1. The First Step

One of the first questions students usually ask is "When do I start applying to medical, dental, or optometry school?" Although the actual application process begins when you take the admissions tests (MCAT, DAT, OAT) in Spring of your junior year, you really should begin preparing for professional school as a freshman.

The selection of an undergraduate major is often the first decision a student must make. Professional schools are not concerned with what you choose to major in, but they are concerned with how well you do in your chosen major. Thus, you should...
select a major that you enjoy and would enhance your chances of obtaining a good academic record. Therefore, should you \textbf{NOT} be accepted into your chosen professional program, you will still have a degree in a subject area that interests you. As noted above, a science major is not a prerequisite for medical, dental, or optometry school. Students should not major in a science simply because they believe this will increase their chances for admission. Conversely, obtaining a degree in a science based major is not detrimental to your application process. Again, you should select the degree program that best meets your interests. However, regardless of your selected major, you will be required to take certain science courses required for admission to most programs and to prepare you for the admissions tests. These include but are not limited to biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.

Professional schools seek well rounded and gifted students who have proven themselves in and out of the classroom. Don't wait until you are the end of junior year when you are preparing to apply to demonstrate your academic ability. Keep your career goals in mind and start preparing academically from your freshman year. Nationally, the mean undergraduate grade point average of students accepted to medical school over the last decade has been 3.5 - 3.6. For dental and optometry school, the average is 3.2-3.4. However, students with lower grades are admitted to professional schools since Admissions Committees take other factors into consideration in addition to grades. A strong GPA and admission test score, however, will give you an excellent start in the application process. What we tell students is that your GPA and admission test score will be what get you through the screening process for the graduate programs you seek - but you will then be part of a large pool of other students with strong GPAs and admission test scores so it is critical that you build other components of your portfolio - to create distinct and unique components of your service, clinical and social portfolio that demonstrate an understanding of the program you wish to pursue as well as a commitment to service, ethical integrity as well as a diversity of interests to create the most well rounded candidate.

**Minimum Science Course Requirements: Medicine and Dentistry**

Generally, the \textit{minimum} science course requirements for medical, and dental schools (and the equivalent courses at North Carolina State University) are:

- 8 hours of biology or zoology (with labs) - ZO 150 and ZO160 \textbf{or} BIO181 and BIO183. [Note: UNC School of Dentistry requires a vertebrate zoology (ZO 250) or human anatomy course (ZO 212)]

- 8 hours of inorganic chemistry (with labs) CH 101 and CH 102 (Chemistry-A Molecular Science and lab) and CH 201 and CH 202 (Chemistry-A Quantitative
Science and lab).

- 8 hours of organic chemistry (with labs) - CH 221 and CH 223.
- 8 hours of physics (with labs) - PY 211 and PY 212 or PY 205 and PY 208.
- Math/Calculus - One semester to one year of mathematics. Some schools still specifically require calculus, while others have very general math requirements.

BE SURE TO CHECK the admissions requirements and recommendations for EACH school to which you plan to apply. The courses listed above satisfy the minimum science requirements of MOST professional schools. Specific school requirements can be confirmed in the directories of the American Association of Medical Schools and the American Association of Dental Schools. These directories are available for your use in the Health Professions Advising Center located in 2719 Bostian Hall.

Many students ask if there are additional courses beyond those required which might be helpful in preparing for the admissions tests and professional school. The following courses are suggested but are NOT required and many applicants do not have an opportunity to take these courses: Biochemistry (BCH 451), Microbiology and Medical Microbiology (MB 351 and 411), Animal Anatomy and Physiology (ZO250), Basic Human Anatomy & Physiology (ZO 212), Human Anatomy (ZO 412), Principles of Physiology (ZO 421), and Genetics (GN 411). A writing course and courses in the humanities and social sciences to help you develop your verbal reasoning and reading skills would be helpful in preparing you for the Medical College Admissions Test.

Optometry

Individual optometry schools have some very specific requirements. A list of these requirements is available in the Health Professions Advising Center in 2719 Bostian Hall. Pay close attention to these requirements to insure taking the required or recommended courses for specific optometry schools.

