HOW CAN I SECURE A SLOT FOR THE RESIDENCY INTERVIEW?

THE RESIDENCY APPLICANT'S GUIDE TO ERAS

Everything you need to know for MyERAS and Residency Application

Covering the topics related to ERAS application, the effective way to write a personal statement and the techniques to ask or write a letter of recommendation and so much more...
# The Residency Applicant's Guide to ERAS Application

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Right before you get started the ERAS application process, think of the residency path by checking out one or two medical specialties your heart desires—your passion (e.g. heart care, children…).

For selecting your specialty, you may want to consult a few mentors or advisors; otherwise, ask several practitioners in the field you are trying to get yourself into in medicine.

“Before applying for ERAS, consider a residency specialty by asking your mentors or advisors.”

For every specialty, there are several factors, such as…

- Satisfying specialty
- Overall number of slots available
- Competition degree upon completion of the residency
- Previous medical graduate experience, especially among those from your school

Upon deciphering on the specialty/specialties, decide which participating programs to apply. Remember that there are no limitations on the number of residency programs to apply, but check out several factors, including the location of each program, accreditation status of the institution or program, hospital affiliations and the performance of their graduates.

Learn more about the participating programs and specialties included in the ERAS by AAMC or ERAS online.

To search for more programs, you can also visit the American Medical Association using the FREIDA website.
Chapter I: What Is ERAS?

A service that assists residency applicants in transmitting the following documents to the program director:

- MyERAS application,
- Letters of recommendation
- Medical school transcripts
- COMLEX and USMLE transcripts
- Medical student performance evaluation
- Other supporting documents from the designated dean’s office and from the applicants

What Makes It Up?

1. MyERAS
2. Program director’s workstation (PWDS)
3. Dean’s office workstation (DWS)
4. Letter of recommendation portal
5. ERAS post office

A Quick Explanation of Every Component

The MyERAS Website
It is an online portal where you can complete your application, where to choose the program where you can apply and where to select the documents to send the programs that you are applying for.

The DWS (Designated Dean’s Office)
Software used by the assigned dean’s office to make a token that you can use to access the MyERAS portal as well as to attach and scan any application’s supporting documents, including photographs, letters of recommendation, MSPE that will be sent or transmitted to the service’s post office.

The PDWS
Software used by ERAS for receiving, sorting, reviewing, evaluating and ranking all the received applications.
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The LORP
Tool used by the service for letting administrative users and authors to upload letters of recommendation directly to the Electronic Residency Application Service.

The ERAS Post Office
This works as a central computer bank that allows the transmittal or the transfer of the application materials from you and from your dean’s office to the participating programs.

What Is the Process for Signing up?

1. Once you have received your electronic token from your DDO, you can register for a MyERAS account, and then, you will be able to choose a program, select supporting documents and send your application to the residency program.

2. Your school will receive a confirmation or notification of the application received and will start sending in the supporting documents, including your MSPE, LoRs, transcripts and photographs.

3. The screening committee or board will receive and process the request for your score report.

4. To download the application materials, you can contact the ERAS application regularly.

*Unlisted documents to apply for ERAS are called non-ERAS documents, including additional recommendation letters. Any programs requesting for these files should provide the details on how they would be submitted.

What Is the LATEST for MyERAS 2015?

✓ All applicants should know that any AAMC ID will no longer be valid to use as a user name, but you make a user name for MyERAS when you sign up.

✓ On your profile, you should choose the type of VISA you are handling when you responded “Yes” to the Sponsorship found in the profile’s Citizenship section.

✓ With the MyERAS 2015, applicants may be able to reply or respond to any of the messages they get from the programs where they have applied through the PDWS online; however, this only applies to those programs, which have chosen the latest online-based system for the upcoming recruitment season. Therefore, you cannot send a MESSAGE or reply to such if you have received them from a program that has opted out of this system.
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✓ You will no longer be able to access the Applicant Document Tracking System outside of MyERAS.
✓ On the Dashboard is the new “Payment Status” section that will let you know of any outstanding balance or if you have already paid in full.
✓ Now you can also indicate if your letter of recommendation’s author is a chair of a department from a previous or current resident program where he or she has trained, on a checkbox included.
✓ There is also the programs tab on the latest MyERAS dashboard where students can access additional program information of those that responded.
✓ New participating programs listed here.

