

Medical School Recommendations:
Information & Guidelines for HMC Students

(2005-2006 Academic Year)

A centralized system for sending letters of recommendation to medical schools is currently available to all HMC students (regardless of major) through the HMC Biology Department. Participation in the system is voluntary, but strongly encouraged since it will reduce the work required of your individual referees (recommenders) and should strengthen your application.

If you choose to use this system, *you must sign and return the attached form to indicate your agreement to follow the attached guidelines.* As a student, it is your responsibility to follow the guidelines. *Read them carefully.* General questions about the letter system or the medical school application process should be directed to Prof. Karl Haushalter, Pre-Med Coordinator, HMC Biology, Jacobs 2313, x73928 (909.607.3928), Karl_Haushalter@hmc.edu. Questions concerning the status of individual applications should be directed to Molly Stoykovich, Academic Administrative Aide, HMC Biology Department, Olin 2345, x18561 (909.621.8561), Molly_Stoykovich@hmc.edu.

General Information: What the HMC system does for the pre-med student

Pre-med students who use the system will have all of their individual letters of recommendation sent to the HMC Biology Department, where they will be assembled into a single packet for mailing to each medical school. The packet will also contain a cover letter from the Pre-Med Coordinator providing general information about HMC as well as information regarding your class standing (see attached sample). All materials are sent in a single 9" x 12" envelope bearing an HMC label and return address. Note: Some undergraduate colleges and universities have Pre-Medical Advisory Committees that write composite recommendation letters for each applicant; *this service is currently not available at HMC.*

Student Responsibilities

1. Pre-med students must first contact Molly Stoykovich, Academic Administrative Aide, HMC Biology Department, to inform her that you plan to start the application process. She will prepare a file for you to contain records of your requests for packets of letters as well as dates on which individual packets were sent. Students are advised to contact Molly as early as possible.
2. Students must contact their referees and arrange for them to send letters of recommendation to Prof. Karl Haushalter, Pre-Med Coordinator, c/o Molly Stoykovich, Dept. of Biology, Harvey Mudd College, 301 E. 12th Street, Claremont, CA 91711. Letters must follow the guidelines indicated below. *It is entirely the student's responsibility to ensure that we receive correctly formatted letters from all referees.* Students should provide their referees with a copy of the guidelines below. A word to the wise: *Quality* of reference letters is more important than *quantity*: choose only referees who will write strong, substantial letters for you.
3. Thoughtful letters written by those who know you well are more influential than short ones written by casual acquaintances. Ask each individual referee if s/he can write a strong letter!

Medical School Recommendation Letter format:

- a) The preferred format is a signed letter on the recommender's departmental letterhead stationery.

- b) Students should ask their referees (or the appropriate departmental secretary) to send enough letters *printed on departmental letterhead stationery* for the total number of applications, *plus an additional 5 copies*.
 - c) If possible, letters should be submitted *unfolded* in 9" x 12" envelopes.
 - d) Referees should address their letters to: "Prof. Karl Haushalter, Pre-Med Coordinator, Dept. of Biology, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont CA 91711" or "To Whom It May Concern."
 - e) Referees should indicate the student's FULL (including middle) name and social security number (SSN) at the top of the letter.
 - f) The referee needs to indicate the type of recommendation ("SCIENCE" or "NON-SCIENCE") next to student's name.
 - g) Any waivers/statements of confidentiality must be signed and delivered to Molly Stoykovich.
4. Students should submit their requests for packets of letters *by e-mail* to Molly_Stoykovich@hmc.edu, providing the following information:
- a) Names and addresses of all of your referees. (You only need to provide this information once).
 - b) A list of schools with correct mailing addresses.
 - c) Indicate beside each school the total number of recommendations to be sent and by which referees. Examples would be: "All," "only science," "science + 1." Medical school applications vary in their requirements, so this is important. It is essential that you follow the directions on each school's application. The requirements are *not* all the same. (If you do not provide this information, we will assume that you want all letters sent. Please note: Sending more letters than are requested by a particular school may not help, and may even hurt, your application. It will certainly increase your overall costs!)
 - d) Indicate deadline date for recommendations *to be received at the school* next to address. (It is best to list schools in order of priority.)
 - e) Instructions for waivers or statements of confidentiality need to be indicated next to the school address.
 - f) Indicate instructions if sealed recommendations are required. This would be a separate envelope for each recommendation with a recommender's signature on the back. All envelopes would go to the school in the same packet with the cover letter. (Note: The student must ensure that the appropriate referees provide the necessary signed, sealed recommendations.)
 - g) Indicate whether the recommendation packet needs to be sent by FedEx. If so, be sure to include a street address. Keep in mind that you will be billed for all mailing expenses, so plan ahead to avoid the extra cost of FedEx.
5. Each student will be billed for supplies, postage, shipping charges, photocopying, etc. when the recommendation process is complete. You must pay by cash or check (made out to "Harvey Mudd College"). Please deliver payment to Molly Stoykovich, Academic Administrative Aide, HMC Biology Department, after you receive an invoice (see attached sample) from her.

To participate in the centralized system for sending letters of recommendations to medical schools currently available through the HMC Biology Department, you must complete this form and return it to Molly Stoykovich, Academic Administrative Aide, HMC Biology Department, Olin 2345, x18561 (909.621.8561), Molly_Stoykovich@hmc.edu.

AGREEMENT

I plan to use the centralized system for sending letters of recommendation to medical schools currently available through the HMC Biology Department. I have read the attached document "Medical School Recommendations: Information & Guidelines for HMC Students (2004-2005 Academic Year)" and agree to follow the guidelines described there, including providing payment for the cost of all supplies, postage, shipping charges, photocopying, etc. incurred by the HMC Biology Department.

Name (PRINTED): _____

Name (SIGNED): _____

Social Security Number (SSN): _____

Date: _____