



Secondary Application Workshop

How to effectively submit secondary applications to medical school

Agenda

- Secondary Applications Explained
- Secondary Application Components
- Submitting Secondary Applications
- Additional Support
- Questions





Secondary Applications Explained

What is a Secondary Application?

- Processes following the primary application that are **school specific**. They include:
 - Fees
 - Letters of Evaluation
 - Essay Questions
 - Situational Judgement Tests
- How are they used?
 - To learn more about the applicant.
 - To assess how the applicant aligns with the institution.
 - To assess core competencies.
 - To determine who to invite for an interview.



Where are the Secondaries?

- Secondaries may be sent directly to your email on file with the application service, following submission of your primary application.
 - Check your spam/junk folders!
- Secondaries may be embedded within your primary application under "Program Materials" (LiaisonCAS).
 - For information on completing Program Materials, please review the [LiaisonCAS Application Workshop](#)



When do you Receive Secondaries?

- Secondaries are sent individually by specific programs, often scattered through the months of July and August.
 - For the 2026 application cycle, **AMCAS will begin transmitting verified applications to schools on June 27.** This means that medical schools will not receive your application until that date, and **secondary applications will follow accordingly.**
- Secondaries are not always automatically sent to all candidates. Each school has their own process, and timeline, and may choose not to send a secondary application to an applicant.



Secondary Application Components

Fees

- If there is a secondary application fee, it can vary (\$30 - \$250) by each school, but they are usually around \$100.
- Most programs will voluntarily waive secondary application fees for students who have fee assistance through the Centralized Application Service.

Letters of Evaluation

- Whether you are applying with individual letters of evaluation or a letter packet, these materials are considered part of your **secondary application—even though they are uploaded and attached to your primary application.**
- **Letters of evaluation are not required** for your application to be *verified* by the centralized application service(s).
- Your letters will **not be reviewed until after you submit your secondary applications!**

Essays

- Many schools include 3–4 short essay questions in their secondary application process—and some may include even more!
- To get ahead, after you've submitted your primary application, some candidates choose to pre-write their secondaries.
- **Pre-writing** allows you to draft school-specific or common prompts prior to receiving your secondary applications.
- Look up historic secondary application essays by visiting the Medical School Headquarters [Secondary Application Essay Library](#)

Common Prompts

- Why are you interested in our program?/What makes you a good fit for our program?
- Describe an obstacle you have faced,
- Please explain any inconsistencies in your academic performance and/or entrance exam scores.
- Describe your greatest achievements or experiences that you wish to highlight.
- Share an experience where you demonstrated empathy towards another person.
- How have your experiences shaped your perspective of healthcare?
- What do you believe is your responsibility to your community as a healthcare professional?
- Provide a specific example of how you promoted diversity and/or inclusion in your community or school.
- Please use the following space to tell us anything additional that you believe is relevant to your application.

Note: Revisit & revise your responses to the Secondary Application questions in your Mock Application!

Strategic Approach

- Tailor your responses to each school's prompts—avoid generic answers by making them **specific to the program's mission, values, and offerings**.
- Reflect on how your personal values, goals, and experiences directly align with what the program prioritizes.
- Vary the content across a school's different prompts to demonstrate the breadth of your interests and qualifications.
- Introduce new anecdotes or experiences that were not included in your primary application to keep your narrative fresh and multidimensional.
- Use competency-based language to clearly articulate the skills, qualities, and insights gained from your experiences.

Committee Letter Question

- Some programs may ask why you did not receive a Committee Letter. This question is *not* meant to suggest that a Committee Letter is preferred; rather, it is intended to better understand how you chose to engage with the advising resources available at your undergraduate/post-baccalaureate institution.
- How to answer (adapt as needed):
 - If you are applying with a Letter Packet:
 - The Northeastern University PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program only offers a Letter Packet service and does not offer an additional Committee Letter service.
 - If you are applying with Individual Letters:
 - The Northeastern University PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program does not offer a Committee Letter service. I additionally chose not to participate in my institution's Letter Packet process because I wanted greater flexibility and customization in the types of letters I submitted—an approach that differed from the standardized format required by my school's letter packet.

