

Peer Advising Fellows Application for 2018-19

Application Link:

https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3yOvC2pBoe7uyfX

Application Deadline: Applications must be completed and submitted by Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 11:59 pm.

To minimize the risk of losing data, consider composing your responses in a word processing program and pasting them into the application tool.

IMPORTANT: When you submit your application, you will see a confirmation screen saying that the APO will be in touch on Wednesday, February 14. If you do not see that message, your application was not successfully completed. If you do not hear from the APO by Thursday, February 15, please email advising@fas.harvard.edu.

Information About You

Name and Contact Information

- First Name
- Last Name
- Preferred First Name
- Preferred gender pronouns
- Harvard email address
- Phone Number
- HUID

- Class Year
- *Upperclass students, please indicate your House [Drop down list]
- *First-Year students, please indicate your dorm and entryway [Drop down list]

- *Upperclass Students, please indicate your primary concentration [Drop down list]
- *First-Year students, please indicate the concentrations you are considering [Check boxes]

- If you have other particular academic interests, please list them here. (e.g., joint concentration, pre-med, secondary fields or certificates)
- PAFs must arrive on campus on Thursday, August 23 for training and orientation Friday - Sunday, August 24-26. PAFs who are leading pre-orientation programs will participate in an additional spring training session in April/May in addition to a makeup session in August. Will you be able to arrive on campus on Thursday, August 23 and participate in training August 24-26?

Extracurricular Commitments

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 2016 - Present" or "Activity B: Sophomore Fall.")

Being a Peer Fellow requires a substantial commitment. In addition to serving as a Peer Fellow in 2018-19, in what other extracurricular activities do you anticipate being involved?

Your Experiences

Have you applied to the PAF position before?

If no: 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, Freshman Adviser, and PAF)? [Character Limit – 2000]

If yes: In the intervening time since you applied for the PAF position, what experiences have you had that would add to your preparation for the position and how would these experiences enable you to contribute to the advising team (Proctor, Freshman Adviser, and PAF)? [Character Limit – 2000]

Please describe briefly a time at Harvard when you needed help. How did you approach the situation?

Describe a meaningful mentoring relationship you have had. This could include a relationship in which you were the mentor *or* the mentee. What made it successful or meaningful? How do you imagine that would translate to the PAF role?

A challenge many PAFs encounter is having an advisee who seems less engaged in the entryway community or PAF relationship. If you had a student who didn't attend study breaks and didn't reply to your emails, how do you imagine you would approach the situation? What would you do?

Responses to Advisees

If you are chosen to be a Peer Advising Fellow, over the summer you will email your advisees, introducing yourself and letting them know who you are and why you have chosen to be a Peer Fellow.

Imagine that you receive the following replies via email, a week or two before your students arrive on campus. Members of the Class of 2022 will complete an advising questionnaire that asks them a few questions about their academic and extracurricular interests. Peer Advising Fellows have access to their advisees' questionnaires. The fictional students who have written the following emails have also completed their advising questionnaires.

Please take the time to view the advising questionnaires, available at the bottom of the page at http://hwpi.harvard.edu/peer_advising_fellows/training-and-availability

Then, respond to **one of the following two** advisees in the space provided. **Respond to one and 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, though experience suggests that first-year students are more likely to read shorter emails more thoroughly than very long ones.

N.B. 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.

Please compose your responses in a word processing program so that you don't lose your hard work if something goes wrong.

Florence Hoang

Hi Dani!

Thanks so much for your welcome email! I'm actually really glad you reached out—not sure if you were told, but I got off the waitlist about a month ago (I was getting off my lifeguard shift when I got the call and started sprinting around the changing room!). Although I am incredibly grateful to have this opportunity, I'm a bit nervous coming in when I feel like everyone else has so much time to prepare. I already feel behind. Everyone on the Class of 2022 Facebook Group is talking about Visitas and I've never even been to campus.

I guess I missed the deadline to sign up for an orientation program—how big of a deal is not doing one? I feel like I have heard people make friends really quickly in college and I don't want to miss out. I was also wondering if you had any advice on long-distance dating. At the same time I want to be really present and make new friends on campus, I've been in a relationship for almost two years now, and I don't want to be one of those couples that breaks up the first month of school.

I'm pretty close with my family; I have four siblings and anticipate being homesick, at least at first. I think, in addition to missing my family, I will miss the comfort of my high school, which I felt like was always manageable to navigate and meant I had teachers who got to know me really well. Since I am used to translating for my parents, especially about my siblings' school, I'm worried about how they'll cope. I am a first-generation college student, so I know that I will need some additional help adjusting. I don't know how you're supposed to interact with your professors in college, or even what you call them. Or what social life is really going to be like – I don't want it to be like some crazy movie where everyone is drinking all the time. I'm nervous I'm supposed to go to a lot of parties to socialize, or that on the weekend everyone will expect me to drink. Since I didn't go to Visitas I don't really know what a weekend is like at Harvard.

My parents are so excited to have me come to Harvard; they really want me to study something that will prepare me for a successful and financially-stable future in medicine or law. I know they are making a big sacrifice by sending me to Harvard and it has been a big step forward for our family, but honestly I'm not quite sure what I want yet out of my college experience. I'm very close with my parents and value everything they've done for me, but sometimes they can be stubborn about what they think is right. Like maybe medicine or law just aren't right for me. I would love to take a class at Harvard Business School to see if that might interest me. Do you think that's possible?

