

Pre-Health Advising *through* **The Pre-Professional Health Committee (PPHC)**

www.usfca.edu/pphc

Join the PPHC Group:
on USFConnect,
go to *groups—special groups—PPHC group*

Open a PPHC Advising File:
See Professor Niles during drop-in hours, Harney 359

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The PPHC: The Pre-Professional Health Committee (PPHC) serves to guide students as they pursue entrance into professional health programs, such as those in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, optometry, veterinary medicine, and podiatry. In addition, the Committee may recommend a candidate for admission to professional programs in the form of a “committee letter”. Many professional schools either prefer or require a recommendation letter from a pre-professional health committee. While using the PPHC is optional, it is in the student's best interest to take advantage of the services of the Committee.

The health professions candidate: You may complete the pre-health science requirements as a part of, or in addition to, the requirements of your academic major. For example, if you are interested in attending medical school, you will be completing courses to fulfill your major and the core curriculum, as well as specific course work required or recommended by medical schools. While most pre-health students major in Biology or Biochemistry, it is not necessary to do so. It is important that you choose a major that reflects your particular interests, abilities, and strengths. This is important for a number of reasons, including –having an undergraduate experience that is a positive and fulfilling one!

Always check the particular requirements for admission to programs in which you are interested.

Typical science course prerequisites

General Biology, two semesters, lecture-lab

General Chemistry, two semesters, lecture-lab

Physics, two semesters, lecture-lab (may be a non-calculus-based course)

Organic Chemistry, two semesters, lecture-lab

Biochemistry, one semester, lecture

One year of college math

NOTE: 2nd semester lab is not typically required. Also, a few schools accept a one-semester version of Organic Chemistry with lab in conjunction with one semester of Biochemistry.
Always investigate requirements of individual programs.

How to Take Advantage of the PPHC

The Pre-Professional Health Committee

Freshman Year

- Consider career options
- Volunteer / work in professional health settings
- Talk with and shadow working health professionals

and beyond . . .

Sophomore Year

Open a PPHC file (See Dr. Niles in Harney 359).

Investigate professional schools, view web sites, study published materials.

Junior Year

Fall Semester:

Request recommendation letters from faculty, employers, and supervisors

Spring Semester:

Register for the admissions test, if required:

- Check deadlines for test registration
- MCAT** is offered several times a year, computer-based
- The **DAT** is offered year-round, computer-based
- OAT:** Feb, Oct; **PCAT:** Jan, March, Oct

Consult with Dr. Niles to:

- Check the status of your file:
Is it complete or nearly complete?

Your file MUST BE Complete by May 1st

Consult with Dr. Niles to:

- Secure an interview with a member of the PPHC
- Select a member of the PPHC who will compose your Committee letter.

Begin application process beginning in May-June

Most programs use an online application service:

- AAMCAS -allopathic medicine
- AACOMAS -osteopathic medicine
- AADSAS -dentistry
- VMCAS -veterinary
- PharmCAS -pharmacy

**Your Committee Letter
must be written by
September 1st**

Senior Year

- Complete secondary applications as requested
- Request that recommendations be sent by the PPHC to designated schools (See Dr. Niles)
- Prepare for interviews

Develop your study skills

Seek tutoring as needed

Hone your problem solving abilities

Explore other career paths

Identify your strengths & weaknesses

Discover who you are as an individual

Attend USF's
"Health Professions Mentor Night"
every October
and
"Health Professions
Alumni-Student Dinner"
every April

Taking Advantage of the PPHC: the details

Once you have firmly decided on a health professions path, and once you have decided to use the PPHC, it is time to open a **PPHC file**. Most students do this sometime in the sophomore year, but, at the very latest, you should start the file by the beginning of the second semester of your junior year. **Your file MUST BE Complete by May 1st** of the year you are applying (your junior year).

How to open your PPHC file:

1. Indicate your intention to seek a final evaluation and recommendation from the PPHC by meeting with Dr. Niles and by completing and submitting the three forms described below. These forms are available in this packet, in the Biology Department Office, on the Pre-Health bulletin board across from the Biology Office, and at www.usfca.edu/pphc

A. Waiver Statement Form: Decide whether you would like your file to be *closed* (closed to your inspection) or *open* (open to your inspection) and complete the appropriate (OPEN FILE or CLOSED FILE) waiver statement. A closed file is recommended.

B. Candidate Information Sheet: The information you provide will help the Committee learn more about you and serve you better. The sheet also provides space for you to list your science and math classes and figure your science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math) GPA.

