



Advising Programs Office

Academic Advising at Harvard College

PAF Application Preview for 2024-25

To apply, visit https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6fILN2htAE2IWWy

Application Deadline: Monday, February 5, 2024 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 two fictitious PAFees who have 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 2022 - 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 2024-25, in what other extracurricular activities do you anticipate being involved? Space provided to list up to six activities.

C) Being a Peer Advising Fellow requires a substantial commitment. With your anticipated academic (e.g., thesis or research), extracurricular, leadership, or other commitments for 2024-25 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.



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SECTION TWO: YOUR EXPERIENCES

- A) 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.

- B) 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?

- 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, Mignone Center for Career Success, 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 a total of two advisees, one from each pair listed below. Respond to **two advisees in total**. You will respond to one of Marlida or Darby, and to one of Emma or Cole.



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You should address all the important issues raised in these communications. While there are no hard-coded limits on length, a typical response will be about 450 words.

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 separate space so that you don't lose your hard work if something goes wrong.

4) Respond to two advisees only: One from Marlida or Darby, and one from Emma or Cole.

Choose One: Marlida or Darby

PAFee Marlida

Dear Avery,

Thank you so much for reaching out! I'm really excited about coming to Harvard in just a few weeks and am looking forward to meeting you, too. The past few months since getting in have felt like total a dream, so it's honestly kind of crazy that I'll actually be moving in so soon...

Speaking of moving in, I wanted to ask for your take on a rooming dilemma I've been having. I'm living in a suite of five and I met my roommates on a Zoom call earlier this week. The suite has one double, three singles, and a common room. We still haven't decided who will live in which room, but so far some of my suitemates have felt really strongly about not having someone in the common room, while others want to switch rooms halfway through the year. We decided to sort it out when we all move in, but I'm nervous it's not going to be easy. Some of my roommates are moving in early for pre-orientation and I'm worried they'll pick the singles before I even get there. My older cousin graduated from Harvard a few years ago and told me that the rooms in my building are REALLY small, so I don't know if I'm going to be able to fit all of my stuff in a double with a bunk.



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I'm also sort of worried about getting along with some of my roommates. Two of my roommates said that they want our suite to be really social and to throw parties sometimes. I didn't say anything, but I'm pretty uncomfortable with that. I'm just not sure that we're going to be friends, or that we'll even make good suitemates. My cousin told me she "blocked" with her first-year suitemates — do most people do that?

I was also wondering what sorts of things I should bring for my room. I've been seeing emails about buying laundry and water plans and getting a MicroFridge, but I'm pretty confused about if I should get them. I'm also thinking about getting a new laptop, but I'm worried about the cost. I'm on full financial aid, so it's a big expense, but my old computer is really slow and shuts down all the time.

Thank you so much,
Marlida

PAFee Darby

Hi Kiran!

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 get to know one another. I already feel behind. Everyone in the Class of 2028 GroupMe is talking about Visitas, and I've never even been to campus! They're also posting how excited they are about their pre-orientation programs, but I didn't get into the one I wanted to do. Will I even be able to meet anyone before school starts? What if they make all of their friend groups before I even get there?

I've been working hard to prepare for the transition, though! I'm pretty close with my family; I have four siblings and anticipate being homesick, at least at first. I may need some help adjusting. I'm the first in my family to go to college and I am so proud of my family for having accomplished so much to get me here. My parents run their own business, and I'm so thankful for all the opportunities they have given me. I'm so excited to get started at Harvard! I'll miss my mom's cooking though. Is there anywhere to get pupusas in Cambridge??



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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, a family friend mentioned most people either stick to the same things they were really good at in high school or don't even get into those clubs because they are competing against so many other people who were the best at their schools. Like an all-star 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! I've also been thinking about how I'm going to balance my classes and extracurriculars with working. In high school, I had a part-time job that I could go to after school ends, but I have no idea what my schedule will be like on campus. So much to think about...

Thank you! I'm looking forward to meeting you and everyone else in the dorm soon.

Darby

Choose One: Emma or Cole

PAFee Emma

Hi Cam,

Thank you so much for your email and for reaching out, I'm so excited about starting my time at the College in August! I've been spending a lot of time looking at the course catalog and I know I want to be a joint Neuro and English concentrator, so I have created a 4-year plan to accomplish all of my goals by the time I graduate.

In terms of my schedule for the first semester, I plan on taking LS50, Math 55, my Expos requirement through Humanities 10, and Stat 110. I took a lot of AP science courses in high school, so LS50 should be manageable for sure, and I think it would be best for me to take some of the hardest STEM courses possible in order to show rigor when applying to graduate schools down the line. Additionally, I want to add more humanities classes in my schedule next term to get a head start on the English concentration. The sophomore tutorials seem really interesting, and I think would fit my spring schedule better than my sophomore fall - can you show me how to petition for them?



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I know that LS50 is technically an 8-credit course, and first-year students are only allowed to take 16 credits in their fall semesters, but do you think it would be possible for me to apply for permission to take four more credits? I also saw that there are these courses called First-Year Seminars and that they are graded Pass/Fail. Does that mean I could take one in addition to my other STEM courses and Hum 10? There are some that seem really interesting to me, but I don't think I would have the space to take them otherwise and don't think taking a Pass/Fail course like that would benefit me in the long run in building my GPA.

All in all, I'm feeling fairly secure in my academic plan for my first semester and year, but I would appreciate any feedback you have on my proposed schedule and any suggestions you could make regarding First-Year Seminars and a good English course to take in the spring semester so I can add it to my four-year plan now.

Looking forward to speaking with you in person soon, enjoy the rest of your summer!

Best,
Emma

PAFee Cole

Dear Parker,

I'm so happy to hear from you!

I was wondering if you had any thoughts on choosing courses and activities while trying to balance a busy schedule.

I'm part of the basketball team and the schedule seems super intense. We have four morning and four afternoon practices every week + games basically every weekend (half of which are away games) once the season starts in November. Coach even told us we'll have to miss class a few Friday's to get to games. Do professors tend to be understanding? Is this normal?

I'm worried because I'm thinking of taking three STEM courses, Math 21A, LS1A and CS50. I've always enjoyed bio and I think I want to major in something STEM related. I've also taken a lot of math and cs courses and feel comfortable with that. I think that I



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could handle it. My advisor, however, suggested I only take one or two STEM courses this semester as I adjust. I don't know what to do. I want to listen to their advice, but I don't want to fall behind just because I'm an athlete and I think I can handle it. Plus, my athletic schedule won't get any easier! What do you think I should do?

I'm also curious about office hours. I heard that students in STEM classes tend to rely on office hours late at night to finish their homework. Is it absolutely necessary to attend office hours? Are there office hours in the earlier hours/morning time? What do students do when they have conflicts with office hours?

I'm also uncertain about clubs. A few people have told me that I won't have time to join clubs or do research with my busy training schedule. Do athletes have time to do other things?

While I love basketball and I'm excited to be part of the team (go Crimson!) I'm starting to feel like being part of the team means I can't follow my other interests or do things outside of sports. Are there a lot of STEMIE athletes? How do athletes balance it all? Do you have any suggestions for how I can go about planning my semester? Literally anything would help!

Sincerely,
Cole

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
- Resourcefulness
- Commitment to fostering inclusive communities
- Capacity for self-reflection



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- Enthusiasm and open-mindedness about engaging first-year students in all aspects of their Harvard experiences

Current undergraduates may not serve as references. We recommend that you confirm with your references ahead of time that you may list them.

For each reference, please list:

Name, Phone Number, Email Address, and Relationship to You