

# DARTMOUTH

Health Professions Program

## Medical School Application Newsletter Interviews, Update Letters, & Letters of Intent 2024-2025 Cycle October 2024

The interview season can be an exciting time but can also be challenging as you await news. For those of you who may have already heard good news – congratulations! For those who may be waiting for news – do not fret! The application season is still very active. We also know that many of you are hearing about “update letters,” and “letters of interest,” and wondering what those look like. In this newsletter, we hope to address frequent questions that arise during this time. As always, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns!

Best wishes,  
Sarah, Nicole, and Rae

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### Interview Cycle Timeline

While different schools have different timelines, generally most schools send interview invites up through February, and sometimes even early March. This means that the interview season is still very active and you shouldn’t worry if you haven’t received many, or any, invites – or heard about acceptances. This is an appropriate time to send an update letter to

schools that accept them (see the Updates section below for more information. In the meantime, hang in there!

## Interview Prep Reminders

We have worked with many people over the years who receive their first interview invites and December or even later! Please feel free to reach out to HPP for interview prep, no matter when in the cycle you receive an invite. Please see [Sarah's](#) or [Nicole's](#) Calendly to schedule a meeting or contact [Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu). We have also enclosed our Interview Prep Guide.

## Update Letters, Letters of Interest, & Letter of Intent

**Many of you may be wondering about whether or not to send updates and/or letters of interest. Below we hope to provide some tips and clarity about the different types of communication you can send.**

**Update Letters:** These are a useful way to communicate to medical schools that you're still available and for you to share any recent developments and/or accomplishments in your work or personal life. These can be shared with all schools without tailoring the update.

### What can be included in an Update Letter?

- **New Experiences:** Describe any new experiences or accomplishments in your professional/volunteer work or personal life.
- **Continued Experiences:** Describe that continuity. Do you have any new duties or responsibilities? Progress on projects? Have gained new meaningful insights? Have you had a particularly meaningful encounter?
- **Updated Grades or MCAT scores** (i.e., you submitted your application before spring grades or retook your MCAT later in the summer).

**Letters of Interest:** These are tailored to each individual school and often are paired with an update letter. You can use a letter of interest as a way to convey 1-3 things that matter to you, and how those align or resonate with aspects of the medical school as a means of sharing your interest/enthusiasm for the school. After interviews, if you have more than one school that you're very enthusiastic about, choose your words carefully to communicate your enthusiasm and alignment with the school without stating that they are your top choice.

**Letters of Intent:** After interviews, towards the end of the cycle, you may be waiting to hear back from the school you are most interested in. A "letter of intent" to this one school could be written to express that they are your top choice. What differentiates this letter is your willingness to declare your commitment if you were to be accepted.

### Other Tips & Advice

- **We highly recommend researching each school's policy on update letters and adding this to your school list spreadsheet.** It's important to know if a school accepts updates and the total number they will accept. If they only accept two or fewer, be sure to be strategic with your timing. If the school does allow updates, make

sure you know their preferred method of submitting an update and follow said method accordingly – whether it be through a portal or to an admissions office email.

- **Be sure your update is well-written** – it should be concise, no more than a page long generally, and sustain your personal voice just like your primary and secondary applications. **If you are writing tailored updates, make sure they refer to and are sent to the correct school.**
- **Regarding timing**, you could send an update now, and a month later an update plus a letter of interest. Or you could send a combined update and letter of interest first. This option will take a bit longer since you'll need to tailor it to each school. If you're unable to take the time to tailor a letter to each school, consider sending an update especially if you haven't heard from any schools yet by the end of October/Early November.
- **The value of sending an update** is that it can sometimes spark admissions to reach for your file. This is not the case at every medical school, but updates are helpful to some. Please note, that schools can't see where else you have applied or if you have any acceptance at this point in the cycle.
- **Some of you may have a significant update or information to share, others may not.** Regardless, an update can be worthy even if it's not flashy – as long as it is thoughtfully crafted.

## Sending a New Letter of Recommendation

You may have been working or performing service somewhere long enough to prompt a new letter of recommendation from a supervisor. Or a support writer may want to update their letter now that they've known you and your work for longer. Either way, make sure your AAMC ID is included in the letter. You can also write a short note to the admissions office letting them know to expect a new or updated letter of recommendation. Be sure to figure out how schools prefer these to be shared, i.e., through AMCAS or sent directly from the writer. Letters are meant to be confidential, so they should – ideally - not be sent through you!

## Thank You Letters

You may have already done this, but if you haven't, be sure to write a thank you letter after an interview. If you had one-on-one interviews, consider a short, personalized letter to each interviewer and a general letter to the admissions office expressing your gratitude as well as the positive impressions you walked away with. You could also include information or programming that you felt was personally meaningful to you or that you especially aligned with. If you had an MMI, send a letter to the admissions office, addressed to the Dean or Director of Admissions, or the Admissions Committee.

## Withdrawing from an Interview

If you have been fortunate enough to receive an acceptance from a preferred school, it is okay – and even encouraged – to withdraw from your interview at any school you already know you won't choose. This is very appreciated because every interview slot is precious, and someone will definitely want it. **If you do decide to withdraw, do it as soon as possible**

**so the school has time to fill the slot. Never be a no-show!** Doing so will put a negative mark on Dartmouth applicants and may take away a slot from someone who would have loved the opportunity.

## **Holding Acceptances**

You can hold multiple acceptances until the end of April and the beginning of May. You do not need to accept the acceptance! Deposits are generally returned when you make a final decision later in the cycle. If you are holding an acceptance at a school you know you would choose over other schools, you may withdraw your application at any time from those schools.