

Guidelines for Writing Your Autobiography

The 5-6 page autobiography is an opportunity for you to share with the LMU Health Professions Committee who you are. This is your chance to show that you are motivated, articulate, knowledgeable, mature, and an excellent applicant for medical or dental school. Additionally, you can detail your accomplishments, academic achievements, personal and professional goals, and extracurricular activities. Before starting, it is recommended that you draft an outline detailing the aspects you want to explore. Be honest!

Here are some suggestions for your autobiography:

I. Who You Are

- i. Background, family, community
 - i) General family background
 - ii) Communities you identify with
 - iii) Significant events in your life
 - (1) Choices you made, lessons learned
 - iv) Mentors
- ii. Personal Interests (hobbies, talents, abilities)

II. Academics

- i. What is your educational background? (Elementary, middle, and high school, colleges you attended)
- ii. What was your undergraduate major? How did you decide on this major?
- iii. Do you feel your grades or MCAT score accurately reflect your ability? If not, explain W's, C's, lower grades, or repeats. Did anything hinder your academic career?
- iv. Have there been any breaks in your education? If so, please explain.
- v. Have you participated in research? Elaborate.
- vi. Have you been a teaching assistant? Elaborate.

III. Leadership/Extracurricular Activities and Personal Competencies

- i. What significant extracurricular activities have you participated in while in college and beyond (not high school). Emphasize any leadership roles and/or contributions you have made.
 - i) Summer programs
 - ii) Volunteer/service experience
 - iii) Clinical work
 - iv) Clubs/organizations
 - v) Activities requiring eye-hand coordination (dental applicants)
 - vi) Work experience. Be sure to include if this helped finance your education or contributed to your family's household income.
- ii. Consider the following personal competencies: integrity, compassion, ability to work in a team, service orientation, emotional intelligence, cultural competence, leadership, reliability,

resilience, ethical responsibility and capacity for improvement. Use specific examples from your experiences to describe how you have grown and developed in these competency areas.

IV. Motivation/passion for medicine or dentistry

- i. What factors influenced your decision to pursue this field?
- ii. Why do you believe this career is for you? Describe experiences that have reaffirmed your decision.
- iii. Many people choose medicine or dentistry because they want to help others. What does that mean to you? Be specific.
- iv. If you are applying to MD/PhD, please explain your reason for applying to this program.
- v. Have you worked with medically underserved communities? Describe your experience.
- vi. Alternative career plans: What will you do if you are not able to pursue your chosen career?

V. Challenges (may not apply to everyone)

- i. In your application to medical and dental school, you will be asked if you would like to be considered as a disadvantaged applicant. Did you experience any challenges during your formative years? This includes educational, economic, social, physical and geographical challenges. (Examples: financially supporting your family, on government assistance, medical challenges that compromised your education, being a first generation college student, attending many schools, attending schools with few resources, etc.)
- ii. Have you ever been convicted of a crime or did you receive a disciplinary action in college? Please explain the incident(s) and what you learned.

VI. Re-Applicants Only:

- i. What do you believe were the strengths and weaknesses of your application?
- ii. Why do you think you were not accepted?
- iii. How many secondaries and interviews did you receive? Were you wait-listed?
- iv. What has changed since your application was last submitted? Did you enroll in more courses? Retake the MCAT? Gain more experience?