

Health Careers Evaluation Committee Orientation 2011 – 2013

Overview for Cornell graduates who expect to matriculate in 2013.

The HCEC is for Cornellians applying to schools of dentistry, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic and allopathic medicine only.



Why does Cornell have a Health Careers Evaluation Committee?

To efficiently review the large number of applications they receive, admissions officers seek input from undergraduate schools.

Why does Cornell have a Health Careers Evaluation Committee?

The HCEC serves the health profession schools as well as Cornell's undergraduates and alumni.

Why does Cornell have a Health Careers Evaluation Committee?

Just as you seek advising on your health career options, the medical, dental and other professional schools seek the advice of the HCEC on the potential success of our applicants.

Why does Cornell have a Health Careers Evaluation Committee?

Admissions officers expect applicants to use their school's committee if the school has one.

However, once three or four years have passed since graduation, the value of the undergraduate committee letter is debatable.

What does the HCEC do for applicants?

The HCEC materials are used for evaluation by the Committee. They also provide excellent preparation for the subsequent application process.

What does the HCEC do for applicants?

The HCEC ...

- provides registrants with the opportunity to formulate their relevant history in both a narrative and a structured way.
- prepares a comprehensive evaluation of relevant aspects of the applicant's experience. This, when combined with the individual letters of recommendation (LORs), is called the **HCEC Letter**.

What does the HCEC do for applicants?

1. Prepares the HCEC evaluation.
2. Compiles it with the LoRs.
3. Attaches a cover letter describing Cornell's educational system.
4. Makes the **HCEC Letter** available for you to direct to the schools where you are applying.

Do I have to use the HCEC to apply to health care professional schools?

No: Individuals are not required by health professional schools to have a committee-type letter.

Cornell does not require applicants to use the HCEC. It is voluntary. Cornell alumni are eligible to use the HCEC only if they have completed an *undergraduate* degree at Cornell.

Do I have to use the HCEC to apply to health care professional schools?

Even if you do not use the HCEC, you are still eligible for HCEC help. On your request, the HCEC will give you a form letter explaining that you simply chose not to use the service it provides.

What is the HCEC Letter?

The HCEC Letter is
a concise, individualized presentation of a
candidate's attributes.

What is the HCEC Letter?

The HCEC Letter is often the most heavily weighted *non-quantitative* element in the admissions office's decision to offer the candidate a personal interview.

What is the HCEC Letter?

*It is **NOT** a letter of recommendation.*

LoE \neq LoR

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The HCEC Letter interprets your record and the choices you have made:

1. Academic achievement
2. Personal background/experiences
3. Service, research, clinical, and other activities

...in the context of your Cornell undergraduate experience and what you have done since graduating.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The HCEC Letter is supportive in tone.

It is candid, measured and objective.

No candidate is perfect or ideal. The HCEC reports and explains in context its professional interpretation of any weaknesses or unfavorable patterns of achievement over the course of your years at Cornell.

This helps Cornell applicants – from application review to interview cut through final decision by the admissions committee. Because the HCEC has already explained any “red flags” for you in the context of your development, accomplishments and personal qualities, the admission review can focus on your strengths.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

While the HCEC Letter is supportive in tone, it cannot be uniformly supportive—or it would not be a truly evaluative process.

In **rare** situations, the HCEC evaluation demonstrates that a candidate may not be sufficiently prepared to gain admission to any health careers school at the time of evaluation. In these cases, an HCEC staff member will contact the candidate to discuss this view.

At the applicant's choice, the HCEC will submit or withhold the HCEC Letter. The applicant will be permitted alternatively to choose to put the file on hold and register in a subsequent year when the credentials are stronger.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The HCEC will review your transcript(s) for academic information.

Academic achievement is the BASE!

High achievement in other endeavors does not and cannot trade off with the academic record.

In the letter, the HCEC provides statistical data on how an individual's GPA compares to other members of his/her college and class.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

Qualitative, non-academic factors are an important part of our evaluation.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The HCEC reviews all the materials you have submitted in the online registration. This includes the Twenty Questions (20Q), the Background Information Form (BIF) and the Personal Statement (PS), which are part of the online registration.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The HCEC interprets your experiences at Cornell as well as off campus and summer activities during and since your college years. Its evaluation is limited to those experiences that you report in your HCEC registration materials. Your letters of recommendation document and expand on the information you have provided. Taken together, these materials supply a rich depiction of your distinctive qualities as a candidate.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

Based on historical applicant mandate, the evaluation process is distinct from the advising process.

The HCEC does not provide traditional health careers advising to its registrants, but will make referrals to Cornell advisors.

As an alumni, advisors are available for your consultation.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

After reviewing a registrant's HCEC file, a member of the HCEC staff may suggest that the registrant seek advising guidance before applying.

That guidance is for you. The advisor will keep your conversation private and confidential. The HCEC will not know anything about the content of your conversation with the advisor.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

Explain in your personal statement how your experiences and activities have prepared you for the kind of medical degree you seek (DO, DDS, MD, OD, DPM).

