

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation from NMSU Pre-Health Professions Advising

Before making the decision to request a Letter of Recommendation, students need to consider why they're asking Pre-Health Advising for a Letter of Recommendation. Health School Admissions Committees are looking for recommendation letters primarily from science and non-science faculty they've learned under, physicians or other practitioners they've shadowed, research mentors or volunteer experience supervisors. The most weight is given by admissions committees to the first two. NMSU Pre-Health Advising does not offer a Pre-Health Committee letter. Applicants will need to have individual letters submitted on their behalf.

Admissions committees want to see thoughtful and positive letters written by someone who knows the applicant well. At a large campus with nearly 13,000 undergraduate students, it can sometimes be very difficult to really get to know faculty members. However, it's still the responsibility of the health school applicant to cultivate these relationships. Being at a large institution will not exempt anyone from needing well-constructed letters of recommendation.

For students who cannot find a sufficient amount of letter writers, we would strongly encourage them to consider that the lack of quality letters, means that they may not be ready to apply during the current application cycle. It may be beneficial to seek out and develop professional relationships in the upcoming year to gain positive letters of recommendation, to make them more competitive for the next application cycle.

If students aren't able to find a sufficient amount of high-quality, positive letter writers, the following process CAN be used in order to acquire a recommendation letter from the Pre-Health Advising office. However, it must be stressed that even going through this process, the letter that is written is not guaranteed to be the kind of high quality, positive letter that health school admissions committees will find competitive. The resulting letter could be generic and such a letter will not help them get into health school. It may be a red flag to an admissions committee that the student really isn't ready to apply yet.

Instead of gaining a perfunctory and generic letter from the Pre-Health Advising office, students may be better off waiting until they can gain a letter of recommendation that will truly add something positive to their application versus just "checking off the box" of having the sufficient amount of letters.

With all that being said, students still desiring a Letter of Recommendation from the Pre-Health Advising office, need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Student must have completed all core pre-health coursework (2 Semesters each of General Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, General Physics plus at least one semester of Calculus or higher).
- Student must have earned a GPA of 3.4 or above in pre-requisite science courses and overall.

Students who meet the criteria above, should submit a completed "Pre-Health Interview" packet to the Pre-Health Advising Office either in person to Garcia Center 129, or via email at vbanuelo@nmsu.edu before an interview appointment will be scheduled. The Pre-Health Interview packet includes:

- 2 Letters of Recommendation (at least one from science faculty)
- A copy of your personal statement
- Completed "NMSU Pre-Health Interview Form"

Appointments will be scheduled no earlier than one week after the Pre-Health Interview packet has been received. The appointment will be interview-style with a discussion based on the materials submitted. Each appointment will be no longer than 30 minutes.

The Pre-Health Advising Office reserves the right to decline to write a letter of recommendation for any student, especially when there hasn't been a sufficient amount of interaction with Pre-Health Advising.