**INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITERS OF A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

**AND HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO MEDICAL SCHOOLS**

Thank you so much for your support of our students and alumni by agreeing to write a letter of recommendation on their behalf! We recognize the effort that goes into writing strong letters of recommendation and thank you in advance for your commitment to our students through your time and resources.

You can write your Letter of Recommendation and submit it directly to the medical school application service:

* AMCAS - the American Medical College Application Service which is run by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).
* TMDSAS - Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service.
* AACOMAS - American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service.

Applicants should clearly indicate to you where they are applying, especially those applying through several services. Instructions for all of these application services are below.

After you submit your letter, the application service will send your letter to all the schools your student/applicant has chosen.

**HOW TO WRITE YOUR LETTER**

* Use letterhead stationery - this is important!
* Address your letter to "Dear Admissions Committee" or begin with "Recommendation for .....".
* Use your student/applicant's formal name.
* Sign your letter - schools will not accept an unsigned letter. It can be a physical or a digital signature.
* Include your contact information (email and phone number) under your signature.
* If you are uncertain what to write in your letter, see the end of this document.
* You can write your letter at any time and save it on your computer. Then upload or mail your letter when your student/applicant gives you the needed submission information.

**HOW TO SUBMIT TO THE AMCAS APPLICATION SERVICE**

If your student/applicant is applying to a traditional medical school, you can submit your letter to AMCAS as soon as you are given an AAMC ID and Letter ID, usually after May 1 when AMCAS opens for the applicant. We recommend sending your letter by June 1st. However, as long as it is received by AMCAS before the last week of June, when applications and letters of recommendation are released to medical schools, it should not be detrimental to the applicant. If you or the applicant you are writing for have concerns or questions about timing of submission please don’t hesitate to contact our office. Note that mailed letters may take up to 2 weeks for processing, not including mailing time

1. RECEIVE AN AMCAS LETTER REQUEST FORM from your student/applicant. This form will have an
* AAMC ID - an 8-digit identification number assigned to that applicant
* Letter ID - an 8-digit number assigned to your letter
1. COMPOSE YOUR LETTER FOR AMCAS
* Include your student's name, the AAMC ID and the Letter ID at the top of your letter
* Remember to use letterhead stationery, sign your letter, and include your email and phone number.
* **Save a copy as a PDF** if you are going to upload the letter electronically; use a file name that has only letters and numbers (no special characters)
1. SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO AMCAS
	1. IF YOU ARE MAILING your letter, send it and a copy of the AMCAS Letter Request Form to:

 AMCAS, Attn: AMCAS Letters
 AAMC Medical School Application Services
 P.O. Box 18958
 Washington, DC 20036

* 1. IF YOU ARE UPLOADING YOUR LETTER ELECTRONICALLY
1. SIGN UP FOR AN AAMC ACCOUNT
	* go to [aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org/)
	* click on "sign in" in the upper right hand corner
	* click on "create AAMC account"
	* answer a short series of registration questions and contact information
	* choose a username of at least six characters and a password; record them for later
	* click "submit"
	* you'll receive a confirmation email to verify your account.
2. SAVE YOUR LETTER AS A PDF - only PDFs can be uploaded. The file name should only have letters and numbers and no special characters.
3. UPLOAD YOUR LETTER
	* + go to <https://services.aamc.org/letterwriter/> and sign in or [aamc.org/amcasletters](http://aamc.org/amcasletters) and click on "Sign in to the AMCAS Letter Writer Application"
		+ enter the AAMC ID and Letter ID from the Letter Request Form
			- you can only upload letters one at a time so if you are uploading multiple letters, please make sure you are using the correct AAMC and Letter IDs for each letter.
		+ click "Search" and "Browse" to find your PDF letter on your computer
		+ click "Open" - your letter should now appear
		+ click "Upload" - check the preview to be sure your letter is signed and on letterhead
		+ click "Upload"
		+ You will receive a response saying your upload was successful; your letter will be marked as "received" on the applicants application

**HOW TO SUBMIT TO THE TEXAS (TMDSAS) APPLICATION SERVICE**

If your student/applicant is applying to Texas medical schools, you will need to submit your letter of recommendation to the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application service (TMDSAS). This may be in addition to submitting your letter to AMCAS as well.

1. IF YOU ARE UPLOADING YOUR LETTER DIRECTLY TO TMSDAS
	* You will receive an email from TMDSAS directing you to the TMDSAS Evaluator Portal with your password <https://www.tmdsas.com/TMDEvaluator/Login.aspx>

 (If you don't receive an email and are expecting one, check your spam/junk email file as TMDSAS emails may be filtered as spam)

* + Preferred browsers are recent versions of FireFox and Internet Explorer. They request that you not use Chrome or Safari.
1. IF YOU ARE MAILING YOUR LETTER DIRECTY TO TMSDAS send it to:

TMDSAS
P.O. Box 2175
Austin, TX 78768

**HOW TO SUBMIT TO THE OSTEOPATHIC (AACOMAS) APPLICATION SERVICE ~~FOR~~**

If your student/applicant is applying to osteopathic medical schools, you will need to submit your letter of recommendation to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS). This may be in addition to submitting your letter to AMCAS as well.

1. UPLOAD YOUR LETTER TO AACOMAS as they do not accept mailed in letters
* Create an account for Letters by Liaison. <https://help.liaisonedu.com/Letters_by_Liaison_Help_Center>
* Go to Your Recommendation page.
* Click “Start” next to the name of the applicant you are completing.
* Upload your letter.
* Click “Preview & Submit”, then click “Yes, Upload” if it is all correct.

**PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS?**

Contact the application service directly

 AMCAS: (202) 828-0600, follow the prompts for Authors of Letters of Evaluation

 TMDSAS: (512) 499-4785

 AACOMAS: (617) 612-2889

Contact our HPA Office by phone at 919 684 6221 or by email at prehealth@duke.edu

**WHAT INFORMATION WOULD MEDICAL SCHOOLS LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR LETTER?**

Medical schools look for a wide range of traits in applicants - academic excellence and success, understanding and appreciation of diversity, personal traits of compassion and kindness, research experience, ability to cope with adversity and adjust to situations, and unique strengths and goals. The AAMC describes the expected competencies they wish to see in applicants at the website below.

<https://aamc-orange.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/e5/70/e5706c62-af17-43da-9ef8-cac322841071/guidelines_for_writing_a_letter_of_evaluation_for_a_medical_school_applicant.pdf> (