



Faculty Guide for Letters of Reference

Congrats – a student has asked you for a Letter of Reference (LOR), OR you have recognized an exceptional student for whom you would like to offer to write a letter.

- You always have the right to accept or decline a request for a letter.
- Be honest with the student and please do not provide a poor LOR.

Questions to Ask the Student:

- What is the purpose of the LOR?
 - Residency application process, scholarship, or something else?
- What are your career goals? Are there any personal attributes to highlight?
 - Student should provide their CV and Personal Statement(s)
 - Feel free to give student feedback
 - Student should give you 6-8 weeks' notice to complete the LOR
 - Let the student know when you complete and submit their letter

Notes for Residency/ERAS LOR:

- ERAS - AAMC system will automatically send you the ERAS LOR Request form via email with the necessary ERAS Letter ID number on it
 - See [ERAS LOR Instructions for Providers](#) for further info if desired
 - It is recommended that students “Waive” their right to review their ERAS LOR.
 - Giving a student a copy of this letter is a match violation.
 - Most ERAS letters should be completed by the first week of September
 - ERAS LOR Request form example pages 4-5.

Preparing the LOR

- **LOR Format and Contents:**
 - Paragraph 1: Introduce your letter and waiver status
 - Paragraph 2: Introduce your qualifications, background, and level of ability to evaluate the student
 - Paragraph 3: Discuss student’s positive attributes and your connection to the student.
 - Paragraph 4: Letter conclusion and offer to further discuss student along with contact information.
 - See examples on pages 6 and 7.



Submitting the LOR

- WMed has staff who will upload your letters to ERAS, VSLO, etc
- Forward the WMed 'Letter of Reference Request' form, the 'ERAS LOR Request' form (if applicable), and the LOR itself to the Registrar at registrar@med.wmich.edu.
- Please note requirements for ERAS letters:
 - File must be in a PDF format.
 - No electronic signatures – must be signed in ink.
 - Must be on letterhead.
 - File size must not exceed 500KB.
 - Files cannot be password protected.
 - Page dimensions cannot exceed 8.5x11 inches.
 - Name of the file cannot contain spaces or special characters (hyphens, periods, etc.)
- Pro Tip: Scan your wet signed letter on the printer and email it to yourself. This converts it to a PDF that you can forward to the Registrar.

If you must mail a paper letter, please send to:

Office of Student Affairs; ATTN: Registrar
1000 Oakland Drive
Kalamazoo MI 49008

Questions?

If you have any questions about writing letters or the process, please contact:

Registrar: Donna Miroslaw 269.337.6111 or 269.337.6112 registrar@med.wmich.edu	Assistant Dean for Career Advising: Kevin Kavanaugh, MD 269.337.6350 Kevin.Kavanaugh@med.wmich.edu
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Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to help our WMed students pursue their interests in medicine!



Request for Letter of Reference

Student Name: _____ WMed Student ID: _____

Date Request Submitted: _____

For ERAS Letters of Reference:

Student: Complete the bottom of this form (waiver and signature), AND then complete the AAMC ERAS Letter of Recommendation (LoR) Request on the [Letter of Recommendation Portal](#) found in your AAMC student ERAS account. Send both forms to the faculty member.

Faculty: please return the following three items: 1.) This form, 2.) The ERAS Letter of Recommendation Request, and 3.) Your letter of reference on letterhead, signed, and in PDF format, to registrar@med.wmich.edu. Please call the registrar's office if you have questions 269-337-6112.

The Registrar's office will upload the LoR to the student's ERAS account. Faculty do not need to upload letters themselves.

For Non-ERAS Letters of Reference:

Student: Complete this form, including waiver and signature at bottom, and send to the faculty member.

I am requesting a letter of reference for the purpose of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Society Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> VSLO (Away Elective Application) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military Match | <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco Match |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Application | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): _____ |

Date Letter Needed: _____

Specific areas to address in letter: _____

Faculty :Return this form and your letter of reference to registrar@med.wmich.edu.

Registrar should send letter to (if other than ERAS and VSLO):

Name of Person / Institution: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

I do waive my right to review this letter.

I do not waive my right to review this letter.

Student Signature: _____

For Office Use Only

Request Received Date: _____ Filed by who: _____

Letter Received Date: _____ Processed by who: _____

ERAS Letter of Recommendation (LoR) Request

ERAS Application Season: 2019

ERAS Letter ID: 55F5A5DV (this # is automatically assigned by ERAS when student assigns request to author)

I am requesting that you submit my Letter of Recommendation (LoR) to the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), which transmits my LoR(s) to the residency programs to which I am applying.

; ERAS Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP)

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP) is a centralized service that allows LoR Authors to upload LoRs for applicants applying to ERAS residency programs.

ERAS has established a set of guidelines that should be reviewed prior to writing and uploading LoRs using the LoRP.

For more information about the LoRP guidelines, additional resources, and to access the LoRP login, please visit https://www.aamc.org/services/eras/282520/lor_portal.html.

- Review the information below. If any information is inaccurate, contact the applicant directly so they can make corrections.
- Login to the ERAS LoRP to upload this letter using the unique ERAS Letter ID above.

; Applicant Details

Name	Student Last, First (example)
AAMC ID	12345678 (example)
Preferred Phone Number	269-337-4400 (example)
Preferred Email	first.last@med.wmich.edu (example)

; LoR Details

LoR Author Name	Dr. Mark Loehrke (example)
LoR Author Title/Department	Chair, Department of Medicine (example)
Specialty to which this letter will be assigned	Obstetrics and Gynecology (example)
Additional LoR Information	This applicant has indicated that you are a Department Chair where they completed their clerkship training. Group departmental letters must be signed by the team composing the letter.

