

## 2020 – 2021 AMCAS Medical School Application

### FAQ's and Instructions for Dartmouth Students/Alumni

(With some relevant information regarding other Health Professional Applications)

Seen below are the most frequently asked questions asked about the Medical School Application. If you are unable to find your answer within this document or on the AMCAS instruction manual, please contact [Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu) and/or call 603-646-3377. If you are on campus, please visit our Pre-Health Advisors, Sarah Berger and Alicia Kehn, during walk-in hours or schedule an appointment via Calendly or the above email.

#### PAGE REFERENCES:

- General Information 1 – 3
- Schools/Transcripts 3 – 4
- Coursework 4 – 8
- Work/Activities 8
- Letters of Evaluation 9 – 10
- PrivateFolio 10 – 11
- Choosing Schools 11 – 12

#### GENERAL INFORMATION:

##### Q1. Where can I obtain help with my AMCAS application?

Utilize these FAQs, as well as the application instruction manual available on AMCAS and refer to the Online Help available within the application. Additionally, you can contact AMCAS directly at [amcas@aamc.org](mailto:amcas@aamc.org) or 202-828-0600. If you are unable to find an answer through these channels, please contact [Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu) and CC [Sarah.L.Berger@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Sarah.L.Berger@dartmouth.edu) and [Alicia.Kehn@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Alicia.Kehn@dartmouth.edu).

##### Q2. When should I submit my application?

**Timing is very important.** Most medical schools have rolling admissions, and it is to your distinct advantage to be considered early in the process. We suggest that you submit your AMCAS application by **June or early July** (after your spring grades have been reported). If you feel you need more time, however, you should aim to submit by **mid-July**. If you have questions about the timing of your application, speak to a Health Professions advisor.

### Q3. How much does it cost to apply to Medical School?

- [AMCAS](#) charges an application processing fee of \$170 for one medical school designation, and \$40 for each designation thereafter
- [TMDSAS](#) (Texas Medical Schools) charges a flat fee of \$185 regardless of the number of schools you apply to
- [AACOMAS](#) (DO) starts at \$195 and \$45 per each designation after that
- Also, most schools charge fees for their secondary applications which can range from \$75.00 \$150.00. (One must also consider travel and interview expenses)

- ❖ **Fee Reductions through the Fee Assistance Program (FAP) are available, but you must apply for these before submitting your application, as the reduction is not retroactive!** Qualifying for the FAP includes fee waivers for up to 20 schools and often reduces secondary application fees as well. Don't hesitate to ask if they don't automatically offer! For more information, go to <https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap/>

### Q4. What is included on the AMCAS application?

- Identifying Information
- Biographical Information (childhood/parental – not very detailed. You won't need documentation)
- Work experiences and Activities (Major focus is on life after high school)
  - You will have space for up to 15 experiences with descriptions for each up to 750 characters long. You will then choose 3 of these as your "most meaningful" and will have an additional 1325 characters to help you elaborate further
- Schools Attended
- Course Work (Plan to have your own copy of your Official Transcript available to complete this section)
- Personal Statement (5300 characters)
- Letters of Evaluation Information and Designated Medical Schools (See below for more information in the Letter Section)

### Q5. RELEASE TO ADVISOR:

**Please check YES! This will allow your Dartmouth Pre-Health Advisors see the data from your application process. The advisors cannot read your application unless you send it to them. The data released includes information about GPA, MCAT scores, schools applied to, final acceptance data, gender, and race/ethnicity.** Your personal information will be kept confidential. The data from past applicants will help us assist you during the process, and your data will help us assist future applicants.

**Q6. Can I change my AMCAS application after I have certified and submitted it?**

You may only update biographic information and add (but not delete) schools. You may also add to your letters section, but please check with HPP before doing so. You cannot edit or make corrections to course work, post-secondary experiences, or your personal statement.

**SCHOOLS ATTENDED & TRANSCRIPTS:****Q1. What if I took course at another College or Institution?**

You must create/add an entry for each school attended, just as you did for Dartmouth. List the courses and the grades you earned. You must request an official transcript from each school to be sent to AMCAS. This is true even if you took a college-level course during high school.

