Peer Advising Fellow Application Preview For 2022-23
To apply, visit https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8947SQFAr0r537g
Application Deadline: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:59 pm ET
Please compose your longer responses in a separate document to minimize the risk of data loss.
The application consists of four sections. First, you’ll provide information about yourself. Then, you’ll respond to a few questions about your experiences. Third, you’ll respond to one fictitious PAFee who has emailed you in August prior to the fall term. Finally, you’ll provide the names and contact information for two people who will act as references.

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT YOU
Name and Contact Information
Class Year
Residential Affiliation
• For upper-level students, House affiliation
• For first-years, Yard and Proctor affiliation

Concentration (or possible concentrations, for first-years)
Extracurricular Commitments
A) Please list up to four extracurricular activities most meaningful to you in which you have been involved at Harvard, as well as the duration of your participation. (E.g., "Activity A: Fall 2020 - Present" or "Activity B: Sophomore Fall.") Space provided to list up to four activities
B) Being a Peer Advising Fellow requires a substantial commitment. In addition to serving as a PAF in 2022-23, in what other extracurricular activities do you anticipate being involved? Space provided to list up to six activities.
C) With your anticipated academic (e.g., thesis or research), extracurricular, or other commitments for 2022-23 in mind, please describe how the PAF position would fit in your weekly schedule. Please make special note if you imagine your other commitments will have a pronounced peak intensity at some moment, and elaborate on how you might handle such a moment.

SECTION TWO: YOUR EXPERIENCES
A) What experiences have you had that prepare you for the role of a PAF, and how would these experiences enable you to contribute to the advising team (Proctor, First-Year Academic Adviser, and PAF)?
   a. [If you have applied before, this question will ask you about the intervening time since you last applied for the PAF role.]
B) PAFs work with their co-PAF and Proctor team to foster community within first-year entryways and promote a sense of belonging within the broader Harvard
community. Describe a contribution you’ve made to a community, and how that experience might influence your approach to building inclusive environments as a PAF.

C) PAFs draw on their own academic experience to help first-years take ownership of their undergraduate journey and make informed, authentic choices about their academic path. What specific academic information do you wish you had known in your first year and that you would like to impart to your advisees?

D) PAFs help students connect with and utilize academic resources. Tell us about your experiences with Harvard’s academic resources.

Thinking of academic resources on campus (e.g., the Writing Center, office hours, the MQC, Office of Career Services, Office of International Education, Academic Resource Center workshops, peer tutoring, Departmental Writing Fellows, etc.), tell us about your experience with one or two of them.

How did you decide to use this resource? How might you bring to bear your experience with this resource on your PAF role? If you haven’t engaged with any of these resources, why not?

SECTION THREE: RESPONDING TO ADVISEES

If you join the PAF program, over the summer you will email your advisees, introducing yourself.

Imagine that you receive the following replies via email, a week or two before the start of the fall term.

You will respond to one advisee. Please choose one of the three (Gabrielle, Duha, or Devon) and respond to only one.

You should address all the important issues raised in these communications. There are no hard-coded limits on the length of your email.

Four important notes:
1) The fictional advisees are writing to their PAFs by name. When you respond, feel free either to sign your name or the name of the fictional PAF. Either way is fine.

2) If you include web links, please don’t embed the links in your text. That is, if you want to link to the Dean of Students Office website, rather than linking like this, spell out the link: https://dso.college.harvard.edu/.

3) Please compose your responses in a word processing program so that you don't lose your hard work if something goes wrong.
4) Respond to one advisee only.

PAFee Gabrielle
Hi Fran!

Thanks so much for your email! I hope you had a great summer and are looking forward to this semester—I sure am!

I spent the first half of my summer doing immunology research at Columbia, and I spent the second half researching Harvard classes for several hours each day. I’ve already shadowed for dozens of hours at my local hospital across many specialties, so I know 100% that I want to go straight to Med school after Harvard (hopefully staying at Harvard). Both of my parents are physicians and went to HMS, and they’ve always seen me following in their footsteps.

My main goal at Harvard is to keep a 4.0 GPA by ace-ing my PreMed classes and GenEds and sneaking in some easier electives to make my Med school application as strong as possible. In my research in my.harvard this summer, I’ve come up with a four year plan to fit in all of my pre-med requirements and GenEds, and I’ve left spots for Expos and easy classes. My sister, who graduated in 2019, says everyone calls them gems and told me to look at the Q. Do you have any gem recommendations?

I took all of my placement exams this summer too, and I placed out of Spanish, and got recommendations for Biology, Chemistry, Math, and Expos. With my Bio and Chem scores, I was recommended to take LS1a. I looked at the course evaluations for LS1a and LPS A, and I was thinking about taking LPS A instead to increase my chances of getting an A. Would this be possible? I also got placed into Math 18 or higher for my math scores, and I don’t want to take up another class in my four year plan with math, so I’ll stick with that even though it sounds hard. I got placed into Expos 20 for the Expos Requirement, but I’ve heard from my sister that Expos grading is really hard. Could I take Expos 10 instead first to increase my chances of getting an A in that? I want to make sure that I have an A in my writing requirement for Med School. A professor at HMS is teaching a Freshman Seminar, is there any way I can increase my chances of getting into that one?

I never had time in high school, but I’ve always been interested in dance. I want to be involved in as many pre-med extracurriculars as possible, though, so I don’t know if I’ll have time to pursue that interest at Harvard either. I want to make sure that I have the best application and resume for summer internships, so I have to prioritize what will look best on those.

