

Health Professions Program

2026-2027 Application FAQs and Instructions

Make sure to thoroughly review this document to understand how to fill out your primary application for medical or dental school. If you are still unable to find the answer to your questions after reviewing this document, please feel free to contact us at HPP@dartmouth.edu.

If you would like to schedule an appointment with a pre-health advisor, please reach out to our program coordinator, Rae Stokes, at the above email. You can also schedule an appointment directly through Calendly with [Sarah Berger](#) or [Nicole Roeper](#).

We ask that you please select “Release to Advisor” on your primary application and standardized exams. This will allow your advisors to use the data from your application as part of an aggregate number to advise future applicants.

Table of Contents

General Information	3
Where can I find help with my application?.....	3
When should I submit my application?.....	3
How much does it cost to apply?.....	3
What is included in the application?.....	4
Regarding the Release to Advisor question, should I check “Yes”?.....	4
Can I change my application after I have certified and submitted it?.....	4
Am I a reapplicant if I applied to FlexMed and/or Geisel EAP?.....	4
What if I am not sure where I’ll be living or if my address changes?.....	5
Other Impactful Experiences Section	5
Schools Attended & Transcripts	5
What if I attended courses at another college or institution?.....	5
If I participated in a study abroad program, how do I enter it?.....	5
How do I enter programs that were sponsored by a US or Canadian institution/school?.....	5
Entering the abroad institutions:.....	6
Do I order a separate transcript for programs that were sponsored by a US or Canadian school and/or credits that were transferred to a US or Canadian school?.....	6
How do I enter my courses for study abroad?.....	6
What if I took courses at an American college overseas?.....	6
How do I send my transcripts to AMCAS?.....	7
When I create a transcript request in AMCAS, under “College Address Information,” which Dartmouth address should I use?.....	7
Why won’t my transcript request form download (AMCAS)?.....	7

Should I wait until spring grades are available to send my transcript to AMCAS?	7
How do I decide whether to wait for spring grades?.....	7
What if I got a citation on my Spring transcript? Can I still have it included in my composite letter packet? 7	
How do I enter an Institutional Action (IA)?.....	8
Coursework	8
How do I enter AP credit?.....	8
What term should I list AP credit under?.....	8
How do I enter exemptions?.....	8
What course type do I enter if I have an “NR”?.....	8
What is the course number?.....	8
How many credit hours should I enter for courses?	8
What is the Registrar’s official credit conversions statement?	9
Are we on trimesters or quarters?	9
What is course classification?.....	9
What if I’m unsure how to classify a course?	10
How should I classify my First-Year Seminar?	10
How do I classify Neuroscience courses?	11
How do I classify the credits I received through research?	11
How do I list Sophomore Summer?	11
How do I enter a future course? Do I need to?.....	11
Should I use the abbreviation for courses, or should I write out the entire title?.....	11
How do I enter an NR?	11
Should I include transferred credits on my application?	11
How do I enter my citations?	11
What if I did the 5-year AB/BE Engineering program?	12
Work/Activities.....	12
What is in the work/activities section?	12
How many experiences can I enter?.....	12
How do I categorize shadowing?.....	12
How do I enter activity dates/hours and future activities/hours?.....	12
Essay Prompt.....	13
Letters of Evaluation	13
Who is my Primary Contact/Author?	13
How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AMCAS?.....	13
How do I categorize my letters in AMCAS?	13

How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AACOMAS?.....	14
How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to TMDSAS?	14
How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AADSAS?	14
Why has my file not been sent to my composite writer?	15
All my letters are submitted except for one. What should I do?.....	15
When do I need to submit my composite/letter packet to an application service?	15
Do I need to submit my citation report separately to AMCAS?.....	15
Choosing Medical Schools	15
How do I decide which schools to apply to?.....	15

General Information

Where can I find help with my application?

Use this document, along with the [AMCAS Applicant Guide](#) and the online help available within the application. You can contact AMCAS directly at amcas@aamc.org or 202-828-0600. If you cannot find an answer through these resources, please contact HPP@dartmouth.edu. For other applications, please use the resources below:

- [AACOMAS \(DO\) Application Instructions](#)
- [ADEA AADSAS \(Dental\) Applicant Help Center](#)
- [TMDSAS \(Texas Schools\) Application Guide](#)

When should I submit my application?

