

Autobiography Instructions for Haverford Undergraduates and Alumni For the Medical School Application Process

Purpose

Your autobiography has two important functions:

1. It helps Jodi Domsky to get to know you better.
2. It helps you clarify your thinking about your career interests and will help you prepare for the application process essays and interviews.

This will only be read by Jodi; feel free to “let yourself go” while writing this, the process will likely lead to several good ideas for your personal statements and essays.

Guidelines

- Please include your name and e-mail address that you will use during the application process.
- Please write in chronological order and be specific as possible.
- Please attach a resume.

Please submit the autobiography and resume by email to Leslie Wood (lwood@haverford.edu).

A. Introduction - Your background, family history and important influences

- Discuss anything about your family and background that you think is relevant. Please include each parent’s occupation and highest education level.
- Include where you were raised and discuss if it was an area considered medically underserved.
- Were any languages spoken at home other than English?
- Discuss how your family and community shaped you and how this impacted your motivation for medicine (if applicable).
- Include any “unique”/”unusual” background information or anything else about your family and background that you think is relevant.
- Please indicate if anyone in your family has any connections to medical schools, and include what their relationship is.
- Anything else you want to share about yourself such as hobbies, talents, travel etc.

B. Your academic history, including

- Choice of major(s), minor(s) and why
- If you are a non-science major, please discuss why you would enjoy a science based career, and how your non-science based major will be useful to you as a physician if applicable.
- Honors, grants or scholarships received, if any
- Thesis, if applicable
- Special programs (e.g. study abroad)
- Research opportunities through your academic courses if applicable
- Graduate or professional education and why you pursued it, if applicable
- If you feel that your grades and/or MCAT score does not accurately reflect your potential, please discuss this further.

C. Work and activities during college

The professional school applications have sections for you to enter work experiences, extracurricular activities, community service positions, internships etc. The professional schools are interested in learning about activities you have participated in after graduating from high school. Include the start and end dates and number of hours per week. Take the opportunity to be more descriptive than a

resume yet concise. If applicable, describe how the experience had an impact **on** you, and reflect on how these experiences shaped your decision to go into medicine. For example which ones helped you to gain medically related exposure? Research skills? Develop teamwork and/or leadership skills?

- Campus jobs
- Summer jobs
- Activities outside the classroom – sports, volunteer, clubs, etc.
- Internships
- Research experience
- Other professional or extracurricular experiences

For premedical students please place an <*> next to those experiences that provided medically related and/or research experience and be sure to describe the extent of your patient contact, and/or your accomplishments with your research.

For pre-dental students, please describe your shadowing experiences and list the total number of hours.

D. Activities Post-College and During Your Medical School Application Year

Include the start and end dates and number of hours per week. Take the opportunity to be more descriptive than a resume yet concise; where applicable describe how the experience had an impact on you.

- Full time jobs, if applicable
- Volunteer and service-oriented positions
- Leadership opportunities
- Medically related clinical and/or research experiences
- Please use this section to also include what you will be doing during your medical school application year if it is not included elsewhere. If you are still looking for a job, please indicate that in this section.

E. In your AMCAS (allopathic medical schools) application, you will be asked to identify three of your experiences that you have identified as most meaningful. Please indicated which three you plan to list and why.

F. Explain gaps in time (if more than two consecutive months) when you weren't working or in school.

G. Standardized test preparation

Please specify how you are planning to prepare for the MCAT/DAT/GRE and when you plan to take the test. If you have already taken the MCAT/DAT/GRE, please report your scores, test date and how you prepared.

H. Motivation for your career choice – medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine. Please discuss the following:

- Why you want to be a physician/dentist/veterinarian and the nature and development of this interest. Please provide a brief history of your interest, include your own experience with health care as a consumer or a volunteer in a clinical setting, and what insights it provided for you about your career choice.
- Briefly describe where you might like to be in your professional life in 10 years.
- What distinguished you as an applicant to medical, dental or veterinary school?
- How will you add to the diversity of a medical school class? (this is a tricky but common question asked by medical schools in supplemental essays.)

I. Institutional action

Most professional school applications have questions about institutional action and criminal conduct that you are required to answer. It may be helpful in the autobiography meeting to discuss these situations if you will be answering Yes to any of the questions. Prior to our submission of the committee letter in the summer you will be asked to confirm whether or not you have been the recipient of institutional action from Haverford College.

For example the AMCAS medical school application states:

“You must answer Yes to this question if you were ever the recipient of any Institutional Action resulting from unacceptable academic performance or a conduct violation, even if such action did not interrupt your enrollment or require you to withdraw. You must answer Yes even if the action does not appear on or has been deleted from your official transcripts due to institutional policy or personal petition.

Were you ever the recipient of any institutional action by any college or medical school for unacceptable academic performance or conduct violation?”

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, a Felony crime, excluding 1) any offense for which you were adjudicated as a juvenile, or 2) convictions which have been expunged or sealed by a court (in states where applicable)?

Have you ever been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, a Misdemeanor crime, excluding 1) any offense for which you were adjudicated as a juvenile, 2) any convictions which have been expunged or sealed by a court, or 3) any misdemeanor convictions for which any probation has been completed and the case dismissed by the court (in states where applicable)?

J. Academic, professional and personal “competencies” (there is no written response needed for this section. These are important core competencies that medical schools are looking for; as you work on completing this autobiography and start to prepare for your medical school application process, you may want to think about how your background, values and experiences might convey the following competencies.

In fact, the AAMC Guidelines for writing letters of evaluation for medical school applicants suggests that recommenders describe how the applicant has demonstrated the following “Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students.”

[https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/332572/lettersofevaluationguidelines.](https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/332572/lettersofevaluationguidelines)

Thinking and Reasoning Competencies

- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Scientific Inquiry
- Written Communication

Science Competencies

- Living Systems
- Human Behavior

Interpersonal Competencies

- Service Orientation
- Social Skills
- Cultural Competence
- Teamwork
- Oral Communication

Intrapersonal Competencies

- Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
- Reliability and Dependability

- Resilience and Adaptability
- Capacity for Improvement