



**Health Professions Advising Office
Committee Letter Process for Admission Fall 2018**

The committee letter is San Diego State University's endorsement of your application for admission to medical or dental school. **For these health profession schools, the committee letter is usually required for applicants whose colleges or universities provide such a letter.** The SDSU committee includes 2-3 SDSU faculty members and the director of the Health Professions Advising Office.

Committee letters can add important information and support to your application; however, the committee's rating of your application does not guarantee an interview or offer of admission regardless of high the committee rating is. The committee letter is the "icing on the cake" for an already competitive application and does not in any way compensate for or replace the components of a strong application.

The committee letter is based on the information you are asked to provide (see below) as well as the committee's evaluation and overall rating of the strength of your application, and your readiness to apply.

You may:

- go through the committee letter process one time only.
- go through the committee letter process only for the upcoming application cycle and not for any future application cycle.
- request one update to your committee letter should you not be accepted this application cycle.

Your committee letter is written for application for admission to one health profession only. Committee letters will not be provided for anyone applying for admission to more than one health profession (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, etc.).

Committee letters will not be updated or forwarded as part of your application for admission to another health profession during a future cycle.

Committee Rating Scale

Most highly recommend: This individual represents the very best of our candidates and has demonstrated a clear understanding of and commitment to becoming a physician/dentist as evidenced by exceptional experiences and personal attributes. We believe this individual will be a physician/dentist and leader who will make positive contributions to medicine and to society.

Strongly recommend: We are confident the candidate demonstrates skills, experiences and personal attributes to be successful in medical/dental school and as a physician/dentist

Recommend: We believe the candidate should be successful in medical/dental school and then in the profession although there are some deficiencies in academic preparation or experiences.

Postpone: The applicant demonstrates strong potential to become a competitive applicant and will be advised to continue to develop/enhance his/her academic record and/or further develop other components of the application.

Not recommended: There is little or no evidence the candidate is prepared to be successful in medical/dental school. The applicant will be counseled about next steps, either remediation or seeking a different profession.

Requirements for a Committee Letter

1. Intent to Apply

For 2018 admission, you must complete and submit the **Intent to Apply Form by January 15, 2017**. Email this form to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu. In the subject line, enter "Intent to Apply."

2. GPA Requirement

To request a committee letter, you must have a

- **minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA**
- **minimum 3.25 science GPA**

If either of these GPA's is 3.0-3.24, you may submit a written appeal to the HPAO director outlining your reasons for requesting an exception. An **appeal to waive the GPA requirement** must be submitted to the HPAO director by **January 15, 2017**. Email this to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu. In the subject line, enter "Committee GPA Appeal."

If your appeal is not approved and you choose to move forward with your application, HPAO will provide a letter packet with a cover sheet and your letters of recommendation.

Few students are admitted to medical or dental school with GPA's below 3.25, and for those accepted there are compelling and specific reasons for accepting that applicant, e.g., significant upward grade trend, "distance traveled," or exceptional experiences and background beyond the admission test score and GPA. If you have questions, be sure to make an appointment to see the HPAO director prior to the January 15, 2017 deadline.

3. CV/Resume

Submit via email to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **January 15, 2017**. In the subject line, enter "Committee CV/Resume"

4. Autobiographical Questions

Answering these questions will help you determine if you have a strong application and are ready to apply. *These questions will also help you generate ideas for your personal statement. Give careful consideration to your responses. This information will go to the committee members for review and will be used in the committee letter to provide background information about your life and preparation and motivation for your chosen health profession.* Submit to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **January 15, 2017**. In the subject line, enter **Autobiographical Questions**.

5. GPA Calculations – Cumulative and BCPM (Medicine) or ADEA Calculated Cumulative and Science

For medical school applications, use the AMCAS GPA Calculator Excel (Google this). For dental school applications, use the ADEA GPA Calculation Instructions (handout). Submit these in pdf format to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **January 15, 2017**. In the subject line, enter "Committee GPA Calculations."

6. Personal Statement

This does not have to be the final draft of your personal statement, but it must be close to a final draft, since committee members will review this. If you are applying to MD programs, you may also submit the three most meaningful activities you will enter on AMCAS.