2. The Admissions Tests (MCAT, DAT, OAT)

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), is a computerized test offered 22 times a year - the test lasts 4 hours and 50 minutes with breaks and is divided into four sections (see admissions tests portion of website for more detail). The MCAT assesses your mastery of basic concepts in biology, chemistry, and physics; scientific problem
solving and critical thinking; and writing skills. Four separate scores are derived from
the MCAT. Each score you achieve on the multiple-choice sections (Verbal Reasoning,
Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences) is based on the number of questions you
answer correctly. The Biological Sciences and Physical Sciences sections may include
data presented in graphs and charts to test your ability to interpret data from a graphic
or tabular format. There is no penalty for wrong answers, so if you are unsure of the
correct answer, you should make your best guess. Don't leave any question
unanswered on this section of the test. The scores will be reported on a scale ranging
from 1 (lowest) to 15 (highest) and are available approximately 30 days after the test.
There is no waiting period between testing although students may not be registered for
two tests simultaneously and students may not take more than 3 tests in one year.

In order to assess your ability to develop and express ideas in a logical and organized
manner you will be asked to write two 30-minute essays for the MCAT. You will be
given specific topics which usually do not pertain to biology, chemistry, or physics, nor
any subject that is medically related. Each topic will be an expression of an opinion, a
discussion of a philosophy, or a policy related to a field of general interest such as
business, politics, or history.

Specific information on the content of the MCAT can be obtained in 2719 Bostian as
well on the website. We also suggest that you purchase the MCAT Student Manual as a
study guide (available at www.aamc.org/mcat). In addition to this guide, there are
several other publications available that may help you review for the test. Our campus
bookstore and local bookstores have a good selection of study manuals. There are also
several preparatory courses which you can take, although they are relatively expensive.
(see information below)

**Dental Admission Test (DAT)**

The Dental Admission Test is administered on computer on almost any day of the year
at a Sylvan Testing Center. You must submit the application form and fee to the Dental
Admission Testing Program. After processing, Sylvan will receive notification of your
eligibility for testing. You will receive instructions to call an 800-number to arrange a
day, time and place to take the test. (Note: if you decide to retest, you will have to
wait 90 days from the previous testing date) There are four individual examinations
contained in the DAT:

- **Survey of the Natural Sciences** - basic first year biology, general chemistry,
  and organic chemistry will be covered. Questions require problem-solving skills rather
  than simple memorization of material.

- **Quantitative Reasoning** - 30 items of mathematical problems and 10 items of
  applied mathematics. There are no advanced mathematics or calculus problems.
  Knowledge of basic first-year college mathematics and algebra is presumed.
Reading Comprehension - Three reading passages pertaining to dental, basic, or clinical science (subjects you have not covered as an undergraduate) are given. Each passage is followed by 16 or 17 questions which examine the ideas given in the passage.

Perceptual Ability Test (PAT) - This examination consists of 90 two-dimensional and three-dimensional problems. Items covered include angle discrimination, form development, apertures, and paper folding.

A composite, or average score is included in your score on the test called the Academic Average, it is an average of the quantitative reasoning, reading comprehension, biology, and general and organic chemistry test scores. Although some review material is included with the DAT application packet, there are fewer DAT preparation manuals available than there are for the MCAT. Check at our campus bookstore or local bookstores.

Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

Like the DAT, the OAT exam is also computerized and examinees are allowed to take the OAT an unlimited number of times but must wait at least 90 days between testing dates. Only scores from the four most recent attempts and the total number of attempts will be reported. Registration is online and testing is at one of the Thompson Prometric Centers. Raleigh has a testing center located at 3200 Spring Forest Road. Additional test centers can be found at http://securreq3.prometric.com/ProfessionalHome.aspx. The OAT consists of four tests. The first section, Survey of the Natural Sciences, covers biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry. The remaining sections cover Physics, Reading Comprehension, and Quantitative Reasoning. A complete description of items covered in the OAT can be obtained in 2719 Bostian. The application booklet to register for the OAT includes a section on test preparation materials which are very useful in preparing for the test. Check at local bookstores for review manuals.