**Q2. What if I participated in either a Dartmouth or non-Dartmouth ABROAD program?**

A study abroad program, as AMCAS defines it, is a program that must be sponsored by a US or Canadian Institution. (This is different from a branch of an American school overseas i.e. Duke in Singapore.) **You will add the school you attended abroad as another school, but you will check the box for “Transcript Exception” and use the transcript from the domestic school (if LSA/FSP this means Dartmouth).** Then, use your **Dartmouth transcript** for adding the classes from your abroad program, when filling in courses for the school you attended abroad.

- Programs affiliated WITH Dartmouth: FSP and LSA terms that were “ON” terms but abroad, should be entered as regular Dartmouth terms. If you transferred course work from a Leave term, completed exchange terms or post baccalaureate course work, then you will need to add a school entry and request separate transcripts. All credit earned at US colleges or universities must be reported.

**Q3. How do I send transcripts to AMCAS?**

- Applicants can request an official eTranscript or paper transcript to be sent to AMCAS. Paper is okay, but the e-Transcript is more efficient.
- Go to <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/> and click on Transcript Tab.
  - **Current Undergraduate Students:** Select “Official Transcript” from the Undergraduate Student Main Menu.
  - **Undergraduate Alumni and students without Banner access:** Log into the Transcript Request Page. For additional guidance with login information, see Instructions for Dartmouth Login.
- Read the instructions on how to order an official transcript.
  - Request an eTranscript and depending on your status (undergrad or alum), follow the instructions to request an official transcript.

➤ Enter your AAMC ID and AAMC Transcript ID in the eTranscript request process.

- ❖ **You do not need to fill out a separate AMCAS transcript request form!** When you make the transcript request, you can also request “hold for grades,” in which case they will release the transcript once Spring term grades are in.
- ❖ **A separate AMCAS transcript request must be created for each college/institution you have attended (but not Dartmouth).**

**Q4. When I am creating the transcript request form in AMCAS, what Dartmouth address do I use for the “College Address Information?”**

6014 McNutt Hall, Hanover, NH 03755

**Q5. Do I have to wait until Spring grades are available to send my transcript to AMCAS?**

The transcript that you send to AMCAS should include your Spring grades if you are taking courses this Spring. The transcript for your PrivateFolio account does not need to include Spring grades if you are releasing your file to your Composite Writer before Spring grades would be available.

## **COURSE WORK:**

**Q1. How do I handle AP credit?**

If you received credit, note the course number and name exactly as shown on your transcript. The grade should be noted as “CR” on your transcript and on your application. Choose ADVANCED PLACEMENT in the Special Course Types section. If there is no indication of your AP course on your Dartmouth transcript, you should not enter it on your AMCAS application.

**Q2. What should I list as my academic status (Class Year) for Advances Placement course work?**

Choose FRESHMAN and include this course work with your first-year **Fall** courses. You will not have a grade.

**Q3. What if I was exempt from a course?**

Again, enter the course exactly as it appears on your transcript (“EX” for transcript grade). Choose EXEMPT from the Special Course Types section.

**Q4. What Course Type do I check if I have an “NR” on my Official Transcript?**

Choose PASS/FAIL for course type. “NR” should be noted as the grade, exactly as it appears in the transcript.

**Q5. What is the COURSE NUMBER?**

A course number includes both the department abbreviation and course number, such as BIOL013 or ENGL007.

**Q6. What do I put in the CREDIT HOURS box?**

**All Dartmouth courses are worth “1” credit hour**, so **all** courses at Dartmouth should be noted in the Credit Hours box as **1**. For each course, you will check the box to indicate whether the class was “lecture only,” “combined lecture + lab,” or “lab only.” Make sure to do this accurately so that when AMCAS calculates credit hours you will get an accurate credit/GPA count.

**Just for YOUR information**, at Dartmouth, our one credit will be translated as such: lecture only or lab only courses are worth 3.3 semester hours. Combined lecture & lab courses are worth 4.5. **DO NOT ENTER** those equivalencies in AMCAS. They will do the translation. **If you have earned credit at other colleges or universities, you will need to check those official transcript(s) for information on how to record their credit hours.** Applications for other health professions schools might require you to make those translations, but NOT AMCAS.

**Q7. I am confused as to how the Dartmouth term system matches the AMCAS term options. Is it Trimesters (Fall, Winter, Spring, with a Summer session option) or Quarters (Fall, Winter, Spring, and a Summer quarter)?**

Our registrar has reported to AMCAS that Dartmouth is a **QUARTER** term school.

