INFORMATION SESSION FOR COMMITTEE APPLICANTS TO HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS 2021-2022 CYCLE

'68 CENTER FOR CAREER EXPLORATION — WILLIAMS COLLEGE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021 AT 12:00PM EASTERN

Information updated as of 01/08/2021 and is subject to change.
AGENDA

- Introduce your Science & Health Professions support team
- Cover key concepts that are foundational to admission processes of health professions training programs
- Describe key applicant competencies for acceptance and matriculation
- Explain the timing of different application types
- Outline the Williams College Health Professions Committee process for matriculation in 2022 (the next possible cycle)
- Cover preliminary questions that you might have as you start this process
SCIENCE & HEALTH PROFESSIONS TEAM

We are here to support you throughout this process – from exploration to matriculation, and beyond!

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  *Health Professions Advisor*
  
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HOW DO I KNOW IF I’M READY TO APPLY?

- You should apply to medical/dental/veterinary school or other health professions school **when you are in the best possible position for potential success** – this might look different for each applicant!

- The *Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide* and our office can help guide you through this important decision.

- What are some factors to consider in making that decision?
The Association of American Medical Colleges or [AAMC defines “holistic review”](https://www.aamc.org): “Holistic Review refers to mission-aligned admissions or selection processes that consider a broad range of factors—experiences, attributes, and academic metrics—when reviewing applications. Holistic review allows admissions committees to consider the ‘whole’ applicant, rather than disproportionately focusing on any one factor.” (Source: AAMC)

- *In other words, holistic review “is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities” and readiness “by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics... and, when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value as a medical student and future physician.” (Source: AAMC)*

- Core Competencies defined by the [AAMC](https://www.aamc.org)
- Core Competencies defined by the [ADEA](https://www.adea.org)
Health professions schools review applications holistically. Some factors that they consider include:

- Cumulative GPA/Science (BCPM) GPA
- Admissions Tests (MCAT, DAT, GRE, etc.)
- Depth of Health-Related Experiences
- Community Service/Advocacy Experiences
- Extracurricular Engagement
- Demonstrated Leadership
- Cultural Competence
- Communication Skills
- Research Experiences

- Professionalism and Integrity
- Recommendation Letters (and Committee Letter)
- Application Materials (Personal Statements, Etc.)
- The Concept of “Distance Travelled”
- Interview Performance (MMI, panel, one-on-one)

The Self-Assessment Guide will help you evaluate the elements of your portfolio and application.
GENERAL OVERVIEW OF APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

- **February 2021 - May 2021:**
  - Williams Health Professions Committee Process; Prepare to Apply *(more details to follow)*
  - June 1, 2021 is the final deadline to submit materials to Health Professions Committee.

- **Early - Mid June 2021:**
  - Goal to submit your primary application(s) to AMCAS, ACOMAS, AADSAS, etc.
  - *Committee letters are submitted throughout the summer.*

- **July 2021 - September 2021:**
  - Receive and complete secondary applications *(these are supplemental applications sent from the individual schools to which you applied).*

- **August 2021 - March 2022:**
  - Interviews take place. Admissions decisions can be received throughout the cycle and will be complete by spring 2022.

- **Late Summer - Early Fall 2022:**
  - Matriculation to a health professions program if an acceptance is received.
“A committee letter is a letter authored by a pre-health committee or pre-health advisor and offers evaluation and advocacy on your behalf by highlighting your background and accomplishments, contextualizing challenges, and outlining your overall preparation and motivation for pursuing a career in medicine. A committee letter is often sent with additional letters of recommendation that you solicit from your faculty and others in support of your candidacy.” (Source: AAMC, “Advisor Corner: Preparing for Committee Letter Process”)

- These types of letters are currently provided for applicants to MD and combined MD programs (i.e. MD-PhD, MD-MPH, etc.), DO programs, and dental school programs. If you are applying for other types of health professions programs, though, remember that we can support your application process in other ways!

To request a committee letter, you should request to apply through the Williams College Health Professions Committee – the process for which will be outlined next.
HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE PROCESS 2022

- Robust 18-month-long process with a specific timeline for all required elements and actions.
  ○ Remember, this means that if you’re beginning the process now you will be submitting your application in summer 2021 for matriculation in summer/fall 2022.

- The process of preparation by the applicant, Science and Health Professions advisor, faculty evaluators, employers, mentors, supervisors – requires significant investment of dedicated time, focus, and energy.

- Objective is to evaluate readiness and potential of health professions candidates from Williams College in the form of a narrative (committee letter).
  ○ Applicant’s personal story
  ○ Letters of recommendation
  ○ Academic record
  ○ Extracurricular activities
  ○ Relevant clinical and research experiences
  ○ Etc.
The committee is comprised of members of the Science and Health Professions team as well as a rotating combination of at least three additional members (including faculty and physicians).