- **Include your name, the date, and *Personal Statement* in the upper right corner.**
- Be sure to adhere to the character limit required by your health profession. (MD 5300, DO and DDS 4500, all characters including spaces)
- **MD applicants: AMCAS also provides an opportunity for you to address your three most meaningful activities.** Including these along with your personal statement will provide valuable additional information for the committee.

- o Activity description – 700 characters (counting spaces)
- o Why this activity was important/transformational - an additional 1325 characters (counting spaces)

Email this as a Word document to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **March 5, 2017**. In the subject line, enter "Committee Personal Statement" or "Committee Personal Statement and 3 most important activities."

7. Career Services Mock Interview

Call 619-594-6851 to schedule. Mock interviews should be completed by **March 5, 2017**.

8. Letter of Recommendation (LOR) form

This is a list of your letter writers with their contact information (email and phone). You will receive this form via email. Type the information and email this to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **March 5, 2017**. Enter "Committee LOR List" in the subject line.

Committee Letter Update

If you **went through this year's committee process** and **applied to medical or dental school** but are not accepted, you will be eligible to request an update to your committee letter to apply for the next cycle if you meet the following requirements:

1. An **Intent to Re-apply** form that includes specific and detailed information about what you have done to improve your application since you first submitted it.
2. **One additional recommendation letter** supporting what you have done since your committee review.
3. MCAT or DAT scores

You must meet these requirements for an update to your committee letter—no exceptions. If your re-application update is incomplete, we will still forward a letter packet with your other letters of recommendation/evaluation to your CAS with a cover sheet only. Submit the completed Intent to Re-apply to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu by **March 15, 2017**. In the subject line enter "Intent to Re-apply."

A committee letter update may not be used for application to a different health profession program.

Next Steps in the Committee Letter Process

1. Start work on autobiographical questions
2. Attend a Fall or Spring semester personal statement writing workshop.
3. Attend a Fall semester interviewing workshop
4. Start or continue working on your personal statement
 - Use the resources in the Writing Center for review and/or schedule a review with the CASA writing tutor (GMCS 322).

No materials for committee review will be accepted after March 5, 2017—no exceptions.

Committee Interview

Committee interviews will take place late March through June. When notified, schedule a one-hour block Committee interview time. You will receive an email with a link to a Google doc to choose an interview time.

Finalizing your Application for Submission

1. **Schedule the MCAT or DAT.**
 - a. **Be sure you are ready to take the test.**
 - b. If you are not prepared to do well (particularly based on your practice tests), you should not apply until you have a competitive admission test score.
 - c. While you may submit your application to AMCAS, AACOMAS, or AADSAS without the test scores, your application will not move forward for review by the medical or dental schools without this information.
 - d. **Plan to have received your test scores no later than August 1 (and preferably much earlier) for optimal consideration.** Almost all medical and dental schools use “rolling admissions” which means they are evaluating complete applications, scheduling interviews, and making admission decisions throughout the admission cycle. **APPLY EARLY!**

2. **Request your letters of evaluation/recommendation.**
 - a. Identify your recommendation/evaluation letter writers early in the process. Your letter writers should be those who know you well and can speak to your qualifications and readiness for your health profession program. **Check the schools to which you plan to apply to determine if they have specific requirements for who writes your letters.**
 - b. Complete and submit the Letters of Recommendation form no later than **March 5, 2017**. (This form will be sent to you via email.) Complete and email to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu and indicate in the subject line *Committee LOR* list.
 - c. **Two of your letters should come from science faculty who have taught you.** An MD letter is usually not required, but many schools will require or recommend a DO or a DDS/DMD letter.
 - d. Other letter writers may include non-science faculty, community members, others who know you well although NEVER family members, even if they are healthcare professionals. Check school requirements.
 - e. Complete and provide an HPAO Request for Letter of Recommendation/Evaluation form to each of your letter writers.

You cannot be required to waive access to your letters, but health professions schools prefer that your letters are confidential and that you have waived your right to see them. Letter writers tend to be more candid when writing confidential letters.
 - f. Provide your recommenders with your personal statement, resume/CV, and any other information they request. **Do not write your own letter for their signature. If this is an issue, see the HPAO director.**
 - g. Give your letter writers ample time, but **we should have received at least one letter prior to your committee interview.** However, no committee letter will be written before HPAO has received all your recommendation letters.
 - h. You do not have to have your recommendation letters before you submit your application.
 - i. **You will receive an email when an LOR is received. It is your responsibility to follow up to ensure that all your letters have been received.**

3. **Ensure that ALL your letters are received in HPAO no later than July 15, 2017.**
 - Your committee letter packet cannot be uploaded until **all** your letters are received.
4. Attend one of the workshops *Applying to Medical School (MD and DO)* or *Applying to Dental School* during the Spring semester.

