Health Professions Program

Med/Vet/Dental Application Newsletter

The Composite Letter of Evaluation Process

2027-2028

October 2026

Planning to apply to the 2027-2028 application cycle for medical, dental, or veterinary school? **Now is the time to prepare – starting with your letters of recommendation and Dartmouth Composite Letter of Evaluation.** Letters are an important component of your application, and admission committees review them to learn more about you, your academic journey, professional and extracurricular experiences, and personal qualities that make you a qualified candidate.

At Dartmouth, we use a **Composite Letter of Evaluation**, our version of what other institutions call a "committee letter." Obtaining a composite letter requires several steps and tasks, many of which **YOU are responsible for.** This includes reviewing all the resources and instructions we'll send you over the next year to help you understand the entire composite and application process, and what you need to do every step of the way.

Your first step is to review this newsletter and the attached Composite Letter Process Handbook. This newsletter provides a brief overview of the composite process and your most immediate steps to get started, while the handbook outlines the entire process in detail and answers commonly asked questions. Together, these resources will help you understand what to expect and what you need to do to stay on track.

This journey can be both exciting and overwhelming, but you won't navigate it alone. HPP is here to support you every step of the way!

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What is the Composite Letter of Evaluation?

The composite letter is a comprehensive letter that gives admissions committees an in-depth look at how prepared you are for professional school. Think of it as Dartmouth's version of a "committee letter," which you may have heard about on school or application service websites.

Who is the composite writer?

The composite letter is written by a member of the Dartmouth Community (Dartmouth, Geisel, or DHMC) whom you choose. They are often the faculty or staff member who knows you best or with whom you have worked the most closely.

They'll act as your "head writer," combining their own observations of you with information from your support letters and materials (i.e., autobiographical sketch, work/activities list, resume, and transcript). They'll also provide context if you ask them to share meaningful details about your background or journey. The result is a holistic summary of your academic, professional, and extracurricular experiences, along with your personal qualities and character.

Who are the support writers?

Along with your composite writer, you'll choose **3-5 support writers**. Each one shares their perspective on your readiness for medical, dental, or veterinary school, based on their direct experience with you through a course, job, internship, athletics, or other activity. Support writers can be from Dartmouth or elsewhere.

How Does the Composite Process Work?

Below is a simplified summary of the composite process. **Read the Composite Letter Process Handbook** (see attached) for complete instructions and details.

- You choose and ask your composite and support writers, set SPECIFIC deadlines with them, and provide your support writers with your autobiographical sketch and work/activities list (or transcript(s) if requested).
- You create a PrivateFolio account where your support letters will be uploaded, and where you'll also upload your autobiographical sketch, work/activities list, resume, and transcript(s).
- You stay in communication with your writers and send gentle reminders.
- When all support letters and materials are uploaded, you submit a form to let HPP know — prompting HPP to send everything to your composite writer.
- The composite writer works directly with HPP and does not upload their letter to PrivateFolio or have access to it.
- When finished, the composite writer sends their draft to HPP for review. If edits are needed, HPP works with the writer to finalize it.
- HPP then creates your Dartmouth Composite Letter of Evaluation Packet and uploads it to your application service(s) (AMCAS, AACOMAS, TMDSAS, or AADSAS).

Building Your Composite & Support Writer Group

When choosing your composite and support writers, the best combination will demonstrate different facets of you and your experiences, in and out of the classroom, and provide insight into your intellectual, professional, experiential, and personal qualities.

You will choose **ONE composite writer** from the Dartmouth community (Dartmouth, Geisel, or DHMC) and **3-5 support writers**. We highly recommend that your entire writer group (composite + support writers) includes:

- Two faculty members who have taught you in a science class (one can be neuroscience or engineering, if science-focused). If you are unsure if a professor counts as a science writer, please consult with HPP.

- At least one faculty member from your major (if you're not a science major) or another type of class that was meaningful for you.
- Writers from outside the classroom, such as a research supervisor (PI), a coach, an internship supervisor, a job supervisor, FSP faculty, or an extracurricular activity. They can be individuals outside of Dartmouth as well.

Note about the two science writers requirement! If your composite writer taught you in a science course, then they can count as ONE of your science writers.

Your Most Immediate Next Steps

1. **Choose & ask your composite and support writers.**
2. **Agree on specific deadlines** (i.e., exact dates) with each of your composite and support writers once you have them confirmed.
3. **Create your supporting materials.** Write your autobiographical sketch, work/activities list, and resume. Send these directly to your support writers (not your composite writer) and share your transcript(s) if they ask.
4. **Set up your PrivateFolio account.** Use the **Dartmouth-specific sign-up link** to get the discounted subscription rate.
5. **Send PrivateFolio letter requests to your support writers i.** This will prompt PrivateFolio to send each support writer an upload link. **Do not send a request to your composite writer.**
6. **Communicate regularly with your writers.** Confirm deadlines, let them know to expect your autobiographical sketch, work/activities list, resume, and transcript(s) (if requested), as well as the PrivateFolio upload link. Send polite reminders as deadlines approach.