Responsibility is to fairly assess and holistically evaluate each candidate’s portfolio and provide a comprehensive committee letter.

Committee arrives at final, holistic rating for each candidate. The letter and ratings are confidential.
HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE PROCESS 2022

- Committee review takes place in the early summer.

- You will be holistically evaluated according to the following:
  - Academic rigor
  - Leadership
  - Community service
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Clinical experience
  - Research experience (clinical, lab-based, public health, or community-based)
  - Letters of recommendation
    - Two recommendation letters should be in your file by April 15, 2021; optimal to have all in by May 15, but June 1 is the final deadline for all letters of recommendation.*
  - Readiness and preparation to embark upon a health professions program
  - Standardized test scores are not included in the committee assessment.

*We will provide your committee letter as well as the veCollect letter “quiver” (your collection of letters of recommendation) to your respective application services (AMCAS, ACOMAS, AADSAS, etc.) – more on this later.
COMMITTEE CANDIDATE PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS

- **Resume**
- **Biographical Report**
  - Short answer essays; activities during academic year as well as breaks; future coursework; GPA calculations; etc.
  - You may describe up to 15 experiences on the *Biographical Report* and for AMCAS. AADSAS (for dental school) allows for 25 experiences. (*Experiences before college should be included only if relevant and continued in college.*)
- **Personal statement draft** (incorporated into the *Biographical Report*)
  - This is your narrative, should provide an understanding of why you have chosen this professional path, and is an opportunity to give voice to your application. Consider highlighting something that is not featured elsewhere in your application.
  - AMCAS (MD): 5,300 characters
  - TMDSAS (Texas): 5,000 characters
  - AACOMAS (DO): 5,300 characters
  - ADEA AADSAS (Dental): 4,500 characters
COMMITTEE CANDIDATE PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS

- **Transcripts**
  - Our office can download your unofficial Williams transcript.
  - You must send transcripts of coursework completed elsewhere to us (e.g., courses taken during summers or post-Williams).
  - You will also have to send transcripts directly to your application service(s) at the time of application. As you complete the “Schools Attended” section, use the Transcript Request Forms for all schools and programs in which you enrolled when completing the applications.
  - Williams uses the National Student ClearingHouse. Order your official Transcript Request Form generated by each application service and send this with the request.

- **Letters of recommendation**
  - 3-5 for MD candidates; 4-6 for MD-PhD candidates; 3-4 for dental candidates
  - 3 for veterinary school applicants (but no committee letter)
  - MUST BE ON LETTERHEAD, SIGNED (electronically/scanned) and DATED
REQUIRED DISCIPLINARY DISCLOSURES

- You must disclose instances of institutional actions, disciplinary actions, conduct/honor code violations, misdemeanors, and felony convictions on your application.
  - If you are applying through the Williams College committee, you are also required to disclose this on the Biographical Report that you will complete for the Health Professions Committee.

- Such instances are considered in the application process by health professions admissions committees. When applying, it is important to demonstrate time, perspective, and growth since.

- Failure to report required information in the admissions process can have serious consequences for your eligibility to matriculate.

- If you have questions about what you are required to report or how to report it, please reach out to our office and/or the Dean’s Office for guidance.
The **Health Professions Committee interview** will be about two hours long, and can be scheduled with Rebecca Counter or Dr. Marianne DeMarco. This interview will:

- Provide you with an opportunity to share your portfolio, perspective, and motivation to apply for a health professions program
- Help inform your committee letter review process *and*
- Help prepare you for your application submission by:
  - Reviewing your *Biographical Report* (which is helpful preparation for your application)
  - Reviewing your personal statement draft
  - Providing guidance for your school list (please have a preliminary list ready)

- All Williams Health Professions Committee interviews will be held virtually in 2021.
- Scheduling instructions will be provided later in the cycle.
REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHEDULING YOUR COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

- Three required elements before a committee interview can be scheduled:
  - Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide*
  - Resume
  - Biographical Report
    - You will upload these documents to your veCollect account, a virtual filing system that stores your required documents as well as your letters of evaluation. (Note that Williams College will pay for veCollect access.)

- Directions for creating letter records for these documents are linked on the application timeline.

*Note: The Self-Assessment Guide is meant to provide an opportunity for self-reflection and to help guide your decision for the timing of your application. It is not used by the Health Professions Committee.
TIPS FOR NAVIGATING VECOLLECT

• Create three letter records for each required document that you author (Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide, Resume, Biographical Report) with YOU as the evaluator.

• Create evaluator records for all the letters of recommendation (for each individual recommender) and committee letter (Rebecca Counter for committee letter).