Most medical schools have rolling admissions, and it is to your advantage to be early in the process. **We suggest submitting your AMCAS primary application by early to mid-June, ideally.** However, if you need more time to write a quality application or are waiting for Spring grades to enhance your application, take that time. If you have questions about the timing of your application, speak to a pre-health advisor.

How much does it cost to apply?

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, please refer to the [AMCAS Fee Assistance Program \(FAP\) page](#).

Fees will sometimes change from year to year. For the 2026-2027 application year:

- [AMCAS](#) charges an application processing fee of \$175 for one medical school designation and \$47 for each designation thereafter.
- [TMDSAS](#) charges a non-refundable flat fee of \$235 regardless of the number of schools you apply to.
- [AACOMAS](#) charges \$198 for the first program you apply to and \$60 for each additional program.
- [AADSAS](#) charges an application fee of \$264 for your first dental school and \$115 for each additional school.

Most schools charge fees for their secondary applications, which can range from \$50.00 to \$150.00. (One must also consider travel and interview expenses). Most interviews are still virtual, which helps with cutting down on travel costs, but some are requiring or offering an in-person option.

What is included in the application?

1. Identifying and biographical information.
2. Work experience and activities with a focus on college and postgraduate years.
 - Up to 15 experiences with descriptions for each (there is a 700-character limit).
 - Up to 3 of these experiences can be designated as “most meaningful” and will have an additional 1325-character limit to help you elaborate.
 - The experiences section is unlimited in AADSAS and AACOMAS, but has different character limits.
3. Schools attended.
4. Coursework (plan to have your official transcript(s) available to complete this section).
5. Personal statement:
 - AMCAS: 5300 characters including spaces.
 - TMDSAS: 5000 characters including spaces.
 - AACOMAS: 5300 characters including spaces.
 - AADSAS: 4500 characters including spaces.
 - VMCAS: 3000 characters including spaces.
6. Letters of evaluation.
7. Designated medical schools (see Letter Section for more information).
8. Additional essays:
 - In AMCAS, for combined degree programs, additional essays will appear in the “Essays” section.
 - See applicant guides for all other application services.

Regarding the Release to Advisor question, should I check “Yes”?

We ask that you please check “yes.” This will allow your advisors to use the data from your application as part of an aggregate number to advise future applicants.

- Advisors cannot read your application unless you send it to them.
- Your personal information will be kept confidential.
- The information released to your advisors includes your gender, race/ethnicity, GPA, MCAT score, schools applied to, schools accepted, and final matriculation.
- The data from past applicants will help us assist you during the process, and your data will help us assist future applicants.

Can I change my application after I have certified and submitted it?

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

Am I a reapplicant if I applied to FlexMed and/or Geisel EAP?

If you applied to these programs, you are not considered a reapplicant. However, for those who applied to FlexMed, there is a section on the secondary where you can indicate that you applied to FlexMed.

What if I am not sure where I'll be living or if my address changes?

Your "Preferred Address" in AMCAS can be updated after submission and regularly throughout the cycle. Please be sure this information is always up to date.

Other Impactful Experiences Section

This is a section in which applicants can describe specific challenges or obstacles that they have navigated. This could include lived experiences related to family background, financial background, community setting, educational experiences, and/or other life circumstances. While most applicants will not be filling out this section, medical schools do want to know and consider obstacles or barriers you may have experienced if this pertains to you. Please feel free to think through what you might wish to share with one of your pre-health advisors. Here are some example experiences from the AAMC:

- Family background: serving as a caretaker of a family member (e.g., siblings, parent/guardian), first generation to college.
- Community setting: rural area, food scarcity, high poverty or crime rate, lack of access to regular health care (e.g., primarily used urgent care clinics or emergency room, no primary care physician).
- Financial background: low-income family, worked to support family growing up, work-study program to pay for college, federal or state financial support.
- Educational experience: limited educational opportunities, limited access to advisors or counselors who were knowledgeable/supportive of higher education requirements.
- Other general life circumstances that were beyond your control and impacted your life and/or presented barriers (e.g., identity, religion, health circumstance, etc).

