

University of Idaho

Pre-Health Professions Advising

Letters of Evaluation: General Guidelines for Applicant and Writer

Applicants:

- Research the specific letter of recommendation requirements of your top choice schools
 - Many schools will indicate a minimum/maximum number of letters, and may specify exactly who they require letters from (e.g. Science Professor, medical professional, etc.)
- Carefully select references and meet individually with each reference to discuss the application process and timeline.
- Ask the prospective letter writer if they feel confident in their ability to write a strong, positive letter on your behalf. If their answer is 'no', you are highly encouraged to find another reference.
- See [Tips & Strategies for Medical School Reference Letters](#) for guidance regarding whom you should ask to write a letter on your behalf, and how to go about asking (*hint: no waiting until the last minute or texting your request*).
- There are 3 types of letters: Committee Letter, Letter Packet, and Individual Letter. Each letter type, regardless of the actual number of letters, is only considered one letter entry (i.e. a letter packet that contains four letters still only counts as one entry in your AMCAS application).
 - Individual Letters are the most common type submitted by UI students.
 - The UI Career Center does have the capability to set up a medical school placement file (Interfolio) and then submit references to AMCAS as a Letter Packet; however, the use of this service by med school applicants has decreased significantly now that AMCAS allows for individual references to submit their letters directly into the system.
- **Applicants should give their letter writers a packet that includes the following:**
 - A copy of your CV/resume as well as a detailed statement about yourself (such as your AMCAS personal statement) to help provide the letter writer with some background information.
 - Once you create your AMCAS account, you will complete the Letters of Evaluation section. Within this section, you will create a **Letter Request Form (pdf)** that includes your mailing address, AAMC ID, the Letter ID, and information for the letter writer about submitting letters to AMCAS. See page 60 of the [2016 AMCAS Instruction Manual](#) for more information.
 - Include a copy of the AAMC's [Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation for a Medical School Applicant](#).

Additional note: Strongly consider waiving your right to view the letters – admission committees may consider letters to be more credible if they know that the student has waived their right to view the information.

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Reference Letter Writers:

- Refer to the AAMC's [Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation for a Medical School Applicant](#).
- Refer to the [15 Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students](#) and evaluate how the applicant has, or has not, demonstrated these.
- Things for letter writers to consider in their evaluation of the applicant:
 - Under what circumstances and for how long have you known the applicant?
 - What are the applicant's strengths and weaknesses?
 - Scholastic aptitude (however, per the AAMC, "Only include information on grades, GPA, or MCAT scores if you are providing context to help interpret them.").
 - Assessment of written and verbal communication skills.
 - Why should or should not the individual become a physician?
 - Discuss relevant employment, extra-curricular, or vocational activities such as community service or outside interests.

To submit PDF letters of reference to AMCAS (American Medical College Application Service), use the [AMCAS Letter Writer Application](#). Create an account, enter the AAMC student ID and Letter ID numbers (printed on the form you will receive from the applicant), and then upload your letter. **Letters must be signed, dated, and printed on University, company, or personal letterhead.**