Commercial Review Courses

We are often asked if we recommend any of the private review courses available in our area to help students prepare for admissions tests. It should be noted that most of our students do not take any of these commercial review courses. They are expensive (usually over $1,500), and the benefit you derive is related to the amount of time and effort that you invest, as is self study. Many students find that they can use study manuals and receive the same results. However, that is a decision that each student must make after considering all the alternatives. There are online as well as CD review courses if an applicant is willing to set aside the review time.
3. What are the schools looking for?

In addition to grades and admissions tests scores, there are other factors to be considered to be a successful applicant to professional schools. Anyone who is planning a career in a medical area must demonstrate interest in people and be able to relate to others effectively. You can demonstrate that you possess these characteristics by being involved in extracurricular and service oriented activities both at school and in the community. Involvement in such activities will highlight such personal traits as leadership, initiative, perseverance and breadth of interests. In other words, don't just try to tell the schools what a well-rounded person you are; let your actions show them. Information on many local, state, national and international service opportunities can be obtained in the Health Professions Advising Center and on the NCSU website. Create unique and memorable experiences rather than marching through a “checklist” of activities - it is not the number of activities but rather the quality and commitment to these and the experiences gained that are important.

Finally, you must demonstrate your motivation for your chosen health career. Not only should you have a general understanding of a career in medicine, dentistry, or optometry, but you should also have actual experience in a health care setting. You can gain this experience by working or volunteering at a hospital, nursing home, public health department or other health care facility. There are numerous opportunities for clinical mission work both locally and abroad. Again, information on such programs can be found online and in the Advising Center. By obtain this experience, when your interviewer asks: "How do you know you want to be a doctor (or dentist or optometrist)?" you have the answer, not just for the interviewer, but more importantly, for yourself. Once again, it is not simply logging a specific number of hours but rather the experiences themselves.

4. When should you apply? - (See also Timetable)

The actual application process begins with taking the Admissions Tests preferably in spring of your junior year.

- Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) - computer testing 22 times a year
- Dental Admissions Test (DAT) - computer testing on almost any day of the year
- Optometry Admissions (OAT) - computer testing on almost any day of the

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Specific details on the Admissions Tests are given in Chapter 2.

It is to your advantage to take the admissions tests as soon as possible after completing the minimum science course requirements (First step, Chapter 1.) Ideally, you should be ready to take the tests in spring of your junior year. Spring testing gets your scores to the professional schools early in the admissions cycle and places you a step ahead of students testing in the fall. Moreover, if you are not satisfied with your scores, you will have the opportunity to test again in the fall and improve them.

Whether testing in spring or fall, it is important to apply to the professional schools as early as possible. You should submit your applications as soon as the application period begins and certainly before you return to school in the fall. Most professional schools have later application deadlines, but it is to your advantage to apply early. Many schools screen students as soon as the applications are received, and as an early applicant you could reach the interview stage of your application before some students complete the initial application.

**Early Decision Program**

Some medical schools participate in the Early Decision Program (EDP) in which an applicant applies to only one school. Don't confuse being an "Early Decision" (ED) candidate with just applying early. An ED applicant may apply to only one school, and the application must be made between June 1 and August 1. The school must notify you of its decision no later than October 1. You cannot apply to any other medical school until you have been informed of that school's decision. If you are offered admission, you must accept the offer. For this reason, you should not apply ED to a school unless you are SURE that is where you want to go. If you are not accepted by the one school, you may apply to other schools after being informed.

There are advantages and disadvantages in being an Early Decision applicant. On the positive side, you'll know by early fall whether you have been admitted. You'll also save a lot of time and money by applying to only one school. The disadvantage to applying early decision is that if you are NOT accepted you'll still have to submit your application to other schools later in the application period. As a general rule, the Advising Center strongly discourages applicants from applying early decision - if you are a good enough candidate to be accepted under the early decision policy, then you will likely be accepted as part of the traditional pool, but if you are not accepted, then you place yourself at a distinct disadvantage by being at the bottom of the applicant pool under review (as you can only apply to these schools after receiving your rejection) and under rolling admissions, this could significantly hamper an otherwise strong candidates chances.
To be a competitive Early Decision candidate, we recommend that you have the following qualifications:

- An overall GPA of at least 3.8 or above
- MCAT scores of at least 10 or above on all categories
- A good blend of unique extracurricular activities
- Good experience in a health care area with distinct experiences
- Excellent letters of evaluation