Schools Attended & Transcripts

What if I attended courses at another college or institution?

You must create an entry for each school attended, just as you did for Dartmouth. List the courses and grades you earned at each school. You must request an official transcript from each school's registrar's office to be sent to AMCAS. Note that each school's registrar's office may have different instructions for requesting an official transcript.

If I participated in a study abroad program, how would I enter it?

From the perspective of AMCAS, a "study abroad" program is a program that is directly sponsored by a US or Canadian Institution, or sponsored by a third-party organization, such as the Council on International Education (CIEE), and then transferred to a US or Canadian school. In all cases, for a "study abroad" to be entered on your application, it must have been transferred to, and appear on, the US or Canadian schools' transcript.

Please check [the AMCAS instructions directly for further details](#). In the meantime, take note of the following.

How do I enter programs that were sponsored by a US or Canadian institution/school?

Any program sponsored by a US or Canadian institution/school will have one of the following formats. Each has a slightly different way to enter the sponsoring schools, but in all cases, if a program was sponsored by and had credits transferred to a US or Canadian institution, you will not need a separate transcript from the "abroad" (foreign or domestic) institution that hosted you. See more instructions about transcripts below.

Entering the abroad institutions:

1. If the program was sponsored by Dartmouth (ex. you registered for the program through Guarini even though it was one of our special exchanges, etc.) and was taught by and within the foreign institution, you will enter Dartmouth as the sponsoring institution, and then you will list the study abroad institution in the second entry.
2. If your program was sponsored by Dartmouth and led by Dartmouth faculty, even if another school hosted you in their facilities, you will enter Dartmouth as the sponsoring organization. Then, in the second entry, you will enter Dartmouth again, add the phrase Study Abroad, and then add the location of the program (ex. Dartmouth - Study Abroad – Rome). This is true even for domestic Dartmouth-sponsored programs, such as those in Santa Fe, Los Angeles, and the Stretch.
3. If the program was sponsored by a third-party organization (such as CIEE, CEA, DIS, IES, ISA, WES) to assist with the registration and enrollment at a study abroad school **AND** only if a U.S. or Canadian school has granted credit for those study abroad courses, you will enter the U.S. or Canadian institution that granted the credit in the school's attended section then list the study abroad organization. In other words, you will list the school (Dartmouth) that granted you credit for the courses, then list the study abroad organization (such as CIEE), then the state where that organization is actually located, then for the actual school name select "other not listed" and modify it (ex. CIEE Spain).

Do I order a separate transcript for programs that were sponsored by a US or Canadian school and/or credits that were transferred to a US or Canadian school?

1. You will choose "transcript EXCEPTION," meaning that you do not need a separate transcript.
2. Your reason will be: *Foreign Institution or Study Abroad program sponsored by a U.S., U.S. territorial, or Canadian institution - Credits transferred.*

Note: If the program credit was transferred to another US or Canadian school other than Dartmouth, you will need a transcript from that school (but not from the foreign program institution).

How do I enter my courses for study abroad?

Before entering any coursework on your application, please make sure to have your official transcript on hand to ensure you have the most accurate transcript information.

- Before you enter your study abroad coursework in the study abroad section, please make sure to read our "Entering Coursework" section (see page 8).
- You will list the courses you took while studying abroad in the study abroad section just as they are on your Dartmouth transcript.
- From some programs, such as those led by Dartmouth faculty, there will be grades. In many instances, grades won't be shown, and the courses will be listed on the Dartmouth transcript as TR (transfer) courses. Put them in just like that.
- **You will list courses taken in your abroad program only in this section and not under courses taken at Dartmouth in general.**

What if I took courses at an American college overseas?

Some American colleges/universities have programs overseas (ex. Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar). If you took courses at one of these institutions, you will simply enter them as another school attended and order a transcript from that school.

How do I send my transcripts to AMCAS?

Applicants can request an official eTranscript or paper transcript to be sent to AMCAS through Dartmouth's Registrar's Office. eTranscripts are quicker than paper. Dartmouth utilizes a third party called Parchment.