Fall = First Quarter	Winter = Second Quarter
Spring = Third Quarter	Summer = Summer Quarter

That said: when AMCAS does its verification, it will grant credit hours that make our terms the equivalent of semesters at other schools (**i.e. if a medical school requires two semesters of General Chemistry, then trust that two QUARTERS of General Chemistry at Dartmouth ARE the equivalent**).

**Q8. What is COURSE CLASSIFICATION?**

Course classifications are used in the calculation of your AMCAS GPA. The BCPM GPA is comprised of courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics. AMCAS includes Neuroscience in the Biology section (**include only courses with “Neuroscience” in the title or a course you could support being heavily based in Biology**). Some Engineering courses could also qualify. This is just one method schools use to confirm you have taken prerequisite courses. **Do not be concerned if you are still completing some prerequisite course at the time you submit your application. It will not hinder your application.** All prerequisites should be completed prior to your matriculation into medical school or earlier in the cycle if the school requires so.

**Q9. What should I do if I am unsure of how to classify a course?**

You should first use the AMCAS help section to look up “Coursework Classification.” There you will find sub-categories for each classification. **Classification designation is up to you and should primarily be determined by course CONTENT rather than the course title or department.** If you classify a course in a way that is not obvious/clear to AMCAS, you may be asked to justify your classification, which could delay the processing of your application. During the verification process, it is your responsibility to check regularly for emails (be sure to also check spam/junk email) for notifications that AMCAS disagrees with your classification. The pause will hold your application for two weeks, during which you can submit an “Academic Change Request.” After the two weeks, the verification process continues but you cannot retroactively make a change request. They will require a course description or syllabus to justify your classification. You are not “in trouble” if they don’t agree with your classification. If you are unsure how to classify a course, please contact the Health Professions Program for guidance.

**Q10. How should I classify my First-Year Seminar?**

If you plan to use this course as fulfillment of an English prerequisite and this course was completed in a department other than English, you should still classify it as English. However, if you already have your English credits elsewhere, you can classify it however you feel is appropriate. If you need to include follow-up information with your supplemental applications, you can use the following:

“AMCAS has long agreed with the Dartmouth Registrar that Dartmouth’s First Year Seminars meet the criteria for an English course, even though they are sometimes found in an array of departments. In order to fulfill Dartmouth’s writing requirement, I completed (CLASS) a First-Year Seminar. According to the Dartmouth College Bulletin, Organization, Regulations and Courses “First-Year Seminars offer every Dartmouth first-year student an opportunity to participate in a course structured around independent research, small group discussion, and intensive writing. By vote of the Faculty and the Trustees, successful completion of one First-Year Seminar is a requirement for the A.B. degree. The function of the First-Year Seminar Program is threefold. First, by means of a uniform writing requirement, it stresses the importance of written expression in all disciplines. Second, it provides an attractive and exciting supplement to the usual introductory survey course in many disciplines. And finally, the program’s emphasis on independent study enables each first-year student to have an early experience of the scholarship that fuels Dartmouth’s upper-level courses.”

If during YOUR verification, a verifier does not get that message and disagrees with your FYS English classification, you can send them this explanation. Get in touch with HPP if they continue to dispute this.

**Q11. How do I classify Neuroscience courses?**

Again, classification should be based on course **content**, rather than the course **title** or **department**. If the primary content of your Neuroscience course was Biology, instead of Psychology, then it can be classified as **BIOLOGY**.

**Q12. How do I list Sophomore Summer?**

Categorize sophomore summer as SUMMER QUARTER of your JUNIOR year. It will also have the same year (20XX/20XX) as your other junior year terms. When your coursework section is complete, the terms should be listed in chronological order. The academic “year” from the application’s point of view is Summer → Following Spring.

**Q13. How do I indicate a future course? Do I need to?**

You can add current or future courses the same way you add past courses, except you will not include a grade and you will check the **current/future box** at the bottom of the page. You are not required to indicate future courses. Some applicants will choose to do so in order to show medical schools that they plan on taking a remaining prerequisite or other course you wish them to know about. However, it is not required. If you do indicate future courses, but your schedule changes, you are not held to what you listed. **Future course work or activities can also be mentioned on your secondary applications.**

**Q14. Should I copy the abbreviation for course titles on my transcript or should I write out the entire title?**

It is best exactly what is written on your transcript. If Dartmouth abbreviated a course and it seems unclear what the topic is, you can make a more logical abbreviation. If the course title is too long, again, you can make a more logical abbreviation. Keep in mind that AMCAS will try to match up your transcript with your application. The more exact your application, the easier and less time consuming, it will be for AMCAS to verify. If you have AP courses on your transcript, you should put exactly what is on your transcript. If the transcript does not state what the credit is for, add the topic at the end (i.e. College Board Advanced Placement: Calculus).