Unique Coursework: Gen Chem

- Some secondary applications may require you demonstrate how you've met a program's course requirements.
- General Chemistry (CHEM 1161 or CHEM 1151) at NU encompasses learning objectives from both General Chemistry 1 and 2 and is widely accepted by health professional program as meeting their requirements!
- The Letter Packet includes information about the nature of this course, linking to the following webpage: [Northeastern University Coursework](#)
- If your secondary application asks about prerequisites, academics, or has an open text question, you may wish to provide further clarification on this course, using language from the page linked above.
- Please refer any inquiries from an admissions office seeking additional information about your coursework to your PreHealth Advisor!

Situational Judgment Tests for Medical School: Casper & AAMC PREview

What Are They?

- **Casper:** An online test presenting realistic scenarios. You must explain how you'd respond to each.
- **AAMC PREview:** A multiple-choice test that asks you to rate the effectiveness of various responses to professional and ethical dilemmas in medical education and healthcare.

Why Do Schools Use Them? Both tests assess **core professional competencies** important for future physicians, such as ethics, empathy, communication, teamwork, cultural competence. They complement academic metrics for a more **holistic review** of applicants.

Do I need to take them? ONLY if the schools you are applying to REQUIRE them!

- Schools requiring PREview
- Schools requiring Casper

How Do I Prepare? There are no right or wrong answers but familiarize yourself with the format at takecasper.com and aamc.org/preview to understand how responses are evaluated.

When Should I Take Them?: June-August (aligned with the submission timing of the rest of your secondary application); however, pay attention to program-specific deadlines!

Scoring:

- **Casper:** Scores are automatically sent to designated schools.
- **PREview:** Scores are released about 30 days after your test date and sent to selected schools.

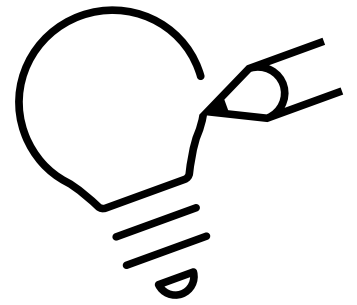


Submitting Secondary Applications

Stay Organized!

- Use your personal or the PreMed & PreHealth School List Builder Template to organize your schools and secondary applications
- Consider adding columns for:
 - Pre-written essays
 - Date received
 - Date submitted
 - Additional requirements (Situational Judgement Tests, fees, etc.)

Fine-Tune!



Review

- Carefully read the prompt to ensure you fully understand what is being asked.
- Reflect on why the school has chosen to ask this question—consider their mission, values, and institutional priorities.

Draft

- Address the prompt thoroughly within the specified character limit.
- Adapt any pre-written content to fit the specific question—**even minor differences in phrasing may require meaningful edits.**

Edit

- Confirm that you used a **Strategic Approach** (see Slide 12).
- **Proofread carefully** for clarity, tone, grammar, and alignment with the school's values.

Submit!

- Set Personal Deadlines

- Aim to have **ALL** secondaries submitted within two to three weeks of receipt, regardless of due date. Without a completed secondary, you're unlikely to get an interview invitation. Track this on your spreadsheet!

- Establish Priority

- Submit your secondaries based on the priority you give each of your prospective schools and/or the anticipated time it will take you to complete (e.g., if a school has few or no questions).

- Keep a Checklist

- Remember to complete all necessary elements of the school's secondary application process (e.g., fees, tests, etc.)

Additional Support

The **Northeastern University Writing Center** team is trained to assist both current students and alumni with drafting secondary applications.

Guidelines:

- Please wait until you have received a secondary application before booking a **Writing Center appointment**. However, you are encouraged to start pre-writing on your own sooner!
- These appointments are intended to help you refine your content and strategy for **one program's** secondary application. Please do not plan to book an appointment to review every school's secondary application. While responses should be tailored for each program, your overall strategy will be broadly applicable. Once you have a solid approach, you'll be equipped to apply it to other essays on your own!

To schedule an appointment, visit: <https://neu.mywconline.com/>

Questions