C. Candidate Agreement Form: complete this form in consultation with the Chair of the PPHC.

2. Request **Letters of Evaluation:** At least four letters of evaluation are required. It is important to obtain evaluations from individuals **who know you well**.

- Consider asking professors, employers, supervisors, health professionals, etc, who have worked with you closely, have known you long enough to write with authority, and who have an overall positive opinion of you and your abilities.
- Meet with the prospective letter writer to make your request, and to explain your goals.
- Provide the letter writer with a packet containing your contact information, a brief statement of your career goals, a summary of projects completed or grades earned in association with the writer, a resumé, and the following information: to whom the letter should be sent (this information is available on the "Evaluation Request Form"; it is recommended that you use this form as a cover sheet), and the date by which the letter is due. Note: letters are due by May 1 of your application year. However, you might consider giving an "early" due date instead of the May 1 deadline. In any case, it is customary to give a letter writer at least three weeks to complete the letter.
- Check with Dr. Niles periodically, by email, to see if she has received the letters you requested.
- Thank your letter writers and keep them posted on the results of your application.

3. Submit a brief (3 to 5 page, double-spaced, word processed) **autobiography**. The autobiography should include pertinent information that provides the PPHC with insight into your background, experience, attitudes and goals.

4. Submit a **resumé** that provides a chronology of jobs, activities, awards, etc.

5. Submit your **admissions test results** (MCAT, DAT, OAT, PCAT). If at all possible, these results should be available before the committee letter is written

Submit PPHC file materials (waiver statement form, candidate information sheet, candidate agreement form, letters of evaluation, autobiography, resumé, and admissions test results) to:

Dr. Mary Jane Niles
Department of Biology
Harney 359
niles@usfca.edu

Except for admissions test results, file materials are due **by May 1** of your application year

What to do once your file is complete

A complete file contains a waiver statement form, candidate information sheet, candidate agreement form, at least 4 letters of evaluation, an autobiography, and a resumé.

1. Meet with the Chair of the PPHC (Dr. Niles, **X2354**, **niles@usfca.edu**) to talk about your status and arrange interviews (typically two, each with a member of the PPHC), and to determine who will author your Committee Letter of Recommendation. ***Interviews and Committee Letters are arranged only in consultation with the Chair of the Pre-professional Health Committee.***

Typically, PPHC members in the sciences write committee evaluation letters, while those in the arts or administration conduct the interviews.

Members of the Pre-Professional Health Committee:

Dr. Thomas Cavanaugh Professor, Philosophy 422-6356	Dr. Susan Prion Assistant Professor, School of Nursing 422-6936
Mr. Richard Cooper Assistant Director, Admissions 422-6563	Dr. Patricia Schulz Professor, Biology 422-6367
Dr. Karen Francis Assistant Professor, Exercise and Sport Science 422-6265	Dr. Gary Stevens Professor, Biology 422-6276
Dr. Jeremy Howell Associate Professor, Exercise and Sport Science 422-6875	Dr. Christian Thompson Associate Professor, Exercise and Sport Science 422-5270
Ms. Rebecca (Liddle) Cisek, MEd, ATC Head Athletic Trainer Adjunct Professor, Exercise and Sport Science 422-6841	Dr. Christina Tzagarakis-Foster Assistant Professor, Biology 422-6820
Dr. Charlene P. Lobo Soriano Director, The Learning & Writing Center 422-2510	Dr. Lisa Wagner Associate Professor, Psychology 422-5828
Dr. Kathryn Nasstrom Associate Professor, History 422-6074	Dr. Brian Weiner Associate Professor, Politics 422-6861
Dr. Mary Jane Niles Professor, Biology 422-2354	Dr. Alan Ziajka Director of Institutional Research 422-2846

2. When the interviews are complete, make an appointment with Dr. Niles to discuss your overall evaluation, and the status of your committee letter.

3. When a school to which you are applying requests a packet of evaluation letters (usually during the secondary application process), email Dr. Niles to request that she send the letters out. Be sure to concisely state the name of the school/s, and any particular requirements they have regarding letters. See your Candidate Agreement Form for further instructions on requesting letters.

4. **Please inform the Committee**, through the Chair (Dr. Niles), **of the interviews and acceptances you are offered**, and where you decide to matriculate. Also inform the Committee if you are not accepted, or if your plans to apply change.

Unless you advise us to hold your file, it will be destroyed 3 YEARS after you leave USF