**Q15. How do I designate a course where I received a NR?**

**DO** check the box at the bottom of the screen that says “Pass/Fail.” Do **NOT** check the “No Record” box. Your transcript grade should be noted as **“NR.”**

**Q16. Should I include transferred credits on my application?**

Credits that are transferred from another college to Dartmouth should be listed under the original college, NOT under Dartmouth. For an example, if you took Organic Chemistry at Harvard, you would have a separate transcript from Harvard. Even if you transferred those credits to Dartmouth and they appear on your Dartmouth transcript, they should NOT be listed under Dartmouth on your AMCAS application. You should add Harvard as a separate college attended and list those

courses there. **Remember to request an official transcript from Harvard/other college/institution to be sent to AMCAS.**

## **WORK/ACTIVITIES:**

### **Q1. What exactly do I describe in the Work/Activities section?**

You have the opportunity to describe work experiences, extracurricular activities, awards, honors, citations, publications, and/or personal pursuits that you would like the medical schools to know about. Be sure to elaborate upon not only what you did but also your role and what you learned/gained.

### **Q2. How many experiences can I enter?**

A maximum of 15 experiences can be entered into AMCAS but remember to only list significant experiences. You will be given 750 characters to describe each experience and then you will be asked to choose up to 3 experiences that were most meaningful to you. You will have an additional 1325 characters to further describe these experiences.

- **NOTE:** Use EVERY opportunity to write about yourself thoughtfully and grammatically! Each one is a chance to “reach out” to the medical schools and help them get to know you better. If you are writing about experiences, specify the skills you learned and how they aided your development. Don’t overdo/overstate!

### **Q3. How do I categorize my shadowing experiences in the Work/Activities section?**

Typically, shadowing is categorized under “Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation,” though this does depend on the role you played (i.e. active role caring for patients or merely witnessing). You can also select “Community Service/Volunteer – Medical/Clinical” or “Other” if your actual experience doesn’t quite fit. Multiple shadowing experiences can be lumped together in one of your 15 work/activities entries. If one stands out or was longer/more in depth, you could distinguish it in its own activity box.

### **Q4. Where can I write about future activities?**

Future plans (gap year activities, work experiences, publications, etc.) are typically discussed in **Secondary Applications**. However, depending on the experience, such as having received a job offer, grant, fellowship, thesis proposal acceptance, etc., you could use a box to highlight it, but in that case its best to keep it simple. You can only write about what you know or have actually done. Don’t project much into what might happen.

## LETTERS OF EVALUATION:

### Q1. How do I categorize my letters in the “Letters of Evaluation” section of AMCAS?

If you are using a composite letter, you will check **COMMITTEE LETTER** in this section. Dartmouth uses a Composite Letter in lieu of a Committee Letter. However, they serve the same purpose.

Alumni three or more years graduated from Dartmouth who have already notified HPP that they are **NOT** using a composite letter should check “Letter Packet,” this will allow all your letters to be sent at once to every medical school if done through our office. Otherwise they will be sent as individual letter. **If you have not notified HPP, please contact us for help with creating your letter packet before you attempt to send it to AMCAS.**

**If you are considering sending an additional letter after your composite letter or letter packet has already been sent to AMCAS, please contact HPP ASAP to discuss.**

### Q2. Who is my “Primary Contact/Author?”

Rae Stokes (HPP Program Coordinator) will be the primary contact for ALL composite letters and/or letter packets that are sent via PrivateFolio. If you are using another school’s letter service in addition to Dartmouth, please contact them for this information.

**The following responses are appropriate for all Dartmouth applicant who are using PrivateFolio to transmit letters:**

What schools is providing this letter?