**Early Assurance Program**

Some medical schools offer Early Assurance Program(s). In NC, Wake Forest School of Medicine has such a program. Well-qualified college students, upon completion of their sophomore year, may apply for acceptance to the class entering two years later. Eligibility requires a minimum GPA of 3.5 each semester for the science, non-science and overall GPAs and completion of half of the required prerequisites. The MCAT will not be required. A student applies early in the junior year through the AMCAS process (**November 1 deadline**), asking consideration for the EAP. The applicant must agree to complete requisite courses, to continue academic excellence, to demonstrate high ethical conduct and not to apply to any other medical school. Non-acceptance by the EAP does not influence future applications.

5. Where should you apply?

**Medicine (allopathic and osteopathic, and podiatry) and Dentistry**

Most NC State premedical students apply to 10-12 medical schools. Since most of our premedical students are residents of North Carolina, their best chances of acceptance are at the two state supported medical schools - the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University in Greenville. Several of our students also gain admission to the two private medical schools in North Carolina (Duke University Medical School and Wake Forest University School of Medicine).

If you are a student at NC State but are a resident of another state, your best chance of being admitted is to a state-supported professional school in your home state. This is not to say that you shouldn't apply to the state-supported professional schools in North
Carolina, but you should be aware that very few students from out of state are accepted into those programs. You can, of course, apply to private professional schools in North Carolina or any state. In addition, some pre-medical students apply to multiple osteopathic medical schools and/or podiatry schools as well. If you want to know more about the history of osteopathic medicine and their approach to health care, you should refer to the following websites: www.aacom.org, www.aoa-net.org, and www.osteopathic.net. If you wish to learn more about the field of podiatry, visit www.apma.org.

Most NC State pre-dental students apply to 4 or 5 dental schools. Many of those who are residents of North Carolina are accepted at the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry.

To help you select where to apply, you should refer to the Medical School Admission Requirements directory or the Admissions Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools. Both are available for review in 2719 Bostian Hall or to purchase at www.aamc.org (medical) or www.adea.org (dental). These books contain statistics on the number of applicants and the number of out-of-state and in-state students interviewed and admitted each year. Most of our pre-medical students apply to the four North Carolina schools (Duke and Wake Forest are private, so state residency isn’t a factor) and then select a few additional schools based on information obtained from the admissions requirements book. Pre-dental students make similar choices.

**Optometry**

Since the State of North Carolina does not have an optometry school, the state has contractual agreements with four optometry schools (Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Southern College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and University of Houston) to accept a certain number of North Carolina residents and to offer those students reduced tuition rates. You may apply for one of the contract positions, but not all applicants who are admitted to the optometry schools are placed in a contract position, you must apply for these through the CFNC. Information on the contract program and a directory of optometry programs are available in 2719 Bostian Hall. Our students usually apply to all four contract programs, plus to one or two other programs.

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**6. How do you apply? - The application services**

**Medicine and Dentistry**

The American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) and the American
Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) are centralized processing services used by most medical and dental schools, respectively, for the initial application. Over 95% of the (allopathic) medical schools belong to AMCAS and 51 of the 54 dental schools belong to AADSAS (others use PASS). If a school is a member of an application service, you must apply to that school through the application service. If a school is not a member of the service, you must write to that school and request an application. Whether a school belongs to the services can be determined from the admissions requirements booklets available for review in our office in 2719 Bostian Hall or at their websites www.aamc.org (medical) and www.adea.org (dental).

The osteopathic medical schools also have an application service - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS). Since all osteopathic schools use this service, this is the only way to apply to these schools. This year, the American Board of Podiatric Medicine has opened an online application service for the 7 podiatry programs as well which is called AACPMAS

Applications to most allopathic medical schools, all osteopathic medical schools, and most dental schools are submitted electronically at the following websites. Check these sites to see when the application period opens (usually on June 1).