You do not need the AMCAS transcript request form, but you can upload it to verify your identity when you electronically request transcripts from Dartmouth's Registrar's Office. When you make the transcript request, you can also request a "hold for grades" if you want your spring term grades sent to AMCAS.

- Go to the [Registrar's website](#) and click on the Transcript Tab.
- Current undergraduates: select "Official Transcript" from the "Undergraduate Student Main Menu."
- Alumni and students without Banner access: log onto 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.

A separate AMCAS transcript request must be created for each college/institution you have attended. For other institutions, please locate the transcript request page for those colleges on their registrar website for instructions on how to request transcripts.

When I create a transcript request in AMCAS, under "College Address Information," which Dartmouth address should I use?

6014 McNutt Hall, Hanover, NH 03755

Why won't my transcript request form download (AMCAS)?

Please check your pop-up blocker, as that is the most common reason applicants experience difficulty downloading the form.

Should I wait until spring grades are available to send my transcript to AMCAS?

The transcript you send to AMCAS should include your spring grades if you are taking courses and want those grades included. Not everyone will need to wait.

How do I decide whether to wait for spring grades?

1. If your grades have been improving this year, and your spring grades will continue to strengthen your academic record, that is a good reason to wait.
2. If you need more time to complete your Primary application writing well, it may then be worth aligning the timing of your transcript to your submission timeline.

What if I got a citation on my Spring transcript? Can I still have it included in my composite letter packet?

If you received any citations on your Spring transcript and would like them included in your composite letter packet, please upload your Spring transcript to PrivateFolio and then inform Rae Stokes at HPP@dartmouth.edu.

How do I enter an Institutional Action (IA)?

First, if you are unsure what your status is (“I had an incident, but was it an IA?”), we’re happy to have a confidential conversation with you to help determine your answer. If you have an institutional action of “Probation” or higher, it is expected by medical schools that you will self-report this even if Dartmouth or any other institution would not have reported it. Several schools, for instance, have a secondary application question that asks, “Even if your school does not report it, have you had an IA?” We know it can feel nerve-wracking to consider disclosing this information. Please discuss this with us. We can help you think through how to approach and write about an incident you may have been involved in.

That said, if you have had an IA, you would check “yes” in that case. You will choose whether it is academic or conduct-related. Then there will be a space to write about the incident. You would write a simple explanation of what happened and how you learned and grew from the experience. Again, we are glad to walk through it with you in a judgment-free zone.

Coursework

BE SURE TO HAVE YOUR OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT ON HAND WHEN ENTERING YOUR COURSEWORK!

Please consult with a pre-health advisor when entering coursework for other application services. This section mostly applies to AMCAS.

How do I enter AP credit?

If you have AP courses on your Dartmouth transcript:

1. Enter the course number and name exactly as shown on your transcript. You can add clarifying information, such as Intro Calc or Gen Chem.
2. Enter “CR” for the grade, just as it is on your transcript.
3. You will not add in any credit hours.
4. Choose “Advanced Placement” in the “Special Course Types” section.

What term should I list AP credit under?

Choose “freshmen” and include this coursework with your first-year, Fall courses. You will not have a grade.

How do I enter exemptions?

Enter the course exactly as it appears on your transcript (“EX” for transcript grade). Choose “exempt” from the “Special Course Types” section.

What course type do I enter if I have an “NR”?

Choose “Pass/Fail” for the course type. “NR” should be noted as the grade, exactly as it appears on your transcript.

What is the course number?

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

How many credit hours should I enter for courses?

For AMCAS: All Dartmouth courses are shown as 1 unit, which is different than credit hours. AMCAS knows this already, so all courses at Dartmouth should be entered as 1, just as it is on your transcript.

For each course:

- ✓ Make sure to check the box to indicate whether the course 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!

AMCAS will convert your Dartmouth credits into semester credit hours, according to the conversion that is listed on the back of your transcript. **Do not enter the conversions in AMCAS.** Combined course + lab courses will convert automatically when your application is processed (after submission) to 4.5 semester credit hours; courses that are lecture-only or lab-only will convert to 3.5 semester credit hours.

