Peer Advising Fellow Application Preview For 2021-22

To apply, visit https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6X3sTUIEr9fo4xE

Application Deadline: Thursday, March 4, 2021 11:59 pm EST

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.

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 2019 - 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 2021-22, 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 (e.g., internship recruiting or social clubs) commitments for 2021-22 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.

YOUR EXPERIENCES

A) PAFs work with their co-PAF and Proctor team to build 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.

B) PAFs help first-years take ownership of their undergraduate experience and make informed, authentic choices. The first-year experience of members of the Class of 2025 is likely to be different from your own. How have you made your decisions about your time at Harvard, and how do you your approach would influence your work as a PAF?

C) 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?

RESPONSES 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 Jin, Morgan or Perveen 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, but experience suggests first-year students are more likely to read short emails than very long ones.

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 Jin**
Hi Allison!

It’s great to hear from you. I’m excited, it’s starting to feel real! Virtual Visitas showcased so many opportunities, from student organizations to entrepreneurship activities and the kinds of classes I can take, and finally it’s almost here. The extracurriculars alone are enough to keep me busy, I’m sure!

I’ve probably spent two hours a day researching classes to take. There are so many that look incredible - I can’t wait to explore topics in intellectual discussions with fellow students. I don’t think the Crimson Cart is open yet, but I have a google doc of about 35 classes that I want to take already. I know, I know. Some of them say they are “Primarily for Graduate Students” but can I still take them? Would those fulfill any requirements? I’m kind of worried about “cutthroat” culture. People say Harvard is hyper competitive, is that really true?

I grew up in a very Asian neighborhood in California, so I’m more than a little nervous about being in predominantly white spaces for the first time. I chose Harvard over other schools because of the greater opportunities here, but that came with the trade off of knowing that my friends at some of the UCs are taking Asian American studies classes and other ethnic studies classes, and there isn’t the same option for me here.

By the way, how do you know what you’re supposed to call people? Like the proctor, what do I call her? Or teachers or professors? Anyways, thanks for your email--can't wait to meet you!

Jin

**PAFee Morgan**

Taty,

I can’t believe I’m finally starting college. I took a gap year and I think I’m ready, but I guess you can never be sure!
It’s hard to know what classes to take. I’m definitely planning to concentrate in Computer Science. I took CS50 online over my gap year, so do you think I should skip CS50 or take it again?

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! How do you even choose? I’ve heard even applying or comping can be really stressful. Should I try something I already have experience with, or should I try something new? Or both??

Time management is probably going to be hard for me. I’ve always handled a ton of extracurriculars, leadership roles, and side projects, but I have a feeling Harvard will be different.

Something else at college will be new for me. At home I wasn’t open about my sexuality, but I am crazy nervous and excited about getting to be fully out for the first time. Is Harvard supportive of LGBTQ students? I heard about the BGLTQ office but I’m not quite sure what it does. Is it like an official administrative thing with adults, or is it like a student run club? And are there places for students like me whose families or hometowns are less than supportive of their identities? I’m sorry about all the questions--it’s weirdly liberating to be able to tell you this and explore this part of myself.

You mentioned I should be hearing from my proctor soon too. To be honest, I’m not too sure what a proctor is, either. I looked up my proctor on the portal and he looks pretty young. I googled him and it says he graduated just a year ago.

Thanks Taty!

Morgan

PAFee Perveen

Hello Terzah!

Thanks for your email. It’s really nice to know you are there for me.

I’m so glad to hear you’ve taken some of the classes I am considering! Does this mean you can help me if I need it? I’m a little worried I won’t be prepared for Harvard classes. My high school was entirely online last year and as hard as I know the teachers tried, a
lot of students sort of coasted by. I helped my little sister with online school, but even being kinda responsible for her it wasn’t very challenging to get good grades.

You asked me what I’m excited and nervous about?? That’s easy!

Nervous - Honestly, it’s pretty intimidating that other students know each other already. On social media and the Class of 2025 groupme, people already have friends, and it feels hard to catch up.

Excited - I really want to take advantage of everything Harvard has to offer. I know I’m probably going from being a fish in a small pond to a MUCH BIGGER pond, but I’m ready for whatever Harvard throws at me. I’m bursting to get started. I signed up for FYRE so I could get a head start.

To be honest I might be even more nervous about the financial aspect and the Harvard student culture. As a FGLI student I’ve never really been in an environment where I think a lot of students around me might not be able to relate to financial struggles.

How are the language courses at Harvard? I know I want to study different languages at Harvard, because as soon as I can study abroad, I want to! 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. People on the groupme keep talking about classes that are gems, are those good classes to take?

I can’t wait for all the opportunities at Harvard. I’ve danced (mainly ballet and tap) my whole life, and because of the pandemic it was disappointing to realize that in my last year I wouldn’t be able to perform, or even rehearse, in-person with my company. We’d spent ten hours a week together for years, and the other dancers in the company have become my best friends.

Anyway, sorry for the super long email. I should warn you I’m going to ask you a LOT of questions!

Thanks!

Perveen
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
- Open-mindedness to a range of Harvard experiences
- Capacity for self-reflection
- Dedication and reliability
- Flexibility
- Resourcefulness
- Commitment to inclusive communities
- Academic resourcefulness and intellectual curiosity

Current undergraduates may not serve as references.