

Tufts Blog Advice about the 2020 Disruption Question
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I would like to start the blog with a moment for everyone to take a deep breath.

Pause. Deep breath.

Did you do it?

Really, we mean it. Please take a deep breath.

We know the application cycle and school year look very different compared to past years (we, too, are living in this pandemic and altering everything WE do!), and we'd like to make things clear and easy to process. So let's talk about the extra question on the application, the one to write about the impact to you of community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters.

In addition to the many lives lost due to COVID-19, lost jobs and financial stress, and social isolation, we know your high school experiences have been greatly impacted. We know baseball season got cut short in March, your theater performance was canceled, classes moved to remote learning (and attention spans dwindled on Zoom), grading scales and policies changed, college trips and visits were postponed...and then canceled, part-time jobs and other extracurriculars were shut down, and on and on and on.

In the extra question this year, there is no need to share disruptions in your life that have also impacted your greater community. Our admissions team will learn about grading policy changes from counselors, we know extracurriculars have been reimagined, and we also can empathize with the decreased attention span on Zoom.

So what could/should you write in the extra question, IF ANYTHING? This is a space to provide additional context to your application if you've endured specific and personal challenges. Examples of this might include limited internet access, a crowded home where you can't find a quiet place to study, loss of a family member's job, COVID-19 related health issues, loss of property due to a natural disaster, a particularly disruptive schooling experience this fall, etc.

We want to re-emphasize that there is no pressure to add any information to your application via this new question—we are confident that our application, even without the question, can give you plenty of space to share your interests, lived experiences, and background stories. If you choose to share any information in this space, though, please share in a concise way the individual and specific challenges you've experienced. This is not meant to be another personal essay or reflection—it may be just 1-2 sentences of additional information.

Don't overthink it—if there are extenuating circumstances outside of the “normal” we're all living in, feel free to share. If not, trust that we'll read every application with care, compassion, empathy, and understanding. We will read with the human perspective, knowing the COVID-19 has presented a vast array of challenges, and that we're all doing the best we can.