Submitting your Application

APPLY EARLY!

Submit your application to your Centralized Application Service (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS) **no later than July 1 (and preferably sooner)** for best consideration of your application.

1. **You do not have to have your letters or test scores to submit your application.** It will take 4-6 weeks for CAS verification of transcripts and GPAs. Letters and test scores can follow.
2. Request your transcripts **after** you start your online application.
 - a. Print out the *Transcript Request Form* to take to the Registrar's office.
 - b. **You must submit transcripts from every institution you have attended even if these courses appear on your SDSU transcript.**
 - c. The Transcript Request form will include your AMCAS, AACOMAS, or AADSAS ID, essential to matching your transcripts to your application.
3. For Letters of Recommendation/Evaluation, choose Committee Letter (not Letter Packet) and enter only one name and one email address: Gwendolyn Hill ghill@mail.sdsu.edu
 - a. The Committee Letter will have **all** your individual letters attached.
 - b. If you have an additional (usually outside) letter to add, enter that as a separate individual letter.
 - i. AADSAS considers the committee letter as three of the four allowed letters. You may add an additional letter.
4. **All your letters of recommendation must be received before your committee letter will be written.**
 - a. Provide ample time for your recommenders to submit their letters to HPAO, preferably by **June 15, 2017**
 - b. **Ensure that ALL your letters are received in HPAO no later than July 15, 2017.**
 - c. Your committee letter packet cannot be uploaded until all your letters are received.
5. Committee letters will be written and uploaded between the first Monday in June when the first Centralized Application Services open and July 31. **The committee letter will not be written until we have received a pdf of your SUBMITTED application, including both AMCAS and AACOMAS if applicable. Email to healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu. In the subject line enter Application PDF. Committee letters will not be written after July 31.**
6. Complete and return all secondary/supplemental applications to the individual schools within 2 weeks of receiving these.
 - a. You will receive some secondary/supplemental applications before your application has been verified. Other schools will screen before sending secondary/supplemental applications.
 - b. Do not wait until the deadline to return these.
 - c. Your application will not move forward without this information.

Interviews and Acceptances

Attend an interview workshop.

Notify HPAO when you are called for an interview if you would like to come in for a mock interview.

You will receive the *Application Summary Report* form after your committee letter is uploaded to AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, or Interfolio for AACPMAS. Please keep the office updated about your applications, interviews and acceptances.

Contact HPAO whenever you have questions. We are here to support you!

Remember this is a journey, not a race, and everyone's path is different. Take the DAT or MCAT when you are ready, and never "just for practice." Apply in a timely manner (early in the cycle) and only when you are ready and know you are competitive.

There are never guarantees for admission, but preparing to be the most competitive applicant you can be is always your best bet. Your efforts will pay off!

IMPORTANT DEADLINES for COMMITTEE INTERVIEW/LETTER

No materials for committee review will be accepted after March 5, 2016—no exceptions.

| DEADLINE | SEND TO healthpr@mail.sdsu.edu | EMAIL SUBJECT LINE |
|----------------|--|---|
| Jan 15, 2017 | Intent to Apply form | Intent to Apply |
| | Autobiographical Questions | Autobiographical Questions |
| | CV/Resume | Committee CV/Resume |
| | GPA Calculations | Committee GPA Calculations |
| | GPA Appeal (if applicable) | Committee GPA Appeal |
| March 5, 2017 | Personal Statement(s) – Word document AMCAS 3 most important activities | Committee Personal Statement OR Committee Personal Statement and 3 Most Important Activities |
| | Career Services Mock Interview | No documentation required |
| | Letters of Recommendation form (list) | Committee LOR Request |
| March 15, 2017 | Intent to Re-apply form | Intent to Re-apply |
| July 15, 2017 | ALL recommendation letters received by HPAO (preferably June 15) | N/A |

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