

Requirements for a Medical School Committee Letter

Are you considering applying to medical school this June? If so, your application will be strongest if you obtain the backing of a **Committee Letter** written by Lake Forest College's Pre-Health Advising. This letter will draw from qualifications such as your academic skills, research, internships, test scores, personal core competences, personal statement, other spoken languages, and recommendations from individual evaluators, including health professionals. We send a single PDF that contains such a committee letter in addition to the complete letters of recommendation from your evaluators to AMCAS, AACOMAS or AACPMAS. If you are an alum taking gap years, or you would like a committee letter for another health profession (e.g. physician assistant), we would be happy to provide a committee letter if you qualify—please contact the Pre-Health Advising Chair to learn more. (kirk@lakeforest.edu)

If you are considering asking Pre-Health Advising for a committee letter, you must make an appointment with a member of the committee and be prepared to discuss whether you have many of the following:

- ✓ Excellent average total GPA and science GPA (BCPM). Successful students might earn, for example, a science GPA of 3.75 for allopathic medical school, 3.55 for osteopathic medical school, and 3.4 for podiatric medical school. National average science GPA for 2017-18 matriculants in allopathic medical school was 3.64.
- ✓ Demonstrated difficulty of courses, breadth of courses, and overall course load (4 vs 3 courses, number of laboratories) are taken into account.
- ✓ Research experiences (Richter program, independent research projects on or off campus, senior theses).
- ✓ Solid MCAT score. Successful students might earn, for example, 508 or greater for allopathic medical school, 503 or greater for osteopathic medical school, and 498 or greater for podiatric medical school. The national average MCAT score for 2017-18 matriculants in allopathic medical school was 510, although all applicants had an average score of 505.
- ✓ Personal core competencies (service orientation, cultural competence, ethical responsibility, capacity for improvement, etc.), described by you and those who know you.
- ✓ Strength, quality, and number of Letters of Recommendation (LORs). Successful students may have five or more letters from two full time science professors who taught them in lab or advised in research, one faculty member outside of the sciences (humanities), and one or two health professionals such as a physician. In some cases, an LOR may be obtained from a coach, a volunteer coordinator, a director of tutoring center, or a religious leader, although such letters are not necessary and will not substitute for physician or faculty letters. *LORs should not come from family connections.*
- ✓ Clinical experiences (number of hours): volunteering (shows you are willing to give your time), various shadowing for DOs, MDs or other health professionals, internships at clinical sites or scribing (clinical experiences can be greatly enhanced in gap years).
- ✓ Peer teaching, shows you will be able to explain concepts to patients.
- ✓ Work to help pay expenses while you are in school shows organization and determination.
- ✓ Speaking a second language (e.g. course level of Spanish, or primary language at home, etc.).
- ✓ Academic, athletic, leadership, or community service awards or experiences.
- ✓ Depth of personal statement and desire to become a physician.
- ✓ APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY EARLY JUNE TO BE COMPETITIVE

If you have misdemeanors or incidences of academic dishonesty, discuss with a member of pre-health committee.

1. By May 1, complete and submit to the Chair of Pre-Health Advising the form "Request for a Committee Letter from Pre-Health Advising." <https://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/programs/prehealth/forms.php> Email or scan (or photograph) the completed form.
2. Request LORs and ask that they be sent to the Chair of Pre-Health Advising, *signed and on letterhead.*
3. Send your resume, personal statement (can be a draft), and MCAT score to the Chair of Pre-Health Advising Committee (kirk@lakeforest.edu) soon after May 1. Your MCAT scores must be available before we will write a letter, hopefully by June 1.

In the future, when you are invited to an interview: notify Pre-Health Advising, schedule a mock interview, and inform us if you are accepted!