

Letter of Recommendation FAQ's

From whom can I get letters of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation should come from your home institution. You must have at least two (2) from neurosurgical faculty and one (1) from general surgery (i.e. program director, clerkship director, or close faculty contact) or non-neurosurgical surgical sub-specialty mentor, to summarize your performance during surgical rotations at your institution. A fourth letter, either from an additional neurosurgical faculty member or a research mentor at your institution is highly recommended. In rare circumstances, you may have previously done a clinical or research rotation (at least 4 weeks) at another institution prior to April 2020, and could request a letter from that mentor if they know you better than current faculty (the circumstances and timing of the recommendation from a pre COVID-19 rotation should be explained in your application).

Why do I need a general surgery letter of recommendation?

Competence and equity are of utmost importance during these substantive changes to our normal application process. It is important to have a consistent but independent source of information for each student. All AAMC-accredited medical students must complete a core rotation in surgery. As neurosurgical training has decreased the formalized surgery training during the intern year, it is critical that medical students engage in and master core general surgical skills. Additionally, because students may have a more limited time rotating in neurosurgery this year, it is important to gain insight into the breadth of their surgical experience. The general surgery LOR template will allow the surgery department to provide a summation of the body of work you performed during your surgical rotations, largely drawn from the evaluations given at the time of those rotations. Any surgical mentor from a discipline other than neurosurgery may assist in completing this letter and writing the individualized summary. Surgical rotations including but not limited to general surgery, vascular surgery, otolaryngology, thoracic surgery, and plastic surgery, among others, provide experience complementary to that obtained in neurosurgery rotations and are thus a good source for this recommendation.

All the Resident Comments won't fit in the text box without being cut off. What do I do?

The template is designed to stay on two total pages. Resident comments can be divided between the multiple letters from the same program in order to provide comprehensive feedback without duplication.

ERAS won't allow me to upload the LOR. What do I do?

The ERAS system will not accept the LOR in the original fillable format. There are a couple of options, but the final document must not exceed 2 pages and must be under 1MB.

- 1) Print the original and scan the copy to a file (<1MB).
- 2) The original can be saved to a PDF to change it to a copy and non-fillable document. Then open that new document, go to File>Save as Other>Reduce PDF. The new version should be small enough for uploading into ERAS (<1MB).

I am having trouble uploading the letter. What do I do?

Select File, Print and choose the printer option named "Adobe PDF". This will allow you to save the document as a secured/ non-fillable PDF and the file size will convert to less than 1MB. This avoids having to physically print and scan in the document.