HEALTH PROFESSIONS PROGRAM

LETTERS OF EVALUATION for Medical (MD and DO) and Dental Schools

Letters of Evaluation are an essential, impactful part of any graduate Health Professions application. Admissions committees read letters of recommendation closely and look for different lenses through which to learn about you.

The Health Professions Program oversees the Composite Process. We work closely with both applicants and composite writers, coordinate the logistics, and ensure the integrity of your final Composite Letter. Letters are written on your behalf, so remain cognizant that it is a privilege that folks are writing to support you in this process Act accordingly, with clear communication, gratitude, and respect. The HPP staff is here to assist you in the process at every step. There are several parts that YOU are responsible for, in order for us to assist you. Please read through this entire document so you will be prepared for the steps ahead.

WHAT IS THE COMPOSITE LETTER?

At Dartmouth College, the Composite Letter of Evaluation is the finished product that is sent to Medical/Dental schools. You may have heard or read about "committee letters" on either schools’ websites or on AMCAS (MD), ACOMAS (DO) or AADSAS (Dental). Our Composite Letter is Dartmouth’s version of a "committee letter."

This is a unique, comprehensive letter of evaluation written on your behalf, by a “Composite Writer.” You choose your Composite Writer. That person becomes your head letter writer. They must be from the Dartmouth Community. They are often the faculty or staff who knows you best, with whom you have the strongest connection, or with whom you worked the most. You will also have 3-5 letters of recommendation from “support writers” that you also choose. The composite writer’s job is to write a comprehensive letter—a composite—that integrates their evaluation with information and quotes from supporting letters. This cohesive, final letter presents you as an applicant from Dartmouth College to MD, DO, or Dental schools.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO FOR THE COMPOSITE LETTER PROCESS?

You will need to:

- Choose 1 Composite Writer—must be from Dartmouth Community (including Dartmouth, DHMC, or Geisel)
- Choose 3-5 Supporting Writers –can combine from Dartmouth Community and from elsewhere
- Create an Interfolio account, to which the supporting writers upload their letters confidentially for you. Please use our specific instructions found online.
- Write an Autobiographical Sketch and update a Resume
- Submit several forms to the Health Professions Program
- Upload your Autobiographical Sketch, Resume, Transcript, and Citation Report (if you have one) onto Interfolio

WHO ARE YOUR WRITERS?

Your Composite Writer will be among these, and must be a member of the Dartmouth Community

- Two faculty who have taught you in a science class (one can be very science-based neuro or engineering)
• Strongly consider including at least one faculty in your major (if someone other than a science major), and/or from another type of class that was meaningful for you
• Writers from outside the classroom, such as a research supervisor (PI), coach, internship supervisor, job supervisor, FSP faculty, etc. (this might include individuals outside of Dartmouth as well)

The best combination of writers will demonstrate different facets of you and your experiences, in and out of the classroom, and provide a view of some of your intellectual, professional, and personal qualities.

THE COMPLETED COMPOSITE LETTER:
The completed COMPOSITE LETTER OF EVALUATION document is created by the Health Professions Program staff. HPP ensures confidentiality, integrity, and quality of the letter.

• The final Composite Packet is one single PDF that includes the Composite Letter itself, followed by your 3-5 support letters, along with a cover letter from the HPP office that explains some unique aspects of Dartmouth College. The HPP office works closely first with you, and then with your Composite writer directly.

• When the Composite Letter of Evaluation is complete, you will receive notification from our office with instructions for how to send it to the AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS application service. This is usually completed during the summer of the year you are applying.

  o Applicants submit their Composite Letter of Evaluation AFTER they have submitted their primary application. Thus, you don’t have to wait to submit your primary application for the letter to be completed. It is typical for the Composite Letter (and Committee Letters from other schools) to be added later.

YOUR TASKS TO A COMPLETED COMPOSITE LETTER

FALL/EARLY WINTER (of year applying)
1. Reflect about, choose, and then ASK your letter writers as early as possible. Fall term is not too soon to begin asking writers. We strongly suggest asking all your letter writers by mid-Winter term. Speak with Sarah Berger or Chelsea Rule if you need to discuss whom, or how, to ask!

2. Understand the Letter Timeline (Found at the end of this document):
   You are responsible for understanding the timeline below, and for having clear communication and agreements with letter writers about the timeline/deadlines you establish, taking their schedules into account, as well. If possible, ask your Composite Writer first. Make sure they can do it…and make sure of their timeline. Are they traveling? Do they need to write sooner? Adjust the entire timeline accordingly.

   Ideally, a draft of the composite letter is completed by the writer by June 15-July 1 and no later than Aug 1. IMPT: While the letter deadlines are in place to benefit you, we will still work with you to have your composite letter packet completed even if you or your letter writers have a later timeline. But we HIGHLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO FOLLOW THIS TIMELINE!

To set your timeline, take the following into account:
- Your Composite Writer should have 4-6 weeks with the supporting material to complete a draft of their letter. Start with setting a deadline with them and then work backwards to set deadlines with supporting writers.
When all supporting letters are in, and ALL the documents you are responsible for (see step #11 below) are uploaded, you will notify HPP and submit what we call the “Release to Composite Writer Request” form. You will be tracking letter input in Interfolio to know when supporting letters have been received.

Once HPP gets that notice, factor in that it might take us up to 2-3 weeks to process and send the supporting letters plus your resume, autobiographical sketch, transcript and citation report (if you have one) to the Composite Writer.

After the Composite letter draft is written and the writer sends it back to HPP, it can take another 3-4 weeks to review and process the packet before it is ready for YOU to submit.