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

The strength and authority of the HCEC Letter correlates with the extent of your academic, extracurricular and life experience. We evaluate through the date that you submit your online registration. Events taking place in the late spring and summer that you apply are usually not included in the HCEC Letter.

How does the HCEC evaluate candidates?

Each HCEC Letter is reviewed by several staff members to assure accuracy, consistency and comprehensiveness.

What does the HCEC *not* evaluate?

We cannot evaluate or mention your future plans, including:

1. Activities planned during or after you submit the online registration.
2. Specific career goals or future interests.

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Core Competencies

Health professional schools want applicants who have developed particular qualities. The AAMC calls these “core competencies”. Their list and definitions follow. Consider these as you fill out your HCEC materials.

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Integrity and ethics

“The applicant behaves in an honest and ethical manner; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways.”

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Reliability and dependability

“The applicant consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.”

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Resilience and adaptability

“The applicant demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations, recovers from setbacks.”

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Service orientation

“The applicant demonstrates a desire to help others and a sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress.”

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Social and interpersonal skills

“The applicant demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues and treats others with respect.”

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Teamwork

“Teams are two or more individuals who make decisions, whose members have specific roles, perform specific tasks, and interact or coordinate to achieve a common goal or outcome.

“They differ from small groups in that teams act collectively due to task interdependency. Teamwork requires members of the team to adapt to one another in an effort to accomplish goals. Medical teams possess specialized knowledge and skills and often function under conditions of high workload.”

From: *A longitudinal, clinic-based leadership, teamwork, and change management curriculum*. Accessed on 11/15/11 from: <https://www.aamc.org/44826/search.html?q=teamwork+&x=0&y=0>

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Oral Communication

The ability to present information and to explain processes effectively. The skill to sense and understand the perspective of the listener so that one's message will be optimally received. Some activities that develop this competency are teaching, leading an organization, and peer counseling.

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Cultural Competence

“With increasing diversity in the U.S. population and strong evidence of disparities in health care, it is critically important that health care professionals are specifically educated on how their own and their patients' demographic (e.g., gender, income, race and ethnicity, etc.) and cultural (e.g., language, religion, etc.) factors influence health, health care delivery and health behaviors.”

Reflect on how your life experiences have contributed to your cultural competency.

<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/tacct/>

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Desire to learn

The applicant sets goals for continuous self-improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; assesses own strengths and weaknesses; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/mr5/committee/143512/committee_meeting_update.html

What do schools want us to include in the HCEC Letter?

Capacity for Improvement

Paths taken and methods the applicant used to grow and develop as a scholar, colleague, friend, leader and collaborator. These could include seeking help, acquiring and depending on mentors, independent work, and engaging peers in projects.

What does the HCEC *not* evaluate?

The evaluation process does not include consideration of performance on standardized tests. The health career schools do not seek our advice on standardized test scores.

If an applicant's GPA and standardized exam score do not correspond well, the applicant must address this directly with the schools to which he or she is applying.

What does the HCEC *not* evaluate?

The HCEC cannot evaluate a applicant's activities or coursework that took place on another campus, although it may mention these things in the HCEC Letter. Applicants who transferred to Cornell may want to have a letter of recommendation from the first school, which is able to evaluate its own curriculum and significant applicant activities.

For example, the HCEC is unable to know or comment on the rigor of a chemistry course taken at another school. It does not know what a peer counseling program like EARS is like at another college.

What does the HCEC *not* evaluate?

The HCEC does interpret off-campus Cornell-sponsored program experiences such as the Urban Semester and Cornell in Washington. It may or may not be able to comment on other Study Away opportunities. Thus, the applicant may want to request a supplemental letter describing Study Away program experiences, either as a supplemental letter sent directly to the schools or as one of the three that will be appended to the HCEC Letter.

An Overall Perspective on the HCEC Process

One registrant told us:

“This process has so many moving parts!”

The next part of this orientation summarizes and clarifies the separate responsibilities of the HCEC Registrant (you), the HCEC Records Coordinator, other HCEC staff members and Committee members/ interviewers.

HCEC Timeline

Alumni have no specific due dates. However, because admissions is a time-sensitive process, the best practice is to complete your HCEC registration about a month before you submit to the application services: AMCAS, AACOMAS, OPTOMCAS, AADSAS, etc.

Alumni are put in the HCEC Letter release queue after they send the HCEC office a PDF of their submitted application service application; more on this later.

HCEC Staff Responsibilities

F.A. Kallfelz, J. Snoyer

Alumni only

- Reviews your HCEC online registration file and LoRs
- Prepares your letter of evaluation
- Edits and approves final draft

203 Barnes Hall
Records Coordinator Responsibilities

Douglas Lockwood

- Compiles your electronic and paper credentials folder
- Maintains your HCEC online file
- Prepares your HCEC Letter
- Uploads the HCEC Letter to Interfolio
- Responds best to email: hcec@cornell.edu
to questions not answered elsewhere.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Registration begins at the HCEC website by clicking on the appropriate registration link.

www.career.cornell.edu/HealthCareers/HCEC

What does the HCEC need from me?