For all other application services (TMDSAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, VMCAS): Enter your courses as semesters (NOT quarters), and YOU WILL convert the units into credit hours. Courses + lab will be worth 4.5 semester hours/credits; courses w/out labs and labs w/out courses will be worth 3.5 semester hours/credits. If you have earned credit at other colleges or universities, you will need to check your official transcript(s) from those colleges/universities for information on how to record your credit hours. Applications for other health professional schools might also require you to make those conversions. If you ever need to know the quarter-hour conversion, see below, as ours are not typical.

What is the Registrar’s official credit conversions statement?

You can find the Registrar's official conversion statement on the back of your transcript: “Each course count unit may be considered the equivalent of a semester course worth 3.5 semester hours (4.5 if a laboratory course) or 5 quarter hours (6.7 if a laboratory course).”

Are we on trimesters or quarters?

Dartmouth’s registrar's office has reported to AMCAS that we are a quarter-term school.

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

Again, AMCAS will convert your Dartmouth credits **into semester credit hours**, according to the conversion that is listed on the back of your transcript. **Do not enter the conversions in AMCAS.** Lab courses will convert automatically to 4.5 semester credit hours, and non-labs will convert to 3.5 semester credit hours when your application is processed (after submission). See the question above for more information.

For all other application services, it is important for the accuracy of your credit hours to enter everything as a semester and use the conversion listed for semesters (see the previous question).

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 (including Statistics).

- AMCAS includes Neuroscience as a sub-category of Biology.
- Include only courses with “Neuroscience” in the title or a course you could support being heavily based in Biology.
- Some Engineering courses could also count towards your BCPM.
- Please review the [AMCAS Course Classification Guide](#).

Do not be concerned if you are still completing some prerequisite courses at the time you submit your application. It will not hinder your application. All prerequisites should be completed before matriculation into medical school or earlier, depending on the school.

What if I'm unsure how to classify a course?

Please review the AMCAS Course Classification Guide. 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 questionable to AMCAS, you may be asked to justify your classification. This could delay the processing of your application.

During the verification process, it is your responsibility to check regularly for emails.

- Just in case, check your spam/junk folder 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 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.

How should I classify my First-Year Seminar?

If you plan to use this course as a 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 them however you feel is appropriate. If you need to provide additional information with your supplemental application, 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. 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 a vote by 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.

How do I classify Neuroscience courses?

The 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.

How do I classify the credits I received through research?

It is up to your discretion based on the content of the research. It is not verified by AMCAS.

How do I list Sophomore Summer?

Sophomore Summer is the summer quarter of your junior year, according to the AMCAS calendar. 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 - Spring.

How do I enter 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 to show medical schools that they plan on taking a remaining prerequisite or another course you wish them to know about. If you enter future courses, but your schedule changes, you are not held to what you listed. Future coursework or activities can also be mentioned in your secondary applications.

Should I use the abbreviation for courses, or should I write out the entire title?

It is best to put 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.

How do I enter an NR?

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.”

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 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 or another college/institution to be sent to AMCAS.

How do I enter my citations?

Do not use the star for citations when entering coursework. You can always draw attention to your citations in the activities section, and we also include them with your Dartmouth Composite Letter of Evaluation packet.

What if I did the 5-year AB/BE Engineering program?

If all your coursework appears on your main Dartmouth transcript, you do not need to do anything differently. However, if some of your courses only appear on the BE transcript from Thayer, you will need to submit both transcripts. To do this, you will create 2 Dartmouth entries under “Colleges Attended.” One will be for Dartmouth, and the other will be for Thayer. Request transcripts following the respective processes for Dartmouth and Thayer, and enter the coursework separately under each respective college. Be sure that the courses you enter under both match each transcript.

Work/Activities

What is in the work/activities section?

You can 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 convey not only what you did/your role, but also what you learned/gained/how it impacted you, or what impact you may have had.

How many experiences can I enter?

A maximum of 15 experiences can be entered into AMCAS. You will be given 700 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. **Do ALL your writing in Word/Google/Notes, NOT on the application.** In the end, you will cut and paste your final version into the application. It cannot deal with formatting and is not useful for editing.