***So, take into account that the process, from when HPP “Releases” your materials to your Composite Writer to when you finally upload to AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS, may take about 9-13 weeks.***

3. **You must submit "Composite Letter Timeline Agreement" form ONLINE.** You can find it on the [HPP website](https://www.dartmouth.edu/prehealth/). Choose “Applying to Medical School,” then go to “Letters of Evaluation” and click on “Your Task Checklist”. Because we assist you throughout this process, you must fill out this form so we can help you. Do this ASAP, but no later than end of winter term. **Please keep a copy for yourself!**

4. **You must submit a "Composite Letter Worksheet Form" ONLINE.** This tells us who you are choosing as your supporting writers and your composite writer. This will help us help you. It is not set in stone, changes can be made at other points in time.

5. **OPEN an INTERFOLIO account.** You can do this now, but definitely by the time you have asked your writers.
   a. Instructions are posted on the Health Professions Program website at [www.dartmouth.edu/prehealth/](https://www.dartmouth.edu/prehealth/). Once on the site, choose “Applying to Medical School”. Then go to “Letters of Evaluation” Click on “INTERFOLIO.” The instructions on how to open an account are there, plus guidelines on how to request a letter of evaluation.

### Ideally by: February 15 (Latest April 1st)

6. You will create a space in your Interfolio account for each supporting writer, but NOT for your composite writer.
   a. HPP will create the space for your composite letter once it is completed.

7. You will send each **supporting writer**: a thank you note, a reminder of their deadlines, the letter request form that Interfolio creates, and an informal resume.

8. You will also write an informal Autobiographical Sketch to send to each writer. This can be a draft of your personal statement, bullet points of your goals to medicine/dental, important moments in your life, etc. Please speak with an advisor if you want to go over your sketch.

9. You will communicate with your **composite writer** a reminder/check-in of an agreed upon deadline.

### April 1-15

10. **Ideal time for SUPPORTING WRITERS to upload their letters onto Interfolio.**
    a. **DO NOT SEND THESE LETTERS TO AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS!** They will be included in your final packet!
b. You will receive email notifications as each letter is received by Interfolio. YOU are responsible for monitoring the arrival of your supporting letters.

April 1-May 30
11. Upload onto Interfolio: a resume, autobiographical sketch, transcript, and your citation report if you have one. These are only for your composite writer, as medical schools will not see these documents. HPP will convey these documents to your composite writer along with the supporting letters.

12. You will monitor your Interfolio account. **When all your supporting letters and documents are in, you will submit "The Release to Composite Writer Request" ONLINE.** This will give us the signal to "release" all your supporting letters AND your other uploaded docs (IN # 11 above) to your composite writer. This can take 2-3 weeks.
   a. **THIS IS ONLY DONE BY OUR OFFICE. Please Do NOT** send your supporting letters and documents directly to your Composite Writer or AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS on your own. HPP has direct and confidential access to Interfolio. We will be releasing this information.
   b. Latest HPP deadline for supporting letters: May 30. ***While the letter deadlines are in place to benefit you, we will still work with you to have your composite letter packet completed even if you or your letter writers have a later timeline.!!!

13. Your composite writer should have 4-6 weeks with the supporting material before a draft of their letter is due. Their timeline needs to be taken into account well ahead of time (see above)!

June 15-July 1
14. IDEAL time frame for COMPOSITE writers to submit a draft of their letters to HPP.
   a. When the composite writer is done, they send their letter to hpp@dartmouth.edu. HPP creates one document that combines the Composite Letter with the Supporting Letters of Evaluation.
   b. Latest HPP deadline for composite letters: August 1. ***While the letter deadlines are in place to benefit you, we will still work with you to have your composite letter packet completed even if you or your letter writers have a later timeline.!!!

June 15- August 1
15. HPP staff works with your Composite Writer to create final document that combines the Composite Letter and Supporting letters.
   a. ***This can take 3-4 weeks AFTER your Composite letter draft is submitted to our office (i.e. if your letter is submitted on June 15, expect packet to be completed by July 15). Plan deadline with Composite writer accordingly***

July 15-September 1
16. HPP uploads your Composite Letter Packet, which includes your supporting letters, to Interfolio. HPP will notify you and send very clear instructions about how to create your mailing from Interfolio to AMCAS.

17. It is up to YOU to create the mailing (delivery) in Interfolio to send your composite packet to AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS. Follow instructions provided by HPP very carefully! Please contact us with any questions you may have before you attempt to complete your mailing.
**IDEAL TIMELINE FOR YOUR LETTER OF EVALUATION PROCESS**

**Late Fall/Early Winter**
- Choose your letter writers
- Submit the Composite Letter Timeline Agreement and Composite Letter Worksheet forms
- Open an Interfolio account

**February 15 - April 1**
- Submit Letter Request forms from Interfolio to each supporting writer
- Send supporting writers your resume and autobiographical sketch

**April 1 - April 15**
- IDEAL time frame for SUPPORTING writers to submit and upload their letters onto Interfolio
  ***While the letter deadlines are in place to benefit you, we will still work with you to have your composite letter packet completed even if you or your letter writers have a later timeline***

**April 1 - May 30**
- Submit the Composite Release Form to HPP
- Upload your resume/CV, autobiographical sketch/personal statement, transcripts, and citation report (if you have one) onto Interfolio.

**June 15 - July 1**
- IDEAL time frame for your COMPOSITE writer to submit a draft of their letter to HPP
  ***While the letter deadlines are in place to benefit you, we will still work with you to have your composite letter packet completed even if you or your letter writers have a later timeline***

**June 15 - August 1**
- HPP staff works with your Composite Writer to create final document that combines the Composite Letter and Supporting letters
  ***This can take 3-4 weeks AFTER your Composite letter is submitted to our office***

**Anytime between July 15 - September 1**
- Your Composite Letter Packet is finalized
- YOU will send final packet from Interfolio to AMCAS