SUGGESTIONS for applying to PA school 2019/20

It is important that you read and follow the INSTRUCTIONS in your CASPA application and in all submissions to us.

Curious, resourceful applicants will often become competent, resourceful providers who are able to provide excellent care to their patients. We are looking for just such persons.

These are suggestions to help with the application process. This document will not take the place of the admission requirements on our website (http://www.harding.edu/paprogram/admission). Following the suggestions in this document will not guarantee an interview, selection or admission into the PA program.

CASPA APPLICATION

1. Start Early with your CASPA application preparation
   a. Use the CASPA dashboard to track your progress
   b. Find the CASPA Instructions for each section. Look for the ? in the upper right hand corner or the drop down menu by your name.
   c. There is a LIVE CHAT feature – use as needed after you have read the instructions on your own.
   d. Supporting Information is where you will find your Evaluations (letters of references) and essay, experiences (health care), work, etc. Program Materials will be specific information to each program you are applying to.
   e. Tip – if your program requires you to complete the prerequisite matching (we do) this cannot be done until the transcript entry is complete.

2. Where to start.
   a. Open your CASPA application with your name and demographic information in the Personal Information.
   b. Immediately you should receive an email from CASPA. If it goes to SPAM – set your filters to receive all correspondence from this sender in the future. caspainfo@caspaonline.org
      i. I will use an admissions program and emails will come from donotreply@webadmit.org and @sendgrid.me. Set these as safe so you do not miss my correspondence. Occasionally .edu email addresses will have a firewall that sends these emails to spam.
   c. Submit your 3-5 reference request forms (read the Instructions for this section). Do not wait until you have finished filling out your application to do this. These can be found in Evaluations.
      i. You do not have control over the timeliness on the return of your Evaluations to CASPA. Starting these early will help to ensure that they arrive by the time you are ready to submit your application to CASPA. Follow up as needed. Watch your status to follow their return.
      ii. Watch your status box to see as they are returned.
   d. Complete the institutions attended section (read the instructions for this section), remembering to include all institutions you have attended post high school in the Academic History section.
   e. Submit your transcript request forms (read the instructions for this section). Do not wait until you have finished filling out your entire application to do this.
      i. You do not have control over the timeliness of the return of your Transcripts to CASPA. Starting these early will help to ensure that they arrive by the time you are ready to submit your application to CASPA. Follow up as needed. Watch your status box to see when they are posted as received by CASPA.
      ii. If you are still taking coursework (designated as planned or in progress) there are suggestions as to when to request the transcripts from that institution – read below and also on CASPA.
      iii. Consider the timing of when that coursework will be completed and how to present the most complete application.
f. Begin carefully completing the rest of the application after you have read the instructions that relate to that section.

g. CASPA will hold all transcripts and references they receive while you continue to work on your application. On the dashboard, Check Status, you can see when transcripts and reference letters are received by CASPA. If there is a delay in their receipt, follow up with the schools or reference writers. Do not let a late transcript or reference letter make your entire application ineligible.

h. If CASPA has all of your transcripts (did you take any courses in high school for college credit?) and at least 2 of your 3 reference letters, when you e-submit your application and pay for your application, your application will be marked complete. You do not have to wait for these to be received before submitting.

i. Once your application is marked Complete, CASPA will begin the verification process. CASPA will NOT mark your application Complete or begin to work on your application for Verification until all transcripts and 2 of your 3 reference letters are received. Watch the deadlines. This is YOUR responsibility, not CASPA's or ours. Read the Application Status and Notifications in Instructions for further explanation of this.

3. If you are completing summer coursework and/or additional medical experiences that you would like considered on your application (this is the recommendation for our program):
   a. Summer Coursework:
      i. Same suggestions as above, but wait to have transcript from institution where summer work is being completed sent to CASPA until after summer term is finished. Everything else in your application can be ready to go once your grades can be entered in application. Submit the application to CASPA as soon as you can enter your summer course grades in your application. Your transcript does not have to be received by CASPA before you submit your application.
   b. Medical Experience (HCE):
      i. Same suggestions as above (1) have all of your application completed except that last bit of health care experience. Submit the application to CASPA once that is completed and entered in application. (you may have to give consideration to others schools deadlines for this one – you can submit to different schools at different times if needed.)
      ii. I will accept updates to HCE but ONLY if they are done in the following manner. Entered into your CASPA application following the CASPA instructions AND sending me an email (mmurphy2@harding.edu) notifying me of the update. I will not know of this update without this email from you. Please enter UPDATE in the duties section also.
      iii. See instructions under Submitting and Monitoring Your CASPA Application
         1. Before and After You Submit Your CASPA Application - then Updating Your CASPA Application/Academic Update. You can enter New HCE - even if it is continuing HCE, just enter the same information with new dates. I much prefer if you put UPDATE in the description so it is easier to follow this.