**Dartmouth** (*if you are using PrivateFolio to transmit your letters*)

Letter Title: **Dartmouth Composite**

Institution: **Dartmouth College**

Primary Contact/Author's Prefix: **Ms.**

Primary Contact/Author's First Name: **Rae**

Primary Contact/Author's Middle Name: **L**

Primary Contact/Author's Last Name: **Stokes**

Primary Contact/Author's Title: **Health Professions Program Coordinator**

Primary Contact/Author's Email: **Rae.L.Stokes@Dartmouth.edu**

Primary Contact/Author's Phone: **603-646-3377**

Organization Name: **Dartmouth College**

Address: **6147 Parker House - Room 101, Hanover, NH 03755 USA**

**Q3. What do I do with my AMCAS Letter Request Form?**

**DO NOT** send this form to anyone! You can print off a copy for yourself. Keep this information handy as **you will need the letter ID #** created on that form to complete the mailing of your composite letter/letter packet to AMCAS.

**PRIVATEFOLIO/CREDENTIALS:****Q1. My PrivateFolio file is complete, why hasn't my file been sent to my composite writer yet?**

Once your file is complete (support letters, transcripts, autobiographical sketch, and resume) you must submit the **"Release to Composite Writer Form" ONLINE** on the [HPP Pre-Health Advising website](#) (see under Application Process – Letters of Evaluation – HPP Composite Letter Forms). This form will not be accepted **until your file is complete**, so monitor PrivateFolio and submit ASAP once ALL your letter and documents are uploaded.

**Q2. My composite letter is finished and has been submitted to HPP. How do I get access to my letters in order to mail them to AMCAS?**

Once our office receives the completed letter from your composite writer, we need time to review the letter. This can take up to 3 – 4 weeks, depending on how many letters were received or whether any additional tasks are necessary in the letter's completion. Once HPP has created the final composite letter document (which includes the HPP cover letter, the composite letter, and support letters), it will be uploaded onto your PrivateFolio account. You will be notified by email with instructions on how to send/mail it to AMCAS, or whichever application you are using.

**Q3. When do I need to submit my composite letter or letter packet to AMCAS?**

You submit your completed composite letter or letter packet through PrivateFolio as soon as they are ready and HPP sends you instructions. **You DO NOT NEED to submit your composite letter or letter packet with your AMCAS application!** Therefore, you do not need to wait until your letter are completed to submit your AMCAS application. **Do not delay submitting your application by waiting for your letters to be finalized.** You will usually be delivering your completed composite letter packet to AMCAS during the time you are completing secondary applications. Again, you will receive mailing instructions from HPP once we have uploaded your composite letter/letter packet to your PrivateFolio account. YOU will create the mailing from your PrivateFolio account.

**Q4. How do I submit my letter from PrivateFolio to AMCAS?**

Once your letters have been uploaded to your PrivateFolio account, HPP will email you and provide mailing instructions. Follow these instructions carefully.

**In order to complete the delivery to AMCAS, you will need to provide your:**

- AMCAS ID # (8-digit number)
- Letter ID # (4-digit number created by PrivateFolio and assigned to your composite letter or letter packet)

**Q5. Do I need to submit my citation report separately to AMCAS, since it will be sent along with my official transcript?**

Your citation report is meant to be reviewed by the medical schools to apply to. They will be prompted in the “schools” section of the AMCAS application to view your citation reports. However, **we recommend** that you include your citation in your mailing when you send your composite letter/letter packet to AMCAS. Again, this will be sent in the instruction from HPP.

**CHOOSING MEDICAL SCHOOLS:****Q1. How do I decide which schools to apply to?**

Understand that this is a research project that takes some time. You will need to develop your own criteria and preferences, as well as create a list with a balanced range of schools that meet both your criteria and take into account selectivity.

Please use the documents on the [“Choosing Medical Schools”](#) page on the HPP website.

**USE the worksheet** on the page to help you develop criteria and a balanced list of schools!

- Consider subscribing to MSAR (Medical School Admissions Requirements) online.
- We also have information from Dartmouth alums attending medical schools who have agreed to share their experiences at their chosen schools. Copies of those questionnaires are compiled into binders located in Parker House, Room 103.
- You can also use the Alumni Advice Network accessible through the [Nathan Smith Society](#) homepage if you are a current student.
- Contact Admissions personal at different schools and ask to speak to current students, if possible.

**Eventually, you will narrow down your list to include a range of schools that interest you and at which you are likely to be competitive.** Apply to multiple schools, but do not go overboard. Dartmouth applicants have applied to an average of 20 – 23 schools in recent years. Remember that the admissions process is very expensive, as well as time and labor intensive. You won't be able to do a good job on your secondary applications if you apply to too many schools.

**For other information about the application process, please use the [“Application Process”](#) section of our website!**