• After you create these records, you have to select the envelope icon for an automatic email to be sent to you and your recommenders.

• The “from” address for the email will look like this: “collect+4575c77f....@virtualevals.org” so be sure to check trash/spam folders, and move the message to your inbox.

• The email will contain a link to attach and submit the relevant document.

• It may take up to 24 hours for veCollect to upload these documents to your file.
You will enter information for each of your evaluators. There is no hard limit on the number of evaluators you can list on veCollect. However, you should keep three things in mind:

- Requirements/guidelines set by your advising office. It is your responsibility to know follow these requirements/guidelines. [Click here to see the requirements/guidelines for]
- It is not appropriate to ask for letters that have a low probability of being used, e.g., do not ask for letters from 8 professors/instructors knowing you will only use 4 of them.
- More is not better. A lukewarm letter from someone who hardly knows ... Click to Read More

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Next Steps if You Plan to Apply for 2022 Matriculation

- **First Step: Intent to Apply Form** – Google Form that you complete and submit by February 1, 2021. The [form is available through our website](#) and is already open for submissions.
  - After February 1, you will need to request special permission to apply through the Committee.
  - Submission of the form indicates that you plan to apply, and also allows us to authorize your veCollect account. We will add you to a special email list for the 2022 applicant cohort as well.

- If you haven’t recently checked in with your advisor, **consider scheduling an appointment** with us via Handshake.
NEXT STEPS IF YOU PLAN TO APPLY FOR 2022 MATRICULATION

- Continue to organize and prepare —
  - Keep up-to-date on Committee and application process deadlines.
  - Be sure to create a plan to finish any prerequisite courses, if you have not already.
  - Think carefully about evaluators and ask them in a timely, professional manner.
  - Maintain your academic/professional/volunteer obligations and continue to build your portfolio of experiences and hone your skills in the core competency areas.
  - Read and be informed about a range of topics relevant to health care and community health.

- Make a plan to apply early. Most application services open in May and June.

- Consider how you will continue to engage with science, health care, medicine, your community, and your other interests/activities throughout your application year.
# REVIEW OF COMMITTEE DEADLINES FOR 2022 APPLICANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>February 1, 2021</strong></td>
<td>Intent to Apply Form, Open veCollect Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19, 2021</td>
<td>Start creating Evaluator Records; Request Outside Transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1, 2021</td>
<td>Submit Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide and Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15, 2021</td>
<td>Submit Biographical Report (Personal Statement draft included)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18 – May 1, 2021</td>
<td>Interview Scheduling with Rebecca Counter and Marianne DeMarco</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15, 2021</td>
<td>Two letters of recommendation must be in veCollect</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1, 2021</td>
<td>Your candidate file must be complete for Committee review. Begin to prepare your relevant applications for submission.</td>
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*Please note that you are also responsible for researching and observing any relevant deadlines for your application service and any schools to which you apply.*
A FEW ADDITIONAL REMINDERS

- Filling out the AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS/VMCAS/TMDSAS requires careful reading of the instructions. Be sure to review their respective applicant guides.

- The Williams guidelines for converting course units have changed. This will be important when completing the coursework section of your application.
  - All courses are 3.75 semester hours, and for every associated one hour of lab an additional .25 semester hours is added. Biology and physics lab courses are 4.5 hours, and chemistry lab courses are 4.8 semester hours.
  - Winter Study courses are given 1 credit and no semester hours.
  - AMCAS/VMCAS/AACOMAS will manually make those semester hour changes after you submit. So you list “1” in credit hour column.

- Review our website for further information, and be sure to check our FAQs.
OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT

● We are here to provide you with ongoing support throughout this entire process – from your initial interest in applying through your eventual matriculation!

● Communication is vital to the process. The Science and Health Professions team will provide you with general guidance and individualized advising throughout this process, but it is critical that you take initiative to reach out as well.

● How best to communicate with Health Professions staff:
  ○ Email anytime
  ○ Schedule phone/video call appointments in Handshake or via email

● Our online Application Timeline is the guide for the process.

● Once you register with us via the Intent to Apply Form, you will be added to a special email list for the 2022 applicant cohort. Throughout every step of the process, we will send you reminders and detailed instructions as well as helpful tips and resources!
Please feel free to reach out to
Rebecca Counter (rc11@williams.edu) or Allisa Miller (anm2@williams.edu)
with any questions that you might have throughout the cycle.
REFERENCES

- AAMC, “Holistic Review”: [https://www.aamc.org/services/member-capacity-building/holistic-review]
- AAMC, “The Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students”: [https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/]
- ADEA, “Competencies for the New General Dentist”: [https://www.adea.org/about_adea/governance/Pages/Competencies-for-the-New-General-Dentist.aspx]