

Secondary Application Workshop

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 decide 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 July and August.
 - Please note that for AMCAS applicants, verified applications will not be transmitted to medical schools until June 26, 2026, for the 2027 application cycle. After that date, applications are released to schools on a rolling basis as they are verified by AMCAS.
- 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 as part of their secondary application process, though requirements vary widely. Some schools may require substantially more essays, while others may not have secondary essays at all.
- 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](#)

Examples of 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 showed 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.

Strategic Approach

- Tailor your responses to each individual program—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.

Example: Tufts University

Prompt: Tufts values include a commitment to social responsibility; to serve and advocate for all people, especially underserved and vulnerable patients and populations, by addressing social determinants of health, health equity, social justice, and stewardship of social resources. Have you done substantial work or volunteer service in such communities? (1000 characters)

STRONG EXAMPLE

At Rosie's Place, a sanctuary and resource center serving women experiencing homelessness and poverty, I initially viewed my volunteer role as an opportunity to provide direct support through meal service and guest assistance. Over time, however, I came to understand that many of the challenges guests faced extended far beyond immediate needs.

Through conversations with women accessing Rosie's Place services, I learned how housing instability, food insecurity, trauma, limited transportation, and difficulty navigating social support systems can profoundly influence health and well-being. Many guests were balancing chronic medical conditions while simultaneously worrying about where they would sleep, how they would access nutritious food, or whether they could afford basic necessities. These experiences highlighted how social determinants of health often shape health outcomes long before a patient enters a clinic.

Working alongside staff dedicated to empowering guests rather than simply providing temporary assistance reinforced the importance of dignity, advocacy, and community-centered support. The experience strengthened my cultural humility, communication skills, and ability to engage with individuals whose life experiences differ from my own.

My time at Rosie's Place deepened my commitment to health equity and social responsibility. At Tufts, I would be excited to continue this work through initiatives such as the Sharewood Project, where students partner with medically underserved communities through health education, screenings, case management, and connections to social services. The program's emphasis on addressing barriers to health both inside and outside the clinical setting reflects the lessons I learned at Rosie's Place and aligns with the physician I hope to become.

WEAK EXAMPLE

Throughout college, I volunteered at Rosie's Place, a shelter and support center for women experiencing homelessness. I assisted with meal service, organized donations, helped distribute supplies to guests, and supported various community events. Through this experience, I met many women from different backgrounds and learned about some of the challenges they face in their daily lives. I enjoyed interacting with guests, listening to their stories, and being able to contribute to an organization that provides important services to the community.

Working at Rosie's Place allowed me to see firsthand the value of supporting individuals during difficult times. It also gave me the opportunity to work with other volunteers who shared a commitment to helping those in need. These experiences taught me the importance of kindness, compassion, teamwork, and service to others.

My time at Rosie's Place reinforced my desire to pursue a career in medicine and serve diverse patient populations. As a future physician, I hope to continue volunteering and helping underserved communities. I believe that healthcare professionals have an important responsibility to support those in need, and this experience strengthened my commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others through service and compassionate care.

An even stronger response would incorporate a specific anecdote that shows these lessons in action rather than simply explaining them.

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.

How to Match Coursework

Some secondary applications require you to indicate which courses on your transcript fulfill specific prerequisite courses.

Schools vary in their academic requirements. Check your individual schools' requirements.

Note, course titles often differ between institutions, so use your best judgment to match your completed coursework to the prerequisite categories based on content rather than exact course names.

The Admissions Committee makes all final decisions on whether courses fulfill their requirements.

Use our [Matching Courses to Prerequisites Template](#) to create a list for yourself of the specific courses you plan to use to meet different prerequisites.

Review our recommendations for [Academic Preparation](#) including guidance on AP credits on that page, as well as the [Academics FAQ](#).

How do I match my chemistry coursework to my health graduate school application?

Instructions: Secondary applications often require you to indicate which courses on your transcript fulfill specific prerequisites. Chemistry prerequisites can vary by profession and by school.

When a school requires two semesters of inorganic or general chemistry and you've only completed Northeastern's integrated one-semester General Chemistry course (CHEM 1161 or 1151), there are several ways to match your coursework.

- **First**, Check the school's prerequisites webpage for information on requesting a waiver or whether an integrated/single-semester general chemistry course is acceptable.
- **Then**, use this flowchart to see our recommended approach for entering your courses to satisfy the prerequisites on your secondary application.



PLEASE
NOTE!

The school's Admissions Committee makes all final decisions on whether these substitutions are acceptable. If they do not accept a substitution, plan to take the appropriate course by the school's deadline.

WHENEVER POSSIBLE, USE THE PROVIDED OPEN TEXT BOX TO JUSTIFY YOUR PREREQUISITE MATCH!

Sample Text: "Northeastern's chemistry sequence begins with the 5-credit integrated chemistry course (Chem 1161 or 1151), including a 1-credit lab, covering General Chemistry 1 and 2 learning objectives. Students then complete Organic Chemistry 1 and 2 and Biochemistry, all with labs, totaling 20 semester hours of chemistry. More information from the University's PreMed/PreHealth Advising Office regarding this coursework can be found [here](#)."

- **Finally**, if a school contacts you about their general chemistry requirement, briefly explain Northeastern's course offerings, note your willingness to take additional coursework if needed, and consider whether to continue your application. **An email template is available on our [Applicant FAQ webpage](#) under "Communication with Admissions."**

Institutional Action Documentation

If you disclosed an institutional action on your application, some schools may request additional documentation from the institution where the incident occurred.

This is a routine part of their process and **should not be a cause for concern**—it will **not prevent you from being accepted**.

- For **conduct violations**, direct documentation requests to OSCCR: [*Authorization for Release of Information Form*](#)
- For **academic infractions**, direct documentation requests to PMPH@northeastern.edu.

Situational Judgment Tests: Casper & 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. Casper scores are valid for one application cycle.
- **PREview:** Scores are released about 30 days after your test date and sent to selected schools. PREview scores do not expire.

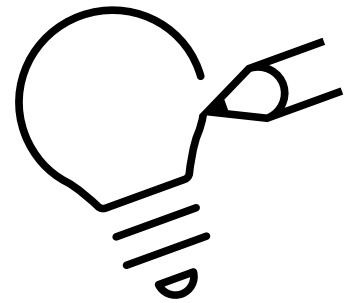


Submitting Secondary Applications

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 secondary received
 - Date secondary 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, **regardless of due date**. Without a completed secondary, you are 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. Within each priority tier (top, middle, last), you can prioritize by anticipated time it will take you to complete (e.g., if a school has few or no questions), but make sure you do your top priority schools first!

- 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

