The Health Professions Advising Office offers a centralized processing service to assist students who are applying to medical, dental, or optometry schools. These services include the following: the distribution of application support materials, compilation of faculty evaluations and other pertinent information on each student, and forwarding of these materials to the school(s) of the applicant’s choice. We offer this service because most professional schools prefer a centralized system of gathering application support materials.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF SUPPORT MATERIALS PACKET

In order to assist you with the applications process, the following checklist is provided:

1. Make arrangements to take the OAT. Registration information is available online:

   https://www.ada.org/oat/index.html

2. Contact (preferably in person) the faculty members and personal references who will be completing the evaluation forms for you, and ask that these be returned to the Health Professions Office. Use the attached recommendation forms for the faculty reviewers and personal recommendations.

   You should request a total of FIVE letters: three from faculty that have taught you in a college course, and two personal references. Good choices for personal references include physicians you have shadowed, former employers, volunteer coordinators, etc. Do not ask a family member for a letter of recommendation. Letters should be sent to:

   Health Professions Advising Office
   Box 870268
   Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0268

   Please note that these recommendations are an important part of your secondary application, which the medical schools will send to you directly AFTER you have applied through AMCAS/AACOMAS (see below). If the schools do not have your letters of recommendation, then your secondary is considered incomplete.

3. Complete the application(s) for the optometry school(s) where you plan to apply

4. Make arrangements to have your official transcript sent from the University Records Office directly to THE OPTOMETRY SCHOOLS. If you have transfer work you must also have this work sent directly from each school. THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS OFFICE DOES NOT SEND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.
5. Complete the two page pre-application form attached and return it to the Health Professions Office with a check for $10.00 NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2009. Please see that we have this information before your interview. Please note that a recent photograph is required and must be affixed to the pre-application. Most supplemental applications will require a recent photo, so this might be a good time to have a few wallet photos taken.

   Now might also be a good time to make sure any personal online profiles (Facebook, MySpace, etc.) reflect the image you want to present to an admissions committee.

6. After the Health Professions Office has received your pre-application form (including photograph) and all five letters of recommendation, you must schedule an interview with our office. You will receive an email from Brandi Sutton (bsutton@as.ua.edu) when all five of your recommendations have been turned into the A&S office. The purpose of the interview with the Health Professions Advising Office is to bring into focus the information we use in preparing a composite evaluation in support of your application, and to give you some experience with an interview situation. These interviews will be held during the months of May, June, July, August, September, and October. We then combine the five letters you had sent to us and our own letter of recommendation to create a composite evaluation, which is sent to the optometry schools.

   The composite evaluation cannot be sent to the optometry schools until your file is complete with all FIVE recommendations AND you have completed your interview with our office.

7. After you have completed the above steps with our committee, a composite evaluation will be assembled and forwarded to the professional school(s) you have indicated.

   The function of the Health Professions Office is to help you with all aspects of the application process. However, it is your responsibility to see that the required materials reach our office by the deadlines, so that we may do our job effectively. The Health Professions Advising Office will process the application support materials on a first completed, first serve basis. Your cooperation will greatly speed up your application process. We would also appreciate it if you would stop by at the first part of the fall semester to make sure everything is in order and to keep us updated as to how we can get in touch with you if necessary.

Good luck as you approach this big step!

Chris Hutt
Kelly Leach
Health Professions Advisors