AMCAS:  www.aamc.org

AACOMAS:  www.aacom.org

AACPMAS:  www.e-aacpmas.org

AADSAS:  www.adea.org

The optometry schools do not have a centralized application service. Thus, you will have to write each school to request an application. Completed applications should be mailed by late summer/early fall (with applications opening between May and mid-September) of your senior year. Addresses for all optometry schools can be obtained at http://www.opted.org/info_links.cfm. Again, as with medical applications, the earlier the better for submission of your application.

**Application Procedures**

AMCAS, AADSAS, AACOMAS, and AACPMAS application packets request general biographic information including information on your extracurricular and community activities. You will list your courses and grades (in chronological order) from every college or university you have attended. In addition, you must submit an official transcript from every college or university you have attended. An official transcript must be sent directly from the Registrar's office to the application service, not from you. One very important part of the application is the “Personal Comments” section. This is a
blank page in the application that will give you an opportunity to introduce yourself to the schools to which you are applying. The big question is - "WHAT should I say?" This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Although the application services provide a centralized application process, each member college stipulates its own deadlines. There is a wide variance in these, so check them carefully. The deadlines are all very clearly stated in the application packet. We advise you again to APPLY EARLY and don't wait for the deadlines! Also – KEEP A HARD COPY for your records.

After the services receive your application, they will verify your grades and forward them to the schools you have designated. Please send your transcripts early as verification procedures can take 6 weeks or more. You may submit your transcripts as soon as the application period opens, you do not have to wait until you submit your actual application to send your transcripts. If the individual schools are interested in you as an applicant, they will contact you with a supplemental application. The supplemental application will require an additional fee and more forms to complete. Many schools will also either specifically request another narrative statement or give you the option of writing one. IF it is an option, you SHOULD write the essay! Sometimes you will be given a specific subject to address, other times you will not. Subjects discussed in your original essay should not be repeated. This statement should be shorter than your original application essay.

Another word of CAUTION: RETURN THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION IMMEDIATELY. Some schools will give you a specific deadline to which you must adhere. If there is no deadline, however, be sure to return the supplemental application within two weeks. Your promptness will emphasize how interested you are in that school. Maintain a record of your secondary application with dates of postmark and due dates noted as well as record of when these are mailed. Like your original application materials, keep a hard copy for your own records.

7. Personal Comments Essay

As mentioned previously, your personal statement is **one of the most important sections** of your application (many schools state that your personal statement and actual interview performance can count as much as 50 - 60% of your admissions score). This is your chance to describe your motivation and your special strengths, so spend a good deal of time thinking about and writing this statement. Before you write your statement, outline the key thoughts you want to include. Be selective and avoid the temptation to include too many points. The essay is not something you can do in one draft. **Write, re-write, and re-write!** Check and double-check the spelling and
grammar. If you are unsure about your skills in these areas, have someone skilled in this area proofread it for you. Also, have someone review (and re-review) your statement until you and the reviewer are satisfied that the admissions committee will be reading the story you want to tell them about yourself.

While the essay should be your own personal statement, a few general suggestions should be considered. Avoid simple declarative sentences. For example, instead of listing clubs and organizations (which are already listed in your application), interweave them into the story about yourself; i.e., who you are, your motivation, your interests, your experiences, and your history. You may wish to include one or two of the most meaningful experiences you have had. Discuss these subjects in depth, rather than write about too many things. It is also helpful to describe any opportunities you may have had to do research, independent study projects, or some special class experiences or projects. In essence, your essay should clearly establish your qualifications and motivation for a career in medicine, and also allow the reader to evaluate your personal attributes, such as leadership, scientific interest, altruism, sense of service, and compassion.

If there are any discrepancies or irregularities in your academic record you may wish to discuss them. Have you had a bad semester? Was it because of illness, family problems, and financial problems? Have you had to work while attending school? Do not dwell on any of these problems (or make excuses for a lackluster performance), but they should be mentioned to explain any aspect of your application that may be viewed negatively by the admissions committee.