IMPORTANT ERAS TERMS TO REMEMBER

ERAS Registration or Token
The code that will be activated and will all you to register to MyERAs in order to access it and process your residency program application. The MyERAS is your workstation once your code is activated. You should sign up early for MyERAS to avoid any problems, including your documents not being scanned without it.

When you have received the token from your dean’s office, you can login to the system to register your code or token. Take note of the important fields and questions to fill out to avoid any hassles. You should type in your token code with extreme care.

All the required fields have to be filled out with ACCURACY. Check for any errors before completing your signup process because you can only apply once.

Once completed, you can access the “Dashboard” through the login screen of MyERAS or through the ERAS official website.

Profile
Make your profile on the MyERAS system to process your residency application. Some data needed are your name and chosen contact number. Aside from these, you will be asked the following,

1. Preferred name
2. Citizenship
3. Previous last name
Chapter I: What Is ERAS?

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4. USMLE ID
5. EMAIL
6. Contact address
7. Birth date
8. NRMP participation

*Not in order

Any the fields can be updated once you have completed the ERAS application. In addition, you should input an accurate USMLE ID so that you can request for your transcript of your records that will be sent directly to ERAS.

“One applicant—one ERAS profile”

The programs will receive the same application, but your personal statement will allow you to personalize your application to a particular program where you are considering taking at least two specialties.

Anytime, you can print a copy of your worksheet that will allow you to see your application. However, you can choose to go off line as you are working on your application before you enter the required data to the system.

The “Worksheet” has all the questions asked in the application to ERAS, but you don’t have to complete the application at once but you are encourage to spend time to work on every page at your own time to ensure that you avoid any errors.

When you save the information, you inputted on one page, it would be automatically saved by the system, although you can change or update any of them at any time. However, you can only do that if your ERAS application has yet to be certified. You cannot apply the changes once you have submitted the application to the system.

ERAS, however, will give you a checklist function so that you can make sure that you have completed all the SECTIONS REQUIRED.

When you have done those things, you can begin with your personal statement and SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS. Take note that at least one personal statement can be done and there is no limits as to the number you can write.
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You should assign the letter of recommendation and personal statement writer and allow the transmission or retransmission of your transcript of records (TOR) from the USMLE.

**Programs**

As an applicant, you are allowed to search for as many participating programs in the ERAS that will provide you with general description of the residency program you desire.

Take note that you CANNOT WITHDRAW AN APPLICATION once you have applied to it, but you can inform the program director that you no longer wish to participate if you have been granted an interview.

Being polite to inform them you are no longer interested to become a part of their program allow them to open the slot to another residency applicant.

You should contact every program prior to transmitting or sending your application to ensure you understand the program documents needed as well as to be informed of the deadlines. Each program has their own.

A program has the right to update their participation status to the Electronic Residency Application Service so that they could let you know when you and others can no longer submit an application. When this happens, you cannot apply to the program anymore and make changes to the document assignments.

“ERAS do not honor refunds for any reason. An applicant should contact a residency program before sending in their application to a program.”

Ask if they are still accepting applicants to minimize your risk or if they are participating in the ERAS system.

**Training Record**

You can edit your training record you have chosen for the program, but you cannot apply any change once you have submitted the application. You can contact the program chair directly if you wish to deselect a training record, however. For the programs where you have applied to, all the document assignments as well as the kind of training you had will be sent to them right away.

**Document Assignments**

All the programs will get the common application form from ERAS from every application, but you have the option of assigning other documents to them as well. In most cases, the ERAS
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Coordinator from your school will be the one to attach LORs, transcript of records, performance evaluation as well as attach your photo.

However, he or she will NOT BE INVOLVED in your PERSONAL STATEMENT as well as in your USMLE TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS.

You will be involved in assigning the personal statement for the programs you wish to apply to as well as in authorizing the release of the TOR to the program.

