

HEALTH PROFESSIONS PROGRAM - Medical School Application

What is our letter process?

Steps you are responsible for.

The Dartmouth College process for

LETTERS OF EVALUATION/RECOMMENDATION

For Medical, 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.

You must understand Dartmouth's unique Composite Letter Process for Medical/DO and Dental School Applications. Read and learn about the entire process, and the steps ahead.

THE COMPOSITE LETTER:

At Dartmouth College, The Composite Letter is the finished product that is sent to Medical/DO/Dental schools. You may have heard about "committee letters?" That is what some other schools use.

Our Composite Letter is Dartmouth's version of a "committee letter" elsewhere.

WHAT IS THE COMPOSITE LETTER?

This is a comprehensive letter written by someone **you** choose. You can think of them as your chief letter writer. They must be from the Dartmouth Community. They are the person you have the strongest connection with. The composite writer will write a comprehensive letter—a composite—that includes their evaluation, and includes quotes from supporting writers, put together cohesively to present you to Medical/DO or Dental schools. **Please read the rest carefully to know how this works:**

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO NEED FOR THE COMPOSITE LETTER OF EVALUATION?

You will Need:

- ✓ **3-5 Supporting Writers** –can combine from Dartmouth Community and from other experiences
- ✓ **1 Composite Writer**—must be from Dartmouth Community (including Dartmouth, DHMC, Geisel)
- ✓ **An Interfolio account**, for the supporting writers to upload their letters confidentially for you.
- ✓ **An Autobiographical Sketch (written by you); A Resume; A Transcript and Citation Report (if you have one).**

Who Are Your Writers (Your Composite Writer will be from among these, and must be a member of the Dartmouth Community):

- ✓ You will need two letters from faculty who have taught you in a science class
- ✓ You should consider having at least one letter from a faculty from your major (if someone other than a science major) and/or from another class that was meaningful for you
- ✓ Letter(s) from outside the classroom such as a Research Supervisor (PI); coach; internship supervisor, job supervisor, FSP faculty, Etc.

YOU choose your Composite Writer—while it's great if they are a faculty member, they can be from any of the above categories, **but THEY DO NEED TO BE part of the Dartmouth community.** The best combination of writers will be that which will show different facets of you, ie: classroom, research, work/volunteering, etc.

The final single document that you send to Med/DO or Dental schools, is created by Annette Hamilton of the Health Professions Program. It includes the completed Composite Letter, followed by the supporting letters, as one PDF. You will work closely with our office, and especially Annette Hamilton who will create this final Composite Letter for YOU to send to the AMCAS, AACOMAS (DO) or ADEAS (Dental) Application service. This is usually completed during the summer of the year you are applying, and usually *after* you have submitted your Primary application.

YOUR TASKS TO A COMPLETED COMPOSITE LETTER

Keep in mind as you move forward:

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, IE: with clear communication; gratitude; and respect.** The Health Professions Program, and Annette Hamilton in particular, 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.

FALL/EARLY WINTER

1. Reflect about, choose, and then ASK your letter writers as early as possible, in Winter term (if not sooner).

Speak with Sarah Berger if you need to discuss whom, or how, to ask! **You are responsible for understanding the timeline below, and having clear communication and agreements with letter writers about the timeline/deadlines you establish, taking their schedules into account. If possible, ask your Composite Writer first. Make sure they can do it...and make sure of their timeline.**

2. Understand the Letter Timeline:

Ideally, a composite letter is completed by the writer by July 15–August 1st and no later than Aug 15th. However you have to check with their schedule. Are they traveling? Do they need to write sooner? Adjust the entire timeline.

To set your timeline, take these things into account:

- When **all supporting** letters are in, **and all** the documents you are responsible for (**see step #10 below**) are uploaded, you will notify Annette Hamilton and submit what we call the “Release to Composite Writer Request” form. You will be tracking Interfolio to know when they are in.
- Once Annette gets that notice, factor in that it might take her up to 2-3 weeks to process and GET the supporting letters plus your resume, autobiographical sketch, transcript and citation report (if you have one) to the Composite Writer.
- Your Composite Writer should have 4-6 weeks with the supporting material before their letter is due.
- After the Composite letter is written and the writer sends it back to Annette, it can take another 2-3 weeks to process before it is ready for **YOU** to submit.
- **Ideally**, a Composite Letter would be completed by Aug 1st. We ask that the absolute deadline be August 15th but **earlier** is better for you, especially if you were able to submit your part of the application early.