4. If you are completing coursework in spring 2019 that is to be used to meet our prerequisite requirements, it is suggested that you follow the suggestions in step 3a. This will only slightly delay your application and will present a more complete academic application (keep in mind all of the schools you are applying to and what you need to do to meet their requirements).
   a. If you do submit your application before your coursework is complete, spring 2019 OR summer 2019, enter your grades in CASPA (see instructions) and send us an unofficial copy of those grades (paprogram@harding.edu) upon completion of this work (you can still send CASPA an official transcript and they will upload it but it will not be verified. Please let me know that this has been done.)
5. Know the deadline for the schools you are applying to and what is meant by those deadlines. CASPA is very clear on their website with their color coding and descriptions and we have it very clearly stated on our website also (http://www.harding.edu/paprogram/admission - CASPA Application and Deadline heading). Again, this is your responsibility.
   a. Do you know why you would want to attend Harding beyond “I meet the prerequisites” or “Arkansas is a pretty state” or “I just want in somewhere” does not show much depth.
   b. Have you ensured that you meet our requirements prior to submitting your application? If it (prerequisites, health care experience, work history, etc) isn’t listed in your application we do not know it occurred.

6. Our supplemental applications are sent to applicants who have been screened to first ensure that they have met our stated academic requirements. We hope that you will use the supplemental application in the following ways:
   a. An opportunity to make a more personal statement just to us. Please give it your attention.
   b. Be sure and answer the questions asked.

7. To consider:
   a. Your CASPA application is our 1st introduction to you. Make it positive. Remember 1st impressions
   b. Consider the email address you use, if it is offensive or too cuteys - create a different account.
   c. The CASPA personal statement should be written to reflect someone who is applying to a graduate program. Misspelling, grammatical errors, copying and inconsistent writing styles between your CASPA personal statement and our supplemental application are noted and make a poor first impression. Don’t trust spell-check to always pick the word that you want. Re-read what you wrote before submitting.

8. If you are a RE-APPLICANT, it is STONGLY ADVISED that you rewrite the majority of your personal statement. We do look to see if you have reused this statement and that is seen as a lack of effort and/or growth over the last year. Look at the CASPA instructions for re-applicants.

9. Sections where mistakes are often made:
   a. READ the Instructions BEFORE contacting CASPA. The majority of your questions will be answered there.
   b. Institutions Attended – list all institutions that you have attended which are considered post secondary. The CASPA instructions will give further guidance. This may cause a significant delay in the processing of your application if errors are made (even with one course/institution).
   c. When completing the Coursework Section: list coursework in progress and coursework planned. This lets schools know how you will be finishing your degree and how you will be meeting the required prerequisites. Not doing this shows lack of attention to detail or the ability to follow directions.
   d. Check your spam filter: Our program communicates almost entirely by e-mail and some filters block our communication. We also list information concerning this: http://www.harding.edu/paprogram/admission - CASPA Application and Deadlines heading. See also 2b in this document.
   e. Professional Transcript Entry: be sure you have carefully read the instructions for this section.
   f. Be sure to CHECK STATUS and VIEW MY NOTIFICATIONS in your CASPA application. Look for any items that need your approval before further action will be taken by CASPA.
g. When evaluating the entire application we do look at the following sections. Complete them following the instruction in CASPA concerning redundancy:
   i. Patient Contact Experience
   ii. Other Health Care Experience
   iii. Health Care Shadowing
   iv. Research
   v. Community Service
   vi. Work Experience (past 5-7 years at least)
   vii. If these are left blank when there have been experiences that should fall in them, you will be short changing yourself. The program has a variety of reason for looking at these categories. We will not ask you to complete these areas if they are left blank as that is your responsibility when completing the application.