There are five other girls from my school in our Harvard class, so I’m not worried about
making other friends. Unfortunately, Harvard doesn’t let us choose our roommates, so we’re not roommates now, but we want to block together for Sophomore year. When do we get to do that?

Warmly,

Gabrielle A. Smith

Harvard College | Class of 2026
A.B. Candidate in Molecular and Cellular Biology
Secondary Field in Global Health and Health Policy

PAFee Duha

Hi Menoya,

Thanks so much for your email and for your introduction! I am SO excited to meet you and to start school. I have been dreaming about this day for so long. My family has been helping me prepare to fly to campus—the travel time is around 23 hours from Tunisia to Boston! I’ve never flown outside the country, and this will be the first time I am living away from home.

There are a few things I’m nervous about, that I was hoping we might be able to talk more about. What is Boston like? I am a little worried about the adjustment to such a different culture and also of the language barrier. I’m planning on doing FIP, which I am so excited for, especially because I heard that we go on a scavenger hunt around the city?? They also help us set up our phone and bank information?! That is so useful and wonderful!! Are there other organizations or clubs you know about that might help me transition into the new environment? How do I join cultural and social organizations? I am extremely tied to my Muslim heritage, and would love to join HIS or other similar clubs! As a Muslim, I’m also nervous about the American drinking culture—will people find it strange that I don’t drink? Should I avoid going to parties? I don’t know what to expect from American college social life. There’s a Class of 2026 GroupMe but I’ve never used GroupMe before, so it’s hard to keep up.

Anyways, that’s enough worries! Let me tell you what I’m excited about!! I definitely know what I’m excited about academically and extracurricularly! I plan on studying Economics while pursuing my dual degree at Berklee (I also sing). I understand that most students take four classes the first semester, but how would I go about getting permission to take five classes this fall? Is there an office I can petition? I want to go to business school after my time at Harvard, ideally at Harvard or Stanford, so I’ll start preparing my coursework and club involvement as soon as I get to campus. I know Harvard College doesn’t have a business track, but do you have any recommendations
for the best business classes? I can’t figure out what finance classes I should be taking.

I’m planning on joining HFAC, HCCG, and one of the campus funds this Fall – do you know anything about them?? Are they hard to join? I keep hearing about ‘comping’, and I don’t really understand what it means ... does that mean joining? Also, I put together a potential academic schedule for each semester through junior year (attached to this email), and I would love to hear your thoughts about it! Is there anyone else I should be talking with about my plan? I want to feel good about the next few semesters early! :) I don’t want to waste any classes so I have decided not to apply for any Freshman Seminars.

Thanks again for all of your help – can’t wait to meet you and the rest of the entryway!

Warmly,
Duha

---

**Pafee Devon**  
Hello Nam!

Thank you so very much for reaching out! I truly appreciate your incredibly kind words and I can already tell that I am going to love working with you!

I am so beyond excited and nervous for the start of the year I cannot even begin to express these feelings. To tell you a little about me, my name is Devon and I am from Valentine, Nebraska, a small town with a population of less than 5000 people. This is the first time that I am flying out to Boston (my first time on the east coast) and I really do not know what to expect. I am a first-generation college student and on full financial aid. I am a bit concerned financially because I do not want to be too much of a burden on my parents and I know that I may need to make big purchases such as furniture for the room and I am not sure how I will get the money for this. I know that Harvard is known for having a lot of wealthy kids and I am concerned that my financial situation may hinder my ability to connect with others.

Academically, I am feeling both nervous and excited! It is no question that Harvard students are brilliant. But I am not sure that my background has prepared me well enough to succeed or fit in at Harvard. My high school only offered two APs and I took them both, but I saw that Harvard Students take an average of 10+ APs. I also heard that Harvard is very competitive, and I am worried that I am going to be left in the dust and won’t find people who want to work with me because I feel as though I am just going to weigh them down. I heard someone talk about “pset groups” like I am supposed to know about it already, but I’ve always just worked on homework by myself.
Anyways, I am excited to be exposed to such a wide breadth of classes. I hope I will be able to explore and find something I am interested in studying because as of right now I have no clue what I want to concentrate in. I am kind of confused about how to narrow my choices down from the 30000 options on my.harvard to just 4 classes. Do you have any suggestions on how I can focus my search? I was thinking I might just take all my required General Education courses my freshman year.

In high school I really loved staying active especially while playing Volleyball. I was a 4-year starter on my high school’s varsity volleyball team, and I wanted to play on the Women's Volleyball Team at Harvard! Do you have any recommendations on how I can further pursue this passion?

I love college sports, some of my favorite memories are when my family and I would ride down and watch big football games and tailgate together. I am really excited for that important aspect of the college experience that includes all the games, tailgates, and parties! I know Harvard is known to have a reputation to be a place for studies but do Harvard students also let loose and enjoy the average college experience?

Thank you again for everything! Excited to meet you very soon!

Thanks!

Devon

SECTION FOUR: REFERENCES

Please list below two people whom we could contact as references for you. Both people must be affiliated with Harvard. Taken together, references should provide a balanced and multifaceted perspective on your candidacy for the PAF role. References should be able to speak to some or all of the qualities we expect candidates will demonstrate through the process, including:

- Empathy and compassion
- Dedication and reliability
- Flexibility
- Resourcefulness
- Commitment to inclusive communities
- Enthusiasm about engaging first-year students in their Harvard experiences
- Academic resourcefulness and intellectual curiosity

Current undergraduates may not serve as references.