

Letters of Recommendation (LOR) Guidelines

During your 3rd year core rotations, you will be able to request letters of recommendation for your residency application. Remember, you may also ask for letters of recommendation from your audition rotations, but do not solely rely on this. It is important you choose your letter writers wisely, so the result is a strong letter of recommendation. Below you will find a few recommendations to take into consideration:

Should my letters of recommendation be from people in the specialty I will be applying to?

Ideally, it would be preferable if your letters of recommendation came from physicians in your specialty, but you may request letters of recommendation from other specialties also. We recommend at least two letters of recommendation from the specialty you will be applying to. This will make your application stronger. With the exception of surgical specialties where all letters of recommendation in the specialty are **strongly** preferred and recommended.

How should I request a letter of recommendation?

You want to make sure you always ask for the letter of recommendation in person. It is important that you've built a strong relationship with the letter writer and do not feel intimidated to request a letter if you have worked with the preceptor only for four weeks. When requesting a letter it is important to provide the preceptor with your **updated** CV and a short personal bio for them to get to know you better. Ask the preceptor if they would be willing to write you a strong LOR. Check the comments from your preceptor in your final evaluation to assess if they would be a good letter writer. Make sure to inquire with the preceptor if it is ok for you to learn more about their knowledge and insight in the field.

Letters of recommendation from a Department Chair at BCOM

This will be program specific! Please make sure when you are searching for residency programs of interest to check on the programs' website and know the requirements to see the specifics of who they want the letters of recommendation from. If you find yourself with programs asking for a LOR specifically from the department chair, please make sure to **first** check with your Career Counselor to know who to contact at BCOM. It is important to have your updated CV and a draft of your personal statement ready for the department chair.

Specialties that will typically request a letter of recommendation from a department chair are:

- Internal Medicine, OB-GYN, Orthopedic Surgery, General Surgery, Neurology, and Pediatrics.

Do not feel intimidated if you do not have a solid relationship with the department chair. At times residency programs request a letter of recommendation from a department chair to describe more of a factual portrayal of the academic side. **Only request a chair letter if the programs you will be applying to are requesting it.**

How many letters of recommendation will I need for my residency application?

This will be program specific! Most residency programs will require only three letters of recommendation, but on ERAS (Electronic Residency Application Service), you will be able to submit up to four letters per program. If you decide to submit four letters, programs will decide which ones they

will be reading. BCOM recommends submitting the appropriate number of letter of recommendations required by the program.

Whom should I ask for a letter of recommendation?

It is important to take in consideration the questions below when requesting a letter of recommendation. According to The Successful Match 2017, if you answer YES to the following questions the letter writer can be considered:

- Did I do well on their rotation?
- Do they think highly of me?
- Did I work closely with them?
- Do they have specific examples they can use?
- Do they have time?
- Do they care about my future?
- Do they have good communication skills?

When requesting a letter of recommendation what documents should I be providing the letter writer?

Remember your letter writer may only know you from the four weeks you spend with them during the rotation, and these documents will assist them when preparing your letter and in getting to know you better. If your letter writer does not request these documents, it is highly recommended to provide it to them; it will show your level of preparation.

- Create letter of entry on ERAS (you will find instructions for this in your Canvas course OMS-IV)
- Cover letter
- Updated CV
- A small bio and you may include the following topics:
 - What led you to the specialty
 - A recap of patient encounters you had at that rotation
 - Highlight from medical school that will distinguish you from other classmates
 - Highlight some of your strengths and skills

* You have the option not to waive your right of viewing your letter of recommendation, but it is highly recommended that on ERAS you waive your right to view the letter of recommendation. The letter will be considered more “credible” if you waive that right.