Each registrant submits information to create an HCEC file:

- Official external transcripts from all post-secondary study outside of Cornell. The HCEC directly acquires the Cornell transcript.
- Three part online registration: Information about you
 1. Answer 20 questions in narrative form and submit to us.
 2. Online application available at the HCEC website. This includes the
 - a. Background Information Form (BIF)
 - b. Personal Statement (PS)
 3. Registration Agreement Form (RAF) and fee to be mailed or delivered personally to the HCEC (see next page).
- Letters of Recommendation (2 - 3 LoRs)
- Photograph (taken of you alone in a professional or neutral setting). Sent as a small .jpg file via dropbox: dropbox.cornell.edu

2012 HCEC Registration Agreement Form (RAF)

- Available for download at HCEC website.
- Requires signed statements
 - Integrity in the application process
 - File retention
 - Purpose of HCEC packet
 - Deadline adherence
 - FERPA right to access

What is the cost?

First-time registrant fee is \$190.

We regret that fee waivers are not available for graduates who have never registered with HCEC.

If you are resuming as an alumni after registering as an undergraduate, at which time you paid the fee, please email us to see if we can apply that fee to this year's registration.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

In order to register you must have a NetID and password. If you need help with that, contact CIT. You can use the link on the HCEC website.

As soon as you register, go into your HCEC online file and enter all demographic information.

Your application will be incomplete until you have filled in **every field**.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

- Make sure you know what a complete file contains.

Until a file is incomplete, it is ineligible for the HCEC Letter.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Do not let your phone, postal mail and email contact information get outdated. We may need to reach you rapidly.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Enter names of recommenders as soon as they agree to write your LoR.

The names may be changed at a later date.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Work with recommenders to make sure 2-3 letters are received by the HCEC. We do not prepare the HCEC Letter until a minimum of two letters are in the file.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

The HCEC, on behalf of Cornell, is required to collect FERPA waive/retain forms for each part of the HCEC Letter.

Familiarize yourself with FERPA and make an informed choice.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Once you have begun an application like AACOMAS, AADSAS, OPTOMCAS, AMCAS, you will receive one or more unique identifier numbers. Enter those numbers in your HCEC online file. Your application is not complete until you do this.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

After you have submitted your online application to AMCAS, AADSAS, AACOMAS, or others, send the application as a PDF to the HCEC via the drop box (dropbox.cornell.edu) as proof of your submission.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

Check your online file periodically to make sure information is accurate at www.career.cornell.edu.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities

We regularly post REQUIRED READINGS in the summer about how to get your packet to the schools where you are applying.

- **READ, PROCESS AND APPLY THE REQUIRED READINGS WE MAKE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE.**

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

The **HCEC Letter**, which AMCAS calls the “Committee Letter”, consisting of the individual letter of evaluation (LoE), the LoRs and the Cornell cover letter, is formatted into an electronic document and uploaded to a third party website:

interfolio.com

**HCEC Applicant Responsibilities:
How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?**

www.interfolio.com

With your HCEC registration, you receive an account with this credentials management company. You open the account with a special HCEC code the HCEC gives you when you register.

You can release your HCEC Letter to approved schools 24/7, at no extra cost.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

Do not open an account without the code. It will cost you money and you will not be able to release your HCEC Letter.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

www.interfolio.com

You can also use this account to upload other credentials and distribute them to any legitimate destination upon your authorization.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

1. You must authorize HCEC to release your HCEC Letter to receiving entities (Interfolio, AADSAS, and others).
2. You must authorize Interfolio to release your HCEC Letter to receiving entities (AMCAS and others).

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

When your registration is complete, including **every required field in your online** file, and the HCEC receives the PDF of your submitted application, your place in the queue for letter release is established. The HCEC staff is not able to inform our candidates of the lag time for individual letters. Expect to wait at least a month.

We do post release dates on the HCEC Facebook page and in your HCEC online file. Check these.

HCEC Applicant Responsibilities: How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?

When you see in your online file that your HCEC Letter has been uploaded to Interfolio, go to Interfolio.com and request a delivery to the appropriate receiver.

**IT DOES NOT HAPPEN
AUTOMATICALLY.**

**HCEC applicant Responsibilities:
How does the HCEC Letter get to the schools?**

Remember: Once the letter is at Interfolio in its electronic format, the applicant must again legally authorize Interfolio to deliver it to AMCAS or to admissions committees of approved professional schools and schedule the delivery.

Use Advisors Liberally

Health Careers Advising Network

Questions to ask while you are responding to the 20 questions, before you complete registration with the HCEC:

1. Am I now ready?
2. Am I a competitive applicant?

You can talk over these important questions with someone at Cornell.

Health Careers Advising Network

Seek guidance.

Health Careers Advising Network

Ask for help.

Health Careers Advising Network

We want you to succeed.

Questions?

**Write to
hcec@cornell.edu**