

REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (LORS): THE BEGINNING PROCESS



Ask for your LOR towards the end of the rotation but **DO NOT** wait until the last minute to obtain a letter of recommendation. If there is a mistake on the LOR and the letter writer has to reissue a new one, which is fairly common, this could take some time.

Collect the writers' full name, title and contact information. You will need this for your residency application.



LORs **must be** on official letterhead, dated, contain the salutation: *Dear Program Director*, and must contain an original signature, as **required by the ECFMG and CARMs**.

- ⇒ All LORs must be uploaded to your ECFMG/ERAS residency application by the letter writer or their designee.
- ⇒ You do **NOT** need an AAMC # or a CARMs # written on your LOR. With direct, electronic uploading to the Residency Match sites, LORs no longer need to be identified by a number.
- ⇒ Ask the letter writer to state in the body of the letter that you have “waived your rights to view the letter” if you choose to do so. Waived LORs are preferred by Residency Program Directors as they are regarded as more open and trustworthy and may inspire more confidence in your letter of recommendation.
- ⇒ It is acceptable to ask a preceptor for more than one recommendation; a general LOR and an LOR that is specialty-specific. You may choose the appropriate LORs to coordinate with each program you apply for during the Residency Match application process.



There is **not** a specific deadline for submitting LORs. However, you must have the minimum, **mandatory three (3)**, LORs uploaded before the September 15th opening of the US residency application period.

- ⇒ You may request as many LORs to be uploaded as you wish. Then you will attach the appropriate ones to each residency program you apply to. ECFMG/ERAS will allow a maximum of 4 LORs to be attached to each program application, while CARMs allows 3 LORs with each application.
- ⇒ After receiving your LOR, sending a thank-you note is always a great idea! Keep your networking skills strong and be cordial to your contacts.

The *Residency Letter of Recommendation Request Form* has been attached here for your convenience.

MUA Form – Request for Clinical Letter of Recommendation



Applicant Name: _____
Last First

Letter Writer: _____
Last First Title

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation in support of my residency application.

This cover sheet explains the special procedures needed to prepare a letter of recommendation for **ERAS** (the Electronic Residency Application Service) and/or **CaRMS** (the Canadian Resident Matching Service).

Instructions for letter writer: Please prepare and save the original letter of recommendation to your files for transmission to ERAS and CaRMS (please know that both entities accept only electronic submission using the Letter Writer Portal and the Letter of Reference Portal respectively).

1. Please write the letter on **your official institutional letterhead** and **sign it manually**.
2. Please **date** the letter.
3. Address the letter to **“Dear Program Director”**, letters with individual salutations will not be processed by ERAS or CaRMS.
4. Please **do not include a specific recipient’s name or address on the letter itself**, so that the letter can be used for both ERAS and CaRMS.
5. **Please include in your letter whether or not I have waived my right to see this recommendation letter, as indicated below.**
6. Please save the original letter to your files. I will provide you with the ERAS and/or CaRMS submission forms once they become available.

Consider including the following in my letter:

1. Was I reliable, punctual, and well-prepared?
2. Did I demonstrate commitment and actively participate in all activities?
3. Did I get along well with patients and staff, and build good rapport?
4. Did I evaluate (H&P) and document my patient interactions well?
5. How do I compare to previous medical students you have worked with?
6. Was there a memorable moment where I made a positive impression on you or your staff?

Student: I waive my right to see this letter I do not waive my right to see this letter.

Applicant Signature: _____

*The applicant must provide the letter writer with an ERAS and/or CaRMS letter of recommendation cover sheet upon registration with ERAS and/or CaRMS.



Letter of Recommendation FAQ's

Q: What information do I need to provide to letter writers?

For ECFMG/ERAS instructions on asking for a Letter of Recommendation (LoR):

<http://www.ecfmg.org/echo/asking-for-lor.html>

A: We recommend asking your letter writers in person, if possible, or sending a professional email request. Bring or email the following with your request:

- MUA Request for Clinical Letter or Recommendation from the MUA website, (www.muacampus.org >Clinical Match>Request for Clinical Letter of Recommendation),
- Copy of your full, updated CV,
- A photo of yourself attached to your CV or request form,
- A copy of your clerkship evaluation if available.

Q: Where should my LOR be sent?

A: The preceptor should save the LOR in their electronic records. After you register with ERAS and/or CaRMS, you will provide the letter writer with an ERAS Letter of Recommendation request form and/or a CaRMS Letter of Reference request form that will instruct them on how to electronically submit it. The letter writer will then upload the LOR to the appropriate entity.

You should supply the following to the letter writer **AFTER** you register with ERAS/CaRMS:

- Your AAMC number (8 digits) and/or CaRMS ID (10-digits).
 - For ERAS review: <http://www.ecfmg.org/eras/letter-writers-index.html>
 - AAMC guidelines for Letters of Recommendation: https://www.aamc.org/services/eras/282520/lor_portal.html
 - For CaRMS review: <http://www.carms.ca/en/match-process/your-application/documents/letters-reference/>

Waived letters should not be sent to the student/applicant under any circumstances.

Q: When should all LORs be electronically uploaded by the letter writer?

A: To have your letters on file with ERAS prior to the release of applications to program directors, LORS need to be uploaded no later than September 1st. However, LORs can be submitted and uploaded to ERAS after September 1st and all the way through mid-February if necessary.

Q: What should I do if my letter has not been received, I cannot get in touch with my letter writer, and it is well after the 4-6 week period?

A: If it has been 6 weeks since a student requested a letter, it is appropriate for the student to send a courteous reminder to their faculty letter writers. If after repeated requests for a letter that still has not been received, the student should consider asking another person for an LOR.

Q: How do I decide which letter to assign to a certain program?

A: You will be able to request an unlimited number of LORs be submitted to your MyERAS or CaRMS application account; however, you will only be able to send 4 LORs to each program in ERAS and 3 LORs to CaRMS. You must choose among your LORs which to send. MUA suggests you consider the strength of your performance on the rotation, your relationship with the letter writer, the position/title of the writer, and the specialty of the letter writer. Listen to and trust your instincts.