For many students, they assign the same personal statement to all the programs they have applied to, but then, many still are personalizing their personal statement for every specialty.

Without even saying, you may also want to do the same because your application will be more tailored to a specific specialty other than being generic in your application. Once the program has downloaded your document, you cannot change the action much worst if you have sent the WRONG DOCUMENT.

Assigning Program Documents

1. You can make as many letters of recommendation but no more than four can be designated to one program. Check every program requirement. Choose your letter writers to assign the letters to the programs.

2. ALL letter request forms are only from ERAS and contain unique codes that can allow your author to upload your LOR to ERAS directly.

3. You can make as many personal statements, but you can designate only one per residency program. Take note you cannot change it or un-assign your TOR once you have sent it to a program.

4. You cannot also change a photo once assigned to a specific program.

5. All the documents that a program receives will be their permanent record of your application and will not be able to delete it. Each of them may have downloaded or printed it out for their future records. They may also use it as reference.

6. Check every document listing for every program to make sure you don’t miss a single requirement in your application. Visit the Applicant Data Tracking System to check and review information.
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Curriculum Vitae

Containing the same or almost the same details as you have written in the ERAS website, you will need a professional CV. It is just like the CAF, only that it is not formatted in the same manner. It is done for the sake of those that want to see your profile in the CV format.

Your CAF is the PRINTED VERSION of what you have inputted in your MyERAS profile and allows you to view your application the manner that the specialty programs will be able to. Once printed, you should check for any inaccurate information as well as omissions before having it certified and transmitted for ERAS.

Take note: You can apply to and certified by ERAS ONLY ONCE! You cannot change anything once your application has been certified and submitted. THERE ARE NO EXEMPTIONS.

Next stop is to have your ERAS application certified and transmitted, but be sure you reviewed it before doing so. Once you have completed the application, submit them to the ERAS PostOffice. Remember you cannot apply to any program unless your application has been certified by and submitted to ERAS.

In order to TRANSMIT the application to the program or programs selected, you should pay in the MyERAS.

Before that,

- Confirm the program’s participation to ERAS
- Review program deadlines, eligibility and requirements
- Read and understand the terms of the ERAS fees to find out how they are calculated

There will be NO REFUND REQUEST ACCEPTED. Check if the program is participating or the deadline is not yet passed.

The ERAS website only uses a secured server for credit card data transmission but does not keep such information for future use.

When the applicant submitted an application to the ERAS, the program will get his profile, CAF and assigned personal statements. They will also get the transcript sent directly from the USMLE to ERAS.

The school ERAS coordinator will get a program list where you have applied to as well as will attach supporting documents, including photographs, LORs, etc.
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The programs will be able to download or print out your files from the ERAS website. However, applications received passed the deadline may no longer be downloaded by the program. Therefore, you should check and see that your materials are submitted before the deadline. Any amount of refund will not be given even if the program failed to download your documents in the PostOffice.

The program will use the PDWS to download your files and may print and review them based from their criteria. You should ask your ERAS coordinator any concerns about uploading your files as well as about the supporting documents.

To check any message from the program, you may check out the message center in MyERAS. You can also monitor your application status and supporting documents using the Applicant Document Tracking System.

The message center will have the history of your communications with the program and will receive any message from the ERAS system. It is also used as another means of receiving messages from ERAS apart from your email account.

You may apply to additional programs should you wish to, but you are recommended to assign the documents to the additional programs before transmitting the new applications. Before you do, you are advised to review and calculate fees of the additional residency programs you are applying.

There you have some of the things to know about the Electronic Residency Application Service to use for applying in one or two medical residency programs in your area. Be able to check out application deadlines, requirements and other supporting documents needed to complete your application in the following section.
Chapter II: The Residency Applicant’s Checklist

As a residency applicant, one must be fully aware of the things that they need to take care of so that they can have a successful residency application for the program they wish to participate in. Applicants must be able to accomplish certain tasks whenever they apply for residency. With that in mind, one must have a checklist to follow.