I have also recently had some time though to look over some of the courses offered in the fall. I have been skimming different websites and the readings in Social Studies 10 seem really interesting so I think that will be at least one of the courses I take. I'm also thinking it would be good to take LS50 and, since I need to fulfill the language requirement, I think I'm going to try to take the Beginning German Intensive as my third and fourth classes. Because it counts for both semesters of language, I am thinking I can complete the requirement sooner that way and I've always wanted to learn German. How are the language courses at Harvard? Do you have any class recommendations in general? What is your advice about freshman seminars? There are so many that look cool but I don't want to waste a class if it won't count for anything and won't even count for my GPA. My friends going to schools around here have already picked classes in practical fields, like business or engineering, so it already feels weird that I don't have a schedule yet. I know I really want to get Expository Writing done. The writing test was okay but if I am placed into Expos 10 do I have to take it? I figure I can work harder and not waste a slot.

In terms of extra-curriculars, I have read that there are a ton of really cool, unique options available. I'm interested in trying out new activities since I can't imagine getting the opportunity to have access to such diverse ones again, like all the amazing publications,

performing arts groups, public service organizations, and so many others! However, my family friend sent me a couple of the *Crimson's* Op-Eds from recent years. One mentioned that it's actually quite tough to try out new things since most people stick to the same things they were really good at in high school. A different article talked about something related, saying that students who were really good at something in high school might not get into a club for that because they are competing against so many other people who were the best at their schools. Like a talented musician might not get into the orchestra here. Is this a real problem? I don't want to feel pigeonholed or to not get into anything at all!

Thanks so much for your help! Sorry if this was a long message - I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,
Florence Hoang

Aubrey Dram

Hi Alex!

Thank you so much for your email. As the summer has been going on, I have been getting more and more nervous about leaving for college. It is so nice to encounter such a friendly voice from Harvard.

I think there is a good chance I will not need your help that much. I am strongly considering walking onto the football team. My impression of the team is that the older guys give the freshmen lots of advice. I hung out with the team at Visitas (we went to Eleganza - have you ever been?) and they gave me and the other freshmen advice about classes and extracurriculars. It sounded like I shouldn't take CS 50, for example, because it would be too time consuming given how much time we will spend at practice and lift. It seems like I would probably get all the advice I need if I join the team. What's more, I'm already pretty sure of what I want to major in - I would like to pursue a double major in Human Developmental and Regenerative Biology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality. My favorite classes in high school have been genetics and AP biology, and my single favorite project I did was one for history about LGBTQ activism and the fight for marriage equality. I am so excited to pursue both areas of study.

That said, if I will join the team is still very much in doubt. Football was a huge part of my life before college. My junior year of high school, my team won CIF - the first CIF championship for the team ever, and the first CIF championship in any sport for my school this century. That experience cemented my desire to play football in college. Academics came first in my college decision, so I was thrilled when the Harvard coach emailed me as I was applying to Harvard that I could walk on the team if I got in.

I have had some indecision since then, though. I came out to my teammates and coach my sophomore year, when I went to prom with my boyfriend, and they were incredibly supportive. I do not feel that my sexuality at all impacted the perception that I could be a good athlete, as I was awarded best male athlete in the senior class upon graduation. I worry about encountering the same support at Harvard. Coming from an environment where all of my identity was not just accepted but supported, I am really uninterested in joining a team where I would feel like I couldn't be myself. I'm torn because I love football so much and am certain I would miss it a ton if I stopped playing. I'm really not sure what to do.

Related to that, we got our roommate assignments recently, and I was happy to get three roommates. I of course did some light social media sleuthing, and was slightly concerned to see on the Facebook of my roommate from Texas that he had been a page in the US Senate for Ted Cruz. I myself am a Democrat, but am quite conscious of trying to tolerate many political viewpoints. However, given Ted Cruz's positions on social issues, I worry that my roommate will not be so tolerant of my identity, and that it could make for quite an awkward year. Plus, I'm the only person of color in our suite. It would have been nice to be assigned roommates who might understand my background a bit more.

My family does not have a lot of money, and I worry about how that will affect me socially. I loved the dancing at Eleganza, but it was really striking to me how nicely dressed all the people in attendance were. I rented my suit for my high school prom because I don't own one, and here were all these people dressed more nicely on a random Saturday night than I did at prom. I do not know that I would have felt comfortable going to that event of my own accord. I do not see myself having the money to buy clothes like the type needed to go, especially I will need to spend money on buying winter clothes, since I have never needed boots or a jacket coming from California. I would love to explore Boston, but I hear it's such an expensive city (even more than Los Angeles!) so do you have any tips on cheap ways to see the city?

Oh one last question – I took the Spanish Placement Test online but I wasn't feeling well so I'm afraid I didn't pass. I heard there's a placement test I take when I get to campus, though, so can I just plan to do that in case I didn't place out over the summer. I can't afford to waste any classes so I really need to make sure I place out.

I'm excited but nervous to get started. I want to show I can make it through Harvard on my own.

Even though I may soon not need so much of your advice, it seems I do have a number of worries right now. Thank you so much for any help you can give now, and thank you in advance for the greeting you've said you will give on move in day.

Very best,
Aubrey Dram

References

Please list below two people, not including family members, we could contact as references for you. At least one should be affiliated with Harvard.