Because your interviewer may use your personal statement as a basis for your interview, be sure that you have included topics that you feel comfortable discussing. In general – we encourage students to begin with an opening paragraph that creates a “catch” much like the opening to a novel – something that engages the reviewer to want to learn more about this person. Use the next 3 – 4 paragraphs to highlight 2 – 4 key components about yourself as an applicant - if possible these should highlight unique attributes about yourself and your experiences. Try to relate 1 – 2 personal “stories or experiences” to make these experiences more memorable. Allow your personality to come through; you should be able to gain an understanding of the person and their passion for their experiences through this essay. Conclude your essay with a summation, a challenge, a “pow” – you may decide to reflect back to your opening statement or maybe provide a statement on your feelings, or desires – but avoid statements like “why I want to be a doctor” or “why I know medical school is right for me” – they know you want to be a doctor – that is why you are applying – avoid using the words “doctor”, “medical school”, etc repeatedly – remember, they are reading thousands of these same words. Make this a unique look into the unique “you.” Create memorable and distinct scenarios that will allow the reader a glimpse into your commitment and desire.
Finally, just a few technical pointers: Your personal statement should be about ¾ - 1 page long (but cannot be longer than a page), single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs. Never use any print that is small and difficult to read. Your application highlights your “hard skills” (academics, awards, activities); your personal essay can highlight these but also shed insight into your “soft skills.” Some key features to think about and depict in your essay are the following: obviously your writing and communication skills but also glimpses into such soft skills as motivation, empathy, maturity, compassion and more. Once again - get personal, depict a story, give details and provide the application reviewers with a sense of your personality and values.

8. The Health Professions Review Committee - Your letters of evaluation

The professional schools will ask for letters of recommendation as part of your application. Although references can be sent directly to the professional schools and application services, most schools prefer that students use their university's review committee. For students applying to medical, dental, podiatry or optometry school, the NC State Health Professions Review Committee (HPRC) is available to any current NC State student or alumni enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program as a means of submitting letters of recommendation along with a university recommendation to professional schools. Note, NC State alumni are also eligible to use the committee process. Our committee will receive your evaluations, transfer ALL of the information from the individual forms to an official composite form, and send the composite to the admissions committees at the professional schools that you request along with an overall HPRC Committee Recommendation. Many professional programs rely heavily on these university recommendations as part of their initial screening process.

To initiate the process, you MUST attend one of the Application Information Session held in November (see Timeline).

A. Minimum of Three Evaluations (but not more than five).

Three of those letters should come from a former or current instructor. The professional schools prefer an evaluation from the life science area (e.g., biology, zoology, genetics, microbiology, biochemistry), a physical science evaluation (chemistry, physics, biochemistry, or math) and a humanities or social science evaluation. If you choose to get the maximum of five letters, we recommend that your other two letters come from any academic area or from an employer, supervisor, advisor or person who has worked with you in some type of service area. For example, if you spent a
summer working in a health care setting or research laboratory it would certainly be to your advantage to get an evaluation from someone in that area. (Note: Many osteopathic medical schools require a letter of evaluation from an osteopathic physician. Most optometry schools require a letter of evaluation from an optometrist.) You may obtain letters of evaluation from faculty at other universities that you have attended, but at least two of your evaluations must come from NC State faculty. Please note that the professional schools prefer evaluations from faculty rather than graduate teaching assistants. Evaluations from personal friends, ministers, or family physicians who know you only as one of their patients are not recommended. The evaluation forms that you will be available online. We strongly encourage you to contact your intended evaluators before submitting their names to our office. Explain to these individuals what you are seeking. Schedule a time to meet with them and discuss you interests. Supply them with not only your resume and list of activities and possibly your personal statement, but we also highly encourage students to prepare a “brag sheet” of key points you would like for the reviewer to know about you as well as to highlight in their letter. You will complete a waiver form and supply us with the names and email contact information for your recommenders. We will send them an email notifying them that you are requesting a letter of evaluation for a graduate program. They will be given access code to log in and submit an evaluation. You should sign the waiver to release the information to the professional schools.

** NOTE TO EVALUATORS: Keep your letters concise and to the point (one page or less) – ask the student to provide – if the student was a member of one of your classes – provide clear and succinct information about the student's standing, performance, attendance and interactions. Also provide any details that you could provide relating to other aspects of the candidate’s qualifications based on your acquaintance with them (this is why we ask them to meet with you and supply the “brag” sheet items) - If you have any questions about writing these recommendations, please feel free to contact our office.

