



Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising

Autobiography Purpose & Prompt

To help our applicants to begin drafting their Autobiography in advance of opening their Letters Packet, we have included the prompt for the Autobiography here:

“The purpose of the Autobiography is to allow you the opportunity to share with the admissions committees more about yourself, your upbringing, and your life thus far. We know that there are often aspects of who you are that you are not able to convey well in the application. The Autobiography will give you the chance to expand upon and provide the admissions committees a more in-depth description and understanding of who you are. You should really reflect upon yourself and write about your experiences and perspectives in your life. The more the health professional schools can learn about you, your character, and your life, the safer they often feel offering you one of the coveted seats in their entering class.

For example, you can write your Autobiography as a chronological description of the biggest events and reflections on your life. Start with where you were born, where you grew up, your family, parents’ backgrounds, and their jobs or professions. Include pertinent information about your upbringing, your schooling, and the biggest or most impactful events in your life (positive or negative). Be sure to include your reflections on your experiences along the way and how they helped to shape you into the person you are today.”

Autobiography Length Limit

Inclusion of the Autobiography is an **OPTIONAL** component of the Letters Packet. If you choose to include it, it will be submitted along with your Letters Packet exactly as you enter it, so it must be error-free with no typos. You will have a limit of **11,000 characters with spaces (approx. 3 pages)** for your Autobiography. You may enter it (or paste it) into the text box on the Autobiography page of the Letters Packet Application, and any characters over 11,000 will not be included, even if it is in the middle of a sentence.

Former Students’ Comments about the Autobiography

“I think doing the autobiography in my Letters Packet was an excellent decision and highly recommend other students to do it even though it is more work. Two out of three of my interviews asked me about things I mentioned in my autobiography and it helped them get to know me better.”

- J. Rodriguez, 2016

“During my first medical school interview, the first question asked of me during my actual interview was about information that I included in my Autobiography and nowhere else in my application – The interviewer asked

about my father's profession (he is a professional guitar player in a band in Puerto Rico). Because of my interviewer's interest in music, it was a great way to connect with him on a personal level! Without writing and including the Autobiography, I would not have been able to share this meaningful information about my upbringing."

- E. Blanco, 2018

"One of my interviewers brought up my autobiography, and she said it was a very unique piece that is not commonly seen in applications and that allowed her to know me better. In fact, during the interview she asked a couple of questions about it. She also mentioned that it was well put together and that the presentation was really nice, and for that I have to thank you."

- A. Guevara, 2018

Differences between an Autobiography and a Personal Statement

It is imperative to note that the Autobiography is NOT simply an expansion of your personal statement.

Therefore, you should avoid overlapping the exact same information in the exact same way in both the personal statement and autobiography; you want two, separate, individual works. In general, the following guidelines will help to differentiate the purpose of the two and will give a basic idea of what to include (you are not restricted to the information and topics):

Autobiography:

- Prompt: You can read the prompt above, but basically, the Autobiography asks you to "Tell the story of your life." ***This document has a very broad scope.***
- What to consider:
 - Create a timeline. (What stands out to you during each of these time periods?)
 - When/where were you born? And to whom?
 - Early childhood events
 - Middle childhood
 - College years
- Your life story: hobbies, childhood, school, influences/inspirations
- Demonstrate, with events, the person you have become.
- Focus on experiences up until entering college, though you can include some college experiences as well.
- If you choose to include information in your Autobiography that is also in your application or personal statement, be sure it is presented differently in your Autobiography. In other words, do not copy and paste, or repeat the same experiences in the same exact way, in each.
- Often times, applicants use the Autobiography to elaborate in more depth on their journey from birth to now.

Personal Statement (General):

- Prompt: In general, why do you want to become a doctor (for AMCAS and AACOMAS), dentist (for AADSAS), or podiatrist (for AACPMAS)? ***This document has a narrow scope.***
- Which of your experiences (academic, extracurricular, or life experiences) will best demonstrate that you are well prepared to become a doctor/dentist/podiatrist?
- Choose your 2-3 most significant reasons/experiences and elaborate
- Choose characteristics/experiences that will highlight that you are a good candidate

- Make the reader **feel your passion** through your characteristics, qualities, and your drive for continuous learning
- Read through the documents about writing a personal statement on the [PHPL Advising Personal Statements](#) webpage
- Do **NOT**:
 - Simply list your experiences as you would on a resume
 - Try to include everything you have done; be thoughtful with what you choose to write about