The first thing that applicants must be familiar with is the process that they have to complete in applying for the Electronic Residency Application Service or ERAS. As the name of the process suggests, it is done online. The following tasks that applicants have to complete don’t have to be done in a systematic order for them to be listed.

Although contacting the ERAS HelpDesk through phone or email is an easy thing to do, this post is meant to give applicants an overview of the things that they need to accomplish for their residency application. Now, checkout the following information regarding ERAS-related application tasks. Let’s get started.

Where and How Residency Applicants Can Start

All residency applicants who wish to participate in a certain residency program can begin their application process by going through the ERAS website. This is an applicant’s main source of information regarding things that would help them achieve a successful residency application. Now, look at the following:

- For applicants to get started with their residency application, they must get in touch with the Designated Dean’s Office or the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates for an ERAS Electronic Token.
- After accomplishing the task above, applicants must then register the ERAS Electronic “Token” they’ve obtained from the DDO or ECFMG at the MyERAS login page.
- Provide all necessary information for a great start for the residency application.

Fulfilling an Applicant’s Residency Application through the MyERAS Website
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Once applicants have successfully logged in to the MyERAS website, applicants must ensure that they’ve completed. This should then be followed by completing the MyERAS application form online, creating and finalizing the applicant’s LoR (Letter of Recommendation), authors that can found within the documents tab. Once applicants have done that, they must now provide each author of the LoR the Letter Request Form that is generated within the MyERAS page after finalizing each LoR author entry.

Key Documents that Applicants Must Submit to the MyERAS Page

Aside from creating an account, completing a profile and finalizing LoRs, applicants must ensure that they get to submit their personal statement, which can also found within the documents tab. Work with your DDO to upload supporting documents to ensure an easier time that those documents will be transmitted to the ERAS PostOffice. To check if the documents were uploaded, applicants can utilize the ADTS or the Applicant Document Tracking System.

If there were any instance where the documents uploaded can’t be found or seen within the ADTS, applicants may choose to contact their LoR author or DDO for they are the ones responsible in uploading the documents.

Another key step that applicants must do is by ensuring that they have answered the USMLE or United States Medical Licensing Examination question found in the Documents tab. Applicants must note that after submitting their answer, it can no longer be changed.

Getting Started with the Program Application Process

Residency applicants have many tasks to fulfill even after they have successfully completed the MyERAS process because as part of it, one must apply to a certain program.

Applicants must ensure that they have successfully chosen a program that they seek to participate in, but may keep looking to search for other programs of their interest.

Once applicants have selected a program, they must now begin to assign their documents to the program of their choosing. Applicants should understand that their letter of recommendations needs to be finalized by its authors and that it should have been uploaded to ERAS PostOffice prior to assigning it to the chosen program.
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Other than that, applicants must also know that the medical school transcripts, the MyERAS application and the MSPE or the Medical Student Performance Evaluation is automatically assigned to the program chosen since its considered mandatory.

These tasks don’t have to done in order to ensure success. However, applicants must ensure that they’ve certified and submitted their MyERAS application. Applicants must understand that this task is mandatory in order for them to apply to a chosen program. In addition, once it has been submitted, no changes can be made to it.

As a residency applicant, they must confirm that they are aware of the program requirements as well as its deadline. It is also the applicant’s obligation to confirm that their application is received by the program chosen. Applicants may use the ADTS to see if the program they have applied for have downloaded their supporting documents as well as their application.

Considering the things listed on this post would help secure that applicants have a successful residency application. Other than this, getting in touch with the applicants school, DDO, ECFMG and the MyERAS HelpDesk would allow them to have all the information regarding their application. In addition, applicants must also secure that they get to have an appealing personal statement as well as a professionally written letter of recommendation.

When it comes to personal statements, applicants may choose to seek help from professional writers online. These writers are some of the most reliable source of a high quality paper. Aside from securing a well written personal statement, applicants must also ensure that they get to have a letter of recommendation that don’t just contain positive things about them, but things that are backed up by information or proof.

