Dr. Bettencourt by no later than March 1 of your Junior Year, and must be accompanied by the signed Request Form (available on this web site or from Dr. Bettencourt), which you must provide to those individuals who have agreed to write letters.
 - Exceptions to the March 1 deadline may be made for students who turn in exceptional performances in Spring courses and for whom this documentation adds significant strength to the overall application.
 - All individual Letters of Evaluation will be sent along with the composite letter (see document titled “Committee Letter of Evaluation”) to those schools to which you are applying.
3. Copies of all **Transcripts** of all college/university level work. Dr. Bettencourt can obtain a copy of your Marist transcript. You are responsible for providing copies of all other transcripts by no later than March 1 of your junior year.
4. **List** of all schools to which you plan to apply, submitted by March 1 of your junior year. This list can be amended after this date.
5. A **copy of your MCAT score report** as soon as it is available (typically 5-6 weeks after taking the MCAT; thus we do not need to have scores prior to scheduling a Committee interview)

We cannot schedule a Pre-Health Professions Committee interview until your file is complete, and we will not write a [composite letter of evaluation](#) until after the interview. Interviews are generally scheduled in April-June of the Junior Year so that the composite letter can be completed in early summer.

If you miss the March 1 deadline for submitting these items, then the Pre-Health Professions Committee is under no obligation to schedule an interview or complete a composite letter until after September 1 of the same year.

Applying

You should mail your completed applications to AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service) and AACOMAS (American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service) as soon after June 1 (just after Junior Year) as possible. **We cannot stress how important it is to get your application submitted early!** You should obtain copies of these applications and begin working on them as soon as possible during Spring of your Junior Year. Completing the Autobiographical Information Form the previous Fall will give you a good head start on completing the applications.

After several weeks, you will receive secondary applications from most of the schools to which you have applied. Because Admissions Committees cannot consider you until these are completed and returned, **do not delay after you have received them** (aim for no more than 2 weeks turnaround time)!