

DARTMOUTH

Health Professions Program

Med/Vet/Dental Application Newsletter

REMINDERS! What You Should be Finalizing Now!

2025-2026 Cycle

January 2025

Hello all!

As we start the new year, this is a good time to refresh your knowledge of the Composite Letter of Evaluation Process and to write your Autobiographical Sketch. Winter and Spring will pass quickly, so it is important to make sure you're on track with your tasks ahead.

We've created a Composite Letter/Auto-Sketch CHECKLIST to help you stay on track with the tasks you need to complete in the coming weeks and ensure your letter process moves forward in a timely fashion. We want you to have the best process possible!

Please read this newsletter carefully, in its entirety, to make sure you're on track. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to schedule an appointment via Calendly with [Sarah Berger](#) and [Nicole Roeper](#) or reach out to Rae Stokes at Health.Professions.Program@dartmouth.edu or 603-646-3377.

Wishing you a wonderful start to the new year!
Sarah, Nicole, and Rae

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What You Should Finalize in Winter/Spring

WINTER

- Review the [Composite Letter Process Handbook](#) if you haven't already.** This handbook provides detailed information and frequently asked questions about the composite letter process, letters of recommendation, how to choose support and composite writers, how to set deadlines with writers, how to write an autobiographical sketch, how to create a PrivateFolio account, and timelines/deadlines.

- Finalize writers.** Finish making your choices and requests to composite and support writers.

- Create a [PrivateFolio](#) account.** Make sure to waive your confidentiality (this is important to medical schools).

- Finalize deadlines with writers.** Discuss and agree on letter deadlines with your composite and support writers. See the Composite Process Timeline in the [Composite Letter Process Handbook](#).

- Send follow-up note to support writers:**
 1. Confirming your agreed deadlines.
 2. Alerting them to expect a PrivateFolio Letter of Recommendation Request that will include an upload link for them to submit their letters to PrivateFolio.
 3. Informing them that you will provide them with your autobiographical sketch and resume (and transcript if they request it) by a specific date.

- Create a PrivateFolio Letter of Recommendation Request for each support writer.** See our [website for instructions on how to create a PrivateFolio LOR request](#).

- Finish writing your Autobiographical Sketch.** When finished, make sure to:
 - Send it directly to your support writers at least 4 weeks before your agreed deadlines.
 - Upload it to PrivateFolio.

WINTER/SPRING

- Upload your documents to PrivateFolio.** Make sure to upload the following documents to PrivateFolio:
 1. Your Autobiographical Sketch.
 2. Your Transcript(s)
 3. Your Resume.

- Submit the [Release to Composite Writer Form](#).** This should be done once ALL your support letters and documents are uploaded to PrivateFolio. The release form will prompt HPP to compile your materials into a single document and send it to your composite writer.

ASAP: Review the Composite Letter Process

If you have not yet read through the instructions for the composite letter process, it is your responsibility to understand the process. Please review the [Composite Letter Process Handbook](#) for detailed information and frequently asked questions about letters of recommendation, how to choose support and composite writers, how to set deadlines with writers, how to write an autobiographical sketch, how to create a PrivateFolio account, and timelines/deadlines.

Read Newsletters and Watch Webinar Videos in a Timely Fashion

We will share timely information and instructions about the next steps as we move through the application cycle. We post links to our newsletters, resources, and forms on the [Resources, Newsletters, and Forms page of the HPP website](#). Additionally, you can find recordings of our application workshops and medical school admissions webinars on the [Application & Admissions Webinars page of the HPP website](#). **We strongly encourage you to bookmark these pages for your ease of reference.**

Resources for Your Letter Writers

Additionally, HPP does have resources to help your composite and support writers with the writing process. If any of your writers would like to see those resources, please direct them to the [Guidelines for Letter Writers page of the HPP website](#). Additionally, we do have sample composite letters, but because these are confidential, please let your composite writer know to reach out to HPP directly to get access to the samples.

Information About PrivateFolio

- [PrivateFolio](#) is where ONLY YOUR SUPPORT WRITERS upload their letters. **Your composite writer will send their composite directly to HPP.** After we've reviewed and finalized it, HPP will upload your Composite Letter of Evaluation Packet to PrivateFolio.
- **You DO NEED to upload your autobiographical sketch, resume, and transcript to PrivateFolio. HPP will include these in your letter file which we send to your composite writer.** It is also helpful for HPP to have these materials as a reference when reviewing your composite letter.
- When all your support letters are uploaded to PrivateFolio, you will submit the [Release to Composite Writer Form](#). This will prompt HPP to compile your letter file (plus your autobiographical sketch, resume, and transcript) and send it to your composite writer.

Writing the Autobiographical Sketch

Your autobiographical sketch is useful to all of your writers, giving them more context and insight into your aspiration and preparation for applying to medical school. This can aid their writing as they advocate for your candidacy. For the support writers, the auto sketch is mostly to broaden their understanding of you. For the composite writer, it directly adds to their task of synthesizing the information they have about you from their own direct experience along with the information shared by you and your support writers. Overall, the composite writer provides context to your abilities, experiences, and who you are as a person. As such, your autobiographical sketch is an important resource for achieving this goal.

The self-reflection involved in this project is a great way to begin the reflection that is essential for the application itself. The format is flexible. You can write your auto sketch as an essay or in sections. You can choose your own relevant sections (ex. family influences, growing up, before college, academics, highlight experiences that were especially meaningful/relevant to your goals, highlight other experiences meaningful to you personally, why medicine, etc.).

Highlighting a few of your more meaningful and relevant experiences is very valuable. An auto sketch goes beyond the list that a resume presents and can better illustrate your engagement and/or the meaning, insights, and growth you may have gained. You can weave this information into your auto sketch or include it in a page attached to your sketch. This will also prepare you to write more deeply about your experiences for your application.

The autobiographical sketch can also be a place to share any unique challenges you may have experienced and wish your writers to understand. If you don't wish to share that with all your writers, add it for your composite writer, or have a thoughtful discussion with them. The composite writer can be called upon to provide context in unique circumstances. Feel free to discuss this with an advisor.

Additionally, brainstorm your composite list of work and activities as part of your application writing preparation, this will also help you with writing your auto sketch. Create a folder, document, or Excel spreadsheet, and start writing down every activity you can think of – whether or not you think it is relevant. Begin jotting down roles, responsibilities, insights, and specific moments. Some of this information may go into your auto sketch and will kick start your work and activities and essay writing for the application.

Self-Reflection and Questions to Consider:

Self-reflection is vital for the autobiographical sketch and for an excellent application. Consider the following questions:

- What were your formative experiences/values with your family, education, or community before college?
- What experiences/interests have you had over the years that have been meaningful to you? How have they shaped you?
- How have you grown academically and personally? Do you have any academic challenges to discuss?
- Have any classes you've taken had a significant impact on you? If so, in what way?
- Have you conducted research? How has it been meaningful to you?
- What extracurriculars or passions (music, athletics, etc.) are you involved in? How have they inspired or surprised you? What do you find meaningful about them?
- Have you engaged in certain themes in your studies or experiences (ex. working with children, the elderly, disadvantaged communities, etc., or researching autism, dementia, oncology, etc.)? If so, how did you become interested in this area? Why has this been such a significant part of your experience/studies? Why is this meaningful to you?
- What kind of service and/or health-related experiences have you had?
- Why do you want to study medicine/dentistry? What has influenced and affirmed this choice? Who has influenced or inspired you?