B. Information from the AMCAS, AADSAS, AACOMAS or AACPMAS

We'll need a copy of the essay(s) that you have written. Detailed information about your medical/extracurricular/community activities should be submitted as well – your information packet will contain instructions on submitting this information.

C. Transcripts from any other College or University You Have Attended

If you've attended another college or university, we will need a copy of your transcript. An unofficial transcript is acceptable for our use as long as it is a good, readable copy.
Remember, this transcript is for our use only. We can pull a copy of your NCSU transcript. You must send official transcripts from all your schools to the application service. **WE DO NOT SEND TRANSCRIPTS TO THE APPLICATION SERVICE OR THE SCHOOLS FOR YOU!!**

**D. MCAT - DAT - OAT Scores**

We use the MCAT, DAT, OAT scores in our evaluation of pre-medical students so you should sign the release waiver when you take the test so that your scores will be released to us, or you may bring us a copy of your scores when you receive them. We prefer that you release your scores to us by signing the waiver the day you take the test. **WE CANNOT PROCEED WITH YOUR EVALUATION UNTIL WE HAVE RECEIVED YOUR TEST SCORES.**

**E. Envelopes Addressed to Each School to Which You Have Applied That are NOT part of Virtual Evals -**

This year, we will be using an electronic submission system for submitting committee evaluation composites to schools utilizing this system which includes essentially all the medical, optometry and podiatry programs. Unfortunately, most of the dental schools are not utilizing this system. The advantages of this system are increase security, immediate transmission of evaluations, and a much better means for tracking submissions and an ability to quickly resend information misplaced by programs. For all schools not participating in Virtual Evals (see 2719 for a list of these programs) you must prove envelopes for these schools. These envelopes must be at least 8-1/2" X 11" with enough postage for 3 oz. first class mail on each envelope. Check with the post office for the correct amount. Be sure to use each professional school's complete address. If you don't have the complete address you can get that information from admissions requirements books available in 2719 Bostian Hall. Put your name in the bottom left hand corner of each envelope. Leave the return address blank. We will place the Review Committee's address here. **Remember - Your committee composite **DOES NOT** replace your application – you must still apply through the appropriate application service or school!

**Five frequently asked questions:**

**I. When do I start requesting letters?** The committee will begin evaluating students during June of 2007, and the composite file deadlines are listed on the timeline. (Early Decision applicants are evaluated in June, as they have an earlier deadline). Medical, dental and optometry applicants attend an Admission Information Session in November of their junior year; and decide whom they plan to ask for evaluations, notify us when they are ready to request their evaluations. Also, note that
some of your letters should come from junior/senior level courses rather than just freshman level.

II. How do I ask for an evaluation? We often hear complaints from students who say they do not have opportunities to get to know their professors because of large size of many lecture classes. We realize that this is a problem, but it is something you can overcome. Take the initiative to get to know your professors. Attend help sessions; make an appointment for a personal visit to let them know of your career goals, answer questions in class or ask questions as appropriate. When you ask for a recommendation, provide the evaluator with a resume and information sheet (brag sheet – see above) of key points that would be helpful in preparing an evaluation of you. Remember, you do not need to have a problem in a course to visit the instructor. Become acquainted with some of your instructors now to avoid being reluctant to ask for an evaluation at a later date.

III. How does the review committee decide on my evaluation? Our Committee will evaluate you as an overall candidate - based on your academic record as well as your admission test scores, clinical, service and social activities, letters of recommendation as well as your personal statement. We are looking for commitment, integrity, dedication, passion, and overall compatibility to the career field of interest – much like the programs you are applying to. All of these factors will be considered in the Committee's overall evaluation.

IV. WHEN will the review committee evaluate me? Pay very special attention to this section because it is imperative that you meet our specific deadlines so we can proceed with your composite evaluation. Important dates are listed in the Timetable.

Evaluations for Pre-medical, Pre-dental and Pre-optometry Students

We CANNOT PROCEED WITH YOUR EVALUATION UNTIL WE HAVE YOUR ADMISSION TEST SCORES!

Our committee meets THREE TIMES to evaluate students. The first meeting is in June for those who are Early Decision applicants to medical school and those who have submitted their final admission test scores (ie. Do not plan to retake the exam). For medical applicants, this means having taken the MCAT by April.

