Information for Evaluators for Medical School Applications

Spring, Summer & Fall 2021

UM Health Professions Advising Office (HPAO)

[HPAO@olemiss.edu](mailto:HPAO@olemiss.edu) **∙** 662-915-1674 **∙** 359 Martindale

<http://healthprofessions.olemiss.edu/>

**This section to be completed by applicant.**

Name of Applicant (printed): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation Requested of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby waive my rights of access to this requested confidential document, as provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

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Applicant’s Signature Date

Letters of Evaluation are important components of any application to medical school, and your willingness to do this is a valuable contribution. The HPAO has offered advice to students on how to be professional when contacting you for a letter, and on instructions for submission of your letters. The HPAO is also available to help you---please contact us with your questions or comments.

Students are not able to initiate their medical school application until May of each year; therefore, letters cannot be formally submitted before May 28. The HPAO can submit your letters for you, but we must have all accompanying documentation and forms that the student provided to you, including this signed waiver and the letter request form from AMCAS, AAOCMAS, and/or TMDSAS.

**Writing your letter of evaluation:**

**Your letter must be on official letter-head stationery, signed by you, dated, and should be a general letter that can apply to any medical school, addressed to “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Admissions Committee.”** The evaluator should mention the course(s) in which he/she taught the applicant. If you submit a letter, most medical schools (including UMMC) do not require that you fill out a rating form. If a form is required by a school, it is the responsibility of the student to provide you with the specific form and submission instructions.

The majority of medical schools in the US use an online medical school application program, AMCAS, AACOMAS, and/or TMDSAS. AMCAS is the application system for applying to MD schools, AACOMAS is the application for applying to DO schools (osteopathic), and TMDSAS is the application for applying to most Texas schools (usually only students who are Texas residents should apply via TMDSAS). The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has published guidelines for letter writers here: [**https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf**](https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf)

**The content of your letter** of evaluation should address things like: **personal characteristics** including honesty, integrity, awareness of ethics and values and motivation; **interpersonal qualities** including attitude toward others, enthusiasm, teamwork, sense of cooperation and communication skills; and **classroom abilities** such as work ethic, attendance and preparation for class assignments. Above all, admissions committees seek information on an applicant’s approach to academic studies, including how they dealt with difficulties encountered along the way or how they achieved success. **Least helpful content** includes information that can be cleaned from transcripts or resumes. Admissions committees place more value on the quality, not the length, of a letter.

**Here’s how AMCAS/AACOMAS/TMDSAS work:**

Students may initiate their online application **starting in May** in AMCAS, AACOMAS, or TMDSAS. In AMCAS, when they enter your contact information into the application system, they download or print a ‘Letter Request Form’ specifically for you that includes the student’s ID and Letter ID. **The Letter Request Form is REQUIRED to submit a letter of evaluation to AMCAS (it includes the student’s ID number and Letter ID number**). If you receive a request for a letter after May 4th for AMCAS, the ‘Letter Request Form’ should be included in the envelope along with these instructions. If a student requests a letter before May 4th, they will have to send you the Letter Request Form after they initiate their AMCAS application (after May 4th).

**Submitting a letter via AMCAS:**

AMCAS provides specific instructions, and offers several ways to submit your evaluation letter: <https://services.aamc.org/letterwriter/>. **Producing a PDF version of your signed letter and submitting it directly online is probably the easiest option** and there is a tutorial at the above link on how to do so**.** Creating a log-in and password to the AMCAS Letter Writer Service takes about 3 minutes, but you may use the same log-in information for all letters that you submit for all students.

Note: UM does not have a contract with Virtual Evals or Interfolio, but you may use these services if you contract directly to them. Be aware that if a student contracts with one of these services, the student may have access to your letter!

By obtaining the signed student waiver and submitting your letter of evaluation online, you can be certain that your letter is completely confidential and that you control the submission time (after May 4th). On average, students apply to about 10 medical schools, but you need to submit only one letter of evaluation to the AMCAS, AACOMAS, or TMDSAS Letter Writer service for each student. If a student applies to a medical school that requires letters be submitted directly to the school, it is the responsibility of the student to provide you with specific instructions and stamped, addressed envelopes.

**If you have already submitted paper letters to the HPAO this year, or if you are unable to submit your letters digitally, we will submit them for you to AMCAS if we have the signed student waiver and the letter request form or instructions for alternative submissions. If you have problems with or questions about any of the letter submission process, we are here to help! Contact the Health Professions Advising Office!**

Thank you for taking the time to write a thoughtful letter for our students.

Kelli Hutchens, Assistant Director, Health Professions Advising Office, [kellih@olemiss.edu](mailto:kellih@olemiss.edu)

**QUESTIONS?** Contact us by email at[**HPAO@olemiss.edu**](mailto:HPAO@olemiss.edu)or call our office at **662-915-1674**