- Use every opportunity to write about yourself thoughtfully.
- Each activity is a chance to help medical schools get to know you better.
- It usually helps to *over write*—figure out what you really want to convey/say, and THEN craft and edit it into the character count with the use of compelling prose.
- In AACOMAS, TMDSAS, VMCAS, and AADSAS, you have unlimited experiences, but the character counts might be shorter. ACCOMAS (600 including spaces), TMDSAS (varies depending on experience type, see TMDSAS website), AADSAS (600 including spaces), and VMCAS (600 including spaces)

How do I categorize shadowing?

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 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 is longer/more in-depth, you could distinguish it in its own activity entry.

How do I enter activity dates/hours and future activities/hours?

For each activity, you can enter multiple start and end dates if you paused and returned to an activity multiple times. For each, you will calculate the number of hours spent on that experience. You can also put in anticipated future hours and dates. Stay as accurate as possible. For a future activity you have not yet started, don’t overstate what you have not yet done. Keep it simple. During the course of the application year, you can submit updates to individual medical schools.

Essay Prompt

When considering the essay, many people think the prompt is simply “Why medicine?” In fact, it’s broader than that. You want the reader to walk away with a sense of conviction that medicine is a genuine aspiration for you, but their actual prompts to reflect on are: Why have you selected the field of medicine? What motivated you to learn about medicine? What do you want medical schools to know about you that you haven’t disclosed in another section of the application?

You can also discuss any special hardships or challenges that may have influenced your educational pursuits. This can also be a space to discuss any significant fluctuations in your transcript.

Do ALL your writing in Word/Google/Notes, NOT on the application. In the end, you will cut and paste your final version into the application. It cannot deal with formatting and is not useful for editing.

Letters of Evaluation

Who is my Primary Contact/Author?

Rae Stokes (HPP Program Coordinator) is the primary contact for all composite/letter packets submitted to AMCAS, AACOMAS, and TMDAS. Please use Rae’s contact information below. If you are using another school’s letter service in addition to Dartmouth, please contact them for their information. For AADSAS, the primary contact would be the composite writer (see more information under the section “How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AADSAS?”).

- What schools are providing this letter? **Dartmouth**
- 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: **37 Dewey Field Rd. Hanover, NH 03755 USA**

How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AMCAS?

HPP will upload your composite/letter packet to AMCAS once it is completed. To ensure this, **you will need to create a Letter Entry in AMCAS addressed to Rae Stokes** (using the above contact information), which will prompt AMCAS to send Rae an upload link. To create a Letter Entry, please see the [AAMC’s Step-by-Step Guide for Creating and Managing Your Letter Request](#).

How do I categorize my letters in AMCAS?

- **For Composite Letter Packets:** Select “Committee Letter.”
- **For Letter Packets:** Select “Letter Packet.”
 - This option is typically chosen by alumni who have been graduates for 3+ years. If you have not notified HPP, please contact us for help with creating your letter packet before you attempt to send it to AMCAS.

- **For Individual Letters:** Select “Individual Letter.”

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

How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AACOMAS?

AACOMAS utilizes a service called Liaison to submit letters of recommendation. HPP will upload your composite/letter packet to AMCAS once it is completed. To ensure this, **you will need to create a Letter of Evaluation Request in AACOMAS addressed to Rae Stokes** (using the above contact information), which will prompt AACOMAS to send Rae an upload link. To create a Letter of Evaluation Request, please see [AACOMAS’ Letters of Evaluation Instructions](#).

How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to TMDSAS?

PrivateFolio can upload your composite letter packet directly to the TMDSAS Advisor Portal. However, you will need to complete the Colleges Attended section in TMDSAS first and select Dartmouth College as your primary undergraduate institution. You will also be asked if you want to release your information to your Health Professions Advisor. We encourage you to select “Yes” so HPP can use your data to help future applicants.