Waive rights to view this letter

This applicant has indicated that they WAIVE their right to view this letter now and in the future under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The applicant has acknowledged that this letter is for the specific purpose of supporting my application for residency.
(Author please note if student waived right to letter do not give letter to student for review nor submission to ERAS)

Note: Please do not submit LoR(s) by mail. Documents submitted by mail cannot be processed to the ERAS application. For assistance with the Letter of Recommendation Portal (LoRP), contact the ERAS Support Team at eraslorportal@aamc.org or (202) 862-6298.

LOR Template Example:

(Date)

RE: Medical Student (Name First Last)

AAMCID: (12345678)

ERASLetter ID - only if letter is intended for ERAS (87W54A21)

Dear Program Director:

First Paragraph: Introduce your letter and waiver status: I am writing a letter of (strong/very strong/or use neither for average student) reference on behalf of medical student (Name First Last) as (he/she) pursues a residency in your (specialty) program. It is my understanding that (Name First Last) has (waived/not waived) (his/her) right to view (his/her) letters, and is complying with such policy.

Second Paragraph: Explain your background and most notably your interactions and depth/breadth of experience with medical students. Include specific duties, job titles, and duration of such, noting especially your interactions with medical students and residents. Comment on your level of ability to evaluate a student and his/her qualifications.

Third Paragraph: This is the more personal paragraph which will vary the most between each letter. Try to make it sincere, perhaps include one or two short specific examples which exemplify a good character or quality in your student, and demonstrate you have unique insight into this student. Give it some warmth and humor if possible. Academic achievement and capacity should be commented on but specific details of all their grades is not required. Professional behavior should be addressed. Research achievements or interests, outside employment or job skills can be included, especially as they relate to the chosen specialty. (ERscribe at UCLA for one year prior to med school, etc etc) Any unique characteristics about the student should also be included (Eagle scout, organizer of student run health clinic, captain of med student soccer league, etc, etc.).

Fourth paragraph: Demonstrate your willingness to discuss the student and his/her application further. Be sure your contact information is on the letter (letterhead ideally or specifically provide it). Try to sell your student as a good interview candidate to the program. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have questions or concerns about (Name First Last's) application and qualifications. I certainly (strongly/leave out if not felt to be such a strong applicant) encourage you to interview (Name First only) and see for yourself the qualities which I believe would make (him/her) a (good/solid/excellent/outstanding) resident in your program.

Sincerely,

(Author Name First Last), (MD/DO) (Electronic signatures are not acceptable for ERASletters)

Titles

Contact information if not provided in letterhead (letterhead preferred when possible/available)

September 7, 2018

RE: Alice Average
AAMC ID: 12345678

Dear Program Director:

I am pleased to write a letter of reference on behalf of medical student, Alice Average. It is my understanding that Alice has waived her ability to review her letters of reference and is complying with such.

My interactions with my medical students is and has been fairly integrated and involved: For the past 25 years, I have served as full time faculty in the department of Internal Medicine. In that capacity, for Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, I served as a third year clerkship director and fourth year clerkship director for the Internal Medicine clerkships, and Community Assistant Dean with the latter's specific duties of career counseling as well as drafting MSPE (Dean's letters) evaluations on the students' behalf. I have since transitioned to the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. There I have served as a scholar-advisor, teaching clinical skills and physical exam skills. I currently serve as their Assistant Dean for Career Development. Clinically, I also staff patients with medical students on both the inpatient and outpatient teaching services. Thus, I have the good fortune of working directly with my students not only administratively, but also in direct clinical observation as well as in didactic classroom sessions. I believe these multiple levels of interactions with students give me very good insights into their strengths, their abilities, and character as I compose a letter of reference on their behalf.

Alice has had a very good record while a medical student here at Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. She has very consistently demonstrated a keen attention to detail in her history and physicals throughout all of her evaluations. Based on my interactions with her, Alice is a critical thinker who has the ability to think and process information quickly. To that effect, comments from her Family Medicine clerkship director included that "Alice is an excellent student who performed at an honors level in many aspects of the Family Medicine clerkship." In addition, "She demonstrated skills I place among those of my better students with whom I have worked." My work with Alice showed her to be a student who is always on time and with a smile on her face. She was smart and intelligent and able to use her knowledge appropriately without showing off. She was willing to work hard and beyond the resident's expectations in many instances on the Academic Medicine team. She learned quickly, and received several compliments by many on her well-written progress notes. Despite occasional comments about Alice being a bit reserved in her interactions with patients, more often than not, I observed her interactions as very good on the wards. Unfortunately, Alice stumbled on one CBSE exam at the end of her second year of medical school. However, true to form, Alice approached this with a sense of dedication, studied very diligently and passed the repeat exam. She did so with a refreshing lack of blame and a sense of personal ownership, which is a quality that I seek in any residency applicant. I noticed no instances of unprofessional nor unethical behavior in my observations both in the didactic sessions as well as in inpatient and outpatient settings with Alice. She maintains a pleasant and calm demeanor and was a lot of fun to have on service. In summary, I think you would be well served to offer an interview to Alice Average and allow yourself to see the qualities and unique characteristics which she possesses and on which she rightfully prides herself.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions or comments regarding the application of medical student, Alice Average. I would be most happy to correspond with you regarding her application.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kavanaugh, MD
Assistant Dean for Career Development
Associate Professor of Internal Medicine
Western Michigan University
Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine

Department of Internal Medicine
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Office: 269.337.6350 w Fax: 269.337.6380
<http://med.wmich.edu>