

SUMMER HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Shaping Careers. Changing Lives.

Prehealth Advisor FAQ



The National Program Office offers a variety of online tools and resources, including this FAQ, to enhance the advising and application experience and maximize your applicants' chances for acceptance into the Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP).

You've Got Questions, We've Got Answers!

Use the FAQ to better prepare your SHPEP applicants for a successful application process.

1. What is SHPEP? What does it offer, and how does it differ from other pipeline programs?

SHPEP is a free, six-week summer academic-enrichment program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to increase diversity in the health professions (shpep.org). Each host institution provides academic enrichment in the basic sciences and math, clinical experiences, career development activities, learning and study skills seminars, and a financial planning workshop.

SHPEP, formerly called the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP), expanded in 2016 to include a broad array of health professions: medicine, dentistry, nursing, optometry, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and public health. Unlike other pipeline programs, SHPEP introduces students to an interprofessional curriculum that addresses

effective collaboration across the health professions and includes shadowing as well as academic-enrichment opportunities. Students can choose up to three health career tracks to explore. The interprofessional collaborative component helps educate students from all health professions, across the education spectrum, to work collaboratively toward improving health outcomes.

2. When does the SHPEP application period open and close?

Students may apply from Nov. 1 through Feb. 5.* Encourage students to fill out the online application and submit their supporting materials as early as possible during the application season. Their transcripts and, if mailed, their letter of recommendation must be postmarked by the deadline. Students whose applications are incomplete will not be considered for the program.

*Please visit shpep.org for all updates to the application opening and deadline dates.

3. How should students choose their SHPEP sites?

Each of the SHPEP program sites has a variety of health professions tracks. Depending on their interests, students may choose up to three different institutions. Undecided students may select a different career pathway at each institution. Students may also consider location, type of institution, and interest in that particular program site. This information is at shpep.org/sites.

4. What factors are most important when evaluating a SHPEP application?

All the requested application materials are important during the evaluation process. Please share with applicants that SHPEP uses a holistic approach for selecting scholars, which means a wide variety of factors are considered and no portion of the application process is more important than the others. We encourage students to make sure their application is **complete**, including transcripts and the recommendation letter, by the application deadline. If any of the application materials is missing, program sites will not review the application. For more information, please visit shpep.org/apply-to-shpep/application-materials.

5. What are some important points to include in the personal statement? How can you help your students write a strong statement?

There is no “wrong” way to craft a personal statement since it represents that student’s experience and journey. Some students may become embarrassed or ashamed to write about personal obstacles that may have affected their educational opportunities or financial circumstances. Therefore, we ask that you encourage your students to be open and transparent with their personal statements and to note what activities they have pursued to demonstrate their general passion for the health professions. Additional information about the personal statement is available at shpep.org/personalstatementguidelines. We hope that you’ll be able to make time to review your students’ essays, primarily for any grammatical errors, and to make sure they aren’t too long (600 words total).

6. Should the letter of recommendation come from someone at the student's university? If not, who else is qualified to give a recommendation?

The letter of recommendation does not have to come from someone at the student’s current school. If a recommendation can’t be submitted by a prehealth advisor or college professor within the student’s major, the National Program Office will accept one from an employer or from a high school science teacher. Please be sure the student completes the Applicant Information section of the Recommendation Form before submitting it to you.

7. Where do I send applicants who have additional questions about their application status or the admissions process?

Students may log in to their application to check the Application Status for updates. Remind applicants that it can take up to 10 business days for the National Program Office to process application materials once they have been received. If the online application is submitted *after* the supporting materials have been received, it can take up to two business days to update the Application Status. For any additional information about the admissions process, encourage students to visit shpep.org/apply-to-shpep/admission-process or call the National Program Office’s toll-free number: 866-587-6337.