Our committee will meet twice during the Fall Semester, in September and October, to evaluate all other students applying to medical school. - please see timeline for dates and deadlines (the August review will include all students submitting MCAT scores through the July 18th test and the October review will include all students after this
V. Will the committee interview me? Our committee will not interview you. We do not feel that it is necessary to interview our students to evaluate them as candidates for professional school. The academic abilities you have shown while a student at NC State are evident from your transcript. That information, along with admissions test scores and the personal essay you have written helps us in our evaluation of you. However, the professional schools conduct interviews.

9. The Interview - What will they ask?

If the professional schools feel that your initial qualifications make you a good candidate for their programs they will invite you for personal interviews. This will give them an opportunity to meet you personally and question you about your motivation and academic performance and determine how well suited you are for professional school and a career in medicine, dentistry, or optometry. Be prepared to answer these questions completely and intelligently: “Tell me about yourself” and “Why do you want to be a doctor (or dentist or optometrist?).” It is also a good opportunity for you to ask questions about their particular program. We suggest that you read the school catalog and/or website before you go for an interview so you will have some knowledge of the curriculum, facilities, and special programs. Be able to tell why you are interested in their particular program.

We strongly suggest that you keep abreast of any new medical advances or health care issues. You should be interested in these subjects anyway so be sure to read current articles related to anything in this area.

Dress as you would for a job interview. Be neat, conservative, not overdressed. This means a jacket and tie for men and a dress or suit for women. Carry a nice folder with you to your interview. You don't want to be carrying around loose sheets of paper as you proceed through the day.

During your interview be sure to ask some questions of your own. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know the answer to some questions, and don't try to bluff your way through something that you know nothing about. Be honest. Ask for clarification if you are unsure about the question. Be sure to thank the interviewer at the end of the interview and follow-up a few days later with a short "thank you" note to the Admissions Office.
10. Financial Aid

Most students receive some kind of financial aid to help defray the cost of their medical education. Because of academic demands, most professional schools discourage employment of any kind, so you will probably be seeking some sort of aid. Administration of financial aid is usually done by the professional schools. On the day of your interview you will have a session with a financial aid officer who will discuss with you the grants, scholarships, and loans that are available to students attending their particular program. The manuals, Medical School Admission Requirements and Admissions Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools also contain information on financial aid. The medical schools also have a publication entitled "(MD)2: Medical Decisions for Medical Doctors, available at www.aamc.org/md2. This is an electronic resource manual for financial planning for premedical students, enrolled students and residents.

The U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force offer full scholarships for medical, dental, and optometry training in exchange for a service obligation after you have obtained your degree or completed your residency. The State of North Carolina through the North Carolina Health, Science, and Mathematics Student Loan Program, also offers money to health professional students planning a health career in exchange for service after they have obtained the degree. Information on scholarships from the armed forces and from the State of North Carolina are available in 2115 GA.

11. If I'm not accepted, then what?

Even though NC State students have an excellent acceptance rate to professional schools, there will be students who will not be accepted. It is always a good idea to reapply, if you are willing to do what is necessary to strengthen your application. And if you really want to pursue a career in medicine, you will do just that. Admissions committees look favorably upon students who are persistent and determined to attend professional school if the student has made every effort to strengthen his or her credentials before reapplying. While you are proceeding through with the application process - be prepared to begin the process again - should you decide to reapply the following year. For instance, if you are waitlisted, be prepared to refile your application with the processing center in June so that if you are not accepted through the waitlist in August, you are not behind for reapplication the following year.

If you are unsure about what may have been a weak area in your application, make an appointment to visit with the Deans of Admission at one or two of the schools to which you applied. It is advisable to schedule these appointments in late May or in June. Ask the Deans of Admission what you need to do to strengthen your application, then do it!
If your GPA was a little below average, it may be suggested that you take some advanced level courses to demonstrate your academic abilities. If your admissions test scores were low, you will have to work to improve them. If the Admissions Committees were unsure about your motivation for a health career you can improve your chances by getting more experience in a health care area. It may be necessary to wait a year before reapplying to give yourself time to improve these areas and reapply as a stronger candidate. Your perseverance may be rewarded with an acceptance letter.