PrivateFolio will not be able to upload your packet until you complete the College’s Attended Section. For more in-depth instructions on how to fill out this section, [please see the TMDSAS website](#). **If you plan to apply to TMDSAS, please let HPP know ahead of time to ensure your packet is uploaded to PrivateFolio.**

Once your composite/letter packet is uploaded to PrivateFolio AND you have completed the Colleges attended section in TMDSAS, you can submit a delivery request to PrivateFolio to have your packet uploaded to the TMDSAS Advisor Portal (see instructions below).

1. From your dashboard, click New Delivery to go to the delivery initiation page.
2. Click Request TMDSAS Packet Transmittal.
3. Select the appropriate packet.
4. Click the Confirm & Submit button.

How do I ensure my composite/letter packet is submitted to AADSAS?

Like AACOMAS, AADSAS utilizes a service called Liaison to submit letters of recommendation. However, AADSAS has recently implemented a Likert Scale (a questionnaire used to rate applicants) in their letters of evaluation requests. Because the Likert Scale and upload are part of the same process, HPP will not be able to upload composite or letter packets to AADSAS.

For Composite Packets: the composite writer will need to do the upload to Liaison (instead of Rae Stokes). To ensure this, you will need to create a Letter of Evaluation Request in AADSAS addressed to the composite writer, which will prompt AADSAS to send the composite writer an upload link. To create a Letter of Evaluation Request, please see the [AADSAS Letters of Evaluation Instructions](#).

For Letter Packets: we recommend selecting an individual from your letter writer group, who you feel can accurately answer the Likert Scale and is willing to do the upload. **Make sure to let HPP know who will be performing the upload**, so we can send your letter packet to them. You will need to create a Letter of Evaluation Request in AADSAS addressed to the letter writer, which will prompt AADSAS to send the

letter writer an upload link. To create a Letter of Evaluation Request, please see the [AADSAS Letters of Evaluation Instructions](#).

If you have any questions or concerns about submitting your composite or letter packet to TMDSAS, please feel free to reach out to us at HPP@dartmouth.edu.

Why has my file not been sent to my composite writer?

Once all your support letters, resume, transcript(s), and autobiographical sketch are uploaded to PrivateFolio, **it is your responsibility to notify HPP by submitting the [Release to Composite Writer form](#). Your file will not be released to your composite writer until this form is submitted.**

All my letters are submitted except for one. What should I do?

Do not worry! If you think your final letter may be submitted within a few weeks, we suggest waiting. As you're waiting, you can send gentle reminders to your writer. **If you expect a significant delay that will impact your composite writer's ability to start writing, or if your composite writer is requesting your materials, please reach out to Rae at HPP@dartmouth.edu.** Depending on your situation, we can potentially release the letters you have to your composite writer and then your final letter once it's submitted.

For more information about the timeline and our recommended deadlines, please review our [Composite Letter Process Handbook](#). However, keep in mind that these are only recommendations – they are flexible, and it's perfectly okay to have things in later.

When do I need to submit my composite/letter packet to an application service?

You do not need to wait for your letters to submit your application. Do not delay submitting your application because of your letters. You will most likely deliver your composite/letter packet while you are completing your secondary applications.

Do I need to submit my citation report separately to AMCAS?

Your citation report is meant to be reviewed by the medical schools you apply to, which they will do through the "Schools" section of your AMCAS application. However, to make sure that medical schools do see your citation report, HPP will include it in your composite/letter packet.

Therefore, if you submitted your transcript/citation report to be released to your composite writer before your Spring grades were in, and you received a citation during the Spring term, we highly recommend that you upload an updated copy to PrivateFolio and inform Rae Stokes at HPP@dartmouth.edu.

Choosing Medical Schools

How do I decide which schools to apply to?

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 consider selectivity.

You can use the Medical School Worksheet on the [Choosing Your Schools](#) page of the HPP website.

- Consider subscribing to [MSAR](#) (Medical School Admissions Requirements) online.
- You can also use the [Nathan Smith Society's Alumni Advice Network](#) if you are a current student.
- Contact admissions personnel 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 in which you are likely to be competitive. Apply to multiple schools, but do not go overboard. Dartmouth applicants applied to an average of 25 schools during the 2025-2026 application cycle, depending on their state of domicile.

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.