EXAMPLE with goal of Aug 15 submission date: FOUND ON LAST PAGE

- An earlier timeline is certainly okay, within reason, for letter writers. And rarely, someone needs a little longer. **IT IS UP TO YOU to find out your composite writer’s timing. Are they traveling? Their timeline needs to be taken into account first, then set up the timeline accordingly.**

3. You must submit "Composite Letter Timeline Agreement" form to Annette Hamilton (or Sarah) of the Health Professions Program. You can find it on our website www.dartmouth.edu/prehealth/. Choose Applying to Medical School then go to Letter of Evaluation and click on HPP Composite Letter Forms. 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. **You can email or hand in. Please keep a copy for yourself!!**

4. You must submit a "Composite Letter Worksheet Form" to Annette (or Sarah). 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. Instructions are posted on the Health Professions Program website at www.dartmouth.edu/prehealth/. Once on the site, choose Applying to Medical School. Click on INTERFOLIO. The instructions on how to open an account are there plus guidelines on how to request a letter of evaluation.

BY END WINTER TERM/BEGINNING OF SPRING TERM

6. You will create a space in your Interfolio account for each supporting writer, but **NOT** for your composite writer. Annette will create the space for your composite letter once it is completed.
7. You will send to each **supporting writer**: a thank you note; a reminder of the deadline; the letter request form that Interfolio creates and informal resume.
8. You will also write an informal Autobiographical Sketch which you will also send to each **supporting writer**.
9. You will bring or send your composite writer a thank you note, that includes a reminder of agreed upon deadline.

BY MIDDLE OF SPRING TERM

10. Upload onto Interfolio: For your composite writer, **you are required to upload a resume; autobiographical sketch; transcript and your citation report if you have one.** These are only for your composite writer, the schools will not see these documents. Annette will convey them to your composite writer along with the supporting letters.

SPRING

11. You will monitor your Interfolio account. **When all your supporting letters and documents are in, you will submit "The Release to Composite Writer Request" form to Annette.** This will give Annette the signal to "release" all your supporting letters AND your other uploaded docs (IN # 10 above) to your composite writer. This can take 2-3 weeks.

 **THIS IS ONLY DONE BY OUR OFFICE. Please Do NOT** send your supporting letters and documents directly to your Composite Writer on your own. Annette has direct and confidential access to Interfolio. She will be the one releasing this information.

SUMMER

12. When the composite writer is done (3-6 weeks later), they send their letter to Annette who creates one document that combines the Composite Letter with the supporting Letters of Evaluation. She then uploads it onto Interfolio (this can take 2-3 weeks from the time the letter is first sent to Annette). She then notifies **YOU** that it is ready. She will give you **VERY CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS** about how to create your mailing from Interfolio to AMCAS.
13. **IT IS NOW UP TO YOU** to create the mailing (delivery) in Interfolio to send your composite packet to AMCAS. Follow instructions provided by Annette **very carefully! Please contact her with any questions you may have before you attempt to complete your mailing.**

Fall/Early Winter Term (Year Applying)

Reflect, choose, and approach your letter writers

Submit the Composite Letter Timeline Agreement and Composite Letter Worksheet form to Annette Hamilton in the HPP Office

Open an Interfolio account

End Winter Term/Beginning Spring Term

Create space for SUPPORTING writers in Interfolio (NOT Composite Writer)

Send supporting writers thank you note, reminder of deadlines, Interfolio letter request form, resume, and autobiographical sketch.

Check-in with Composite Writer to remind upon agreed deadline

Mid-Spring Term

Upload resume, autobiographical sketch, transcript, and citation report (if you have one) to Interfolio.

Target Deadline: May 5th

Supporting writers submit and upload their letters onto Interfolio. Once all supporting letters are in, you submit the Composite Release Request Form to Annette. She has confidential access to Interfolio and will "release" these materials to your Composite Writer along with supporting letters. Schools will not see these documents. ****DO NOT send information directly to your Composite Writer****

June 1st

After 2-3 weeks, Annette has processed supporting letters and has conveyed supporting materials to your Composite Writer. Your writer will have 3-6 weeks from this date to write the Composite Letter. *****You CAN submit your primary application BEFORE your letters are in--you do not have to wait for your composite letter to submit!!!*****

Target Deadline: July 20th

Composite Writer submits letter to Annette via email.

Any time from July 20-August 15

Annette works with Composite Writer to create final document that combines the Composite Letter and Supporting letters. She will upload it onto Interfolio. **This can take 2-3 weeks.** When complete, she will contact you with clear instructions on how YOU will send final packet from Interfolio to AMCAS.

By August 15 (Latest deadline)

You submit Composite Letter packet to AMCAS