

**Medical School Recommendations:**  
**Information & Guidelines for HMC Students**  
(2008-2009 Academic Year)

A centralized system for sending letters of recommendation to medical schools is currently available to all HMC students and alumni (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 or alum, 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 electronically to the HMC Biology Department, where they will be assembled into a single electronic file for distribution to each medical school via the VirtualEvals program. This centralized electronic clearinghouse was accepted by all but 7 medical schools in 2007 and it is hoped that the remaining schools will participate in the next cycle. More information regarding VirtualEvals is available at <http://www.virtualevals.org>. **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 create your applicant profile on VirtualEvals. You should contact Molly as early in the process as possible.
2. Students must contact their referees and arrange for them to send electronically letters of recommendation to Molly Stoykovich (Molly\_Stoykovich@hmc.edu). 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. 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 PDF file of a (scanned) signed letter on the recommender's departmental letterhead stationery.

(b) The file should not be too large (>0.5 Mb). For scanned letters, a resolution of 200 dpi and "black and white" mode is sufficient.

c) 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."

d) Referees should indicate the student's FULL (including middle) name and AAMC number at the top of the letter. Referees should NOT include your social security number.

**3.** Students should submit their requests for packets of letters by e-mail to Molly\_Stoykovich@hmc.edu, providing the following information:

a) Names and e-mail addresses of all of your referees.

b) A list of schools that you plan to apply to (this can be updated if it changes)

c) Indicate deadline date for recommendations *to be received at the school* (It is best to list schools in order of priority.)

d) Instructions for waivers or statements of confidentiality need to be indicated

e) If the school does not participate in VirtualEvals, then please also include the full mailing address.

**4.** Each student will be billed \$40 for the use of the VirtualEvals server plus the charges for any supplies, postage, shipping charges, photocopying, etc. for any receiving schools that do not accept electronic submission (only 7 schools for 2007 and hopefully 0 for 2008). 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 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.

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# 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 (2008-2009 Academic Year)" and agree to follow the guidelines described there, including providing payment for the cost of VirtualEvals registration, all supplies, postage, shipping charges, photocopying, etc. incurred by the HMC Biology Department.

Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (SIGNED): \_\_\_\_\_

AAMC Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_