These things would help provide residency applicants an easy time and success with their application. Now, why don’t you get started with your residency program application? Well then, go ahead and start accomplishing the residency application forms and requirements.
Chapter III: Helpful MyERAS Tips

As a residency applicant, you must ensure that you carefully follow and make yourself aware of all the things that you need to take care of in order for you to have a successful residency application. Missing a thing about the application process would somewhat fail your application. Now, in order to help achieve success in your application, you must try to consider the following.

The things listed below are extremely helpful information regarding the Electronic Residency Application Service or ERAS as well as the process for the residency application. Now, why don’t you look into that right now? Let’s get started.

The Secrets to a Successful Residency Application

Applying for a residency can be as easy as logging in to your social media account only if you put to mind the necessary information you need to know regarding the application process. Some of the things that you have to do is quite easy and don’t require much of your time. Well then, look into the following right now.

- To start your residency application process, you must start registering to the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges and ERAS Electronic Residency Application in June. Registering would allow you to start to upload all information required as well as adding a residency program into your application.
- After successfully registering with the AAMC and ERAS, you can start to create slots for each of your LoRs at ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates). This will let the commission expect that they’d be receiving your LoR. In order for you to do this, you may log into the ECFMG website, click on MyERAS followed by selecting the LoR tab. In this field, you’d find an area where you can vital information regarding the authors of your letters. Make sure that any information you place on it are correct before you save it. Note that once you’ve saved this information you don’t have any chance to go back and edit any of it. Once you’ve finalized it, you would be able to print the document for your reference. Sending the letter request can be done by the applicant in four ways: in person, through fax, standard mail or email.
- Another thing that you may consider is to register to the National Resident Matching Program or NRMP. Registration on this portal begins on September 1 starting at 12 pm EST. You may choose to do this in order to register with the Match itself.
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- Other than those things, you must also submit your personal statement and transcript from the medical school.

Doing all of these is never easy, but with the help of your Designated Dean’s Office as well as the support desk of the MyERAS website, you’d find it easy to do all of it. Applicants can also track their documents through the ADTS or the Applicant Document Tracking System. Now, are you ready to begin your residency program application? Well then, why don’t you get started so that you don’t miss out a spot into the program you’ve chosen?
Applying for a residency program is one, and actually making it is another. There is a clear line between just submitting an application for the sake of applying to a program, and there is this residency application for winning a slot! If you want to make the big difference and penetrate the program that you desire in order to become a good doctor or practitioner in the specialty you have chosen, the first thing to consider is your residency personal statement.

“All residency programs require a personal statement.”

In this section, you will learn the importance of a residency statement because this will not be about your test scores anymore but about the substance that you can offer to the program you desire to get into. A residency personal statement is not also about the way people find you but it is about presenting yourself well to them so that you will be considered.

“The screening committee puts a lot of emphasis on your personal statement. In short, they filter deserving applicants based from how they appreciate your personal statement. Which side are you on, then? Make or break?”

They give much attention to the personal statement, your main marketing tool to impress or to turn them off, as they have to weigh your application through thousands more from other students. It is about THEY will be keeping or dumping your application from the very beginning.

Without even saying, you should do well in your personal statement so that you can show how you deserve to become a part of the program. Remember that thousands more are out there waiting to be invited for an interview as you do.

“Present your case well if you do want to stand out in your residency application. Better do well than regret later.”

Take control over your fate or destiny to land in your dream residency program by stating your case well in the essay. Check out the following section on how to become a strong candidate in the application. Yes, it may be easier said than done but remember that every single applicant has to go through the same. You are not applying to become like one of them but you have to be a top class candidate to be noticed.
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Your personal statement should be SUCCESSFUL IN ADDRESSING….

- What made you interested to apply in the specific program or programs?
- What are your expectations from the residency?
- What are your goals in the first place?

*You are entitled to ADD COMMENTS but those must be based on the three main points we mentioned above. Put emphasis in discussing these three important components of a successful residency essay.

It should not go over one page when printed through ERAS, and this you could test before sending in your application to your chosen program or programs.

The Making of a Powerful Personal Statement

Review your medical application essay, as this can give you a hint on how to go through your residency essay. You can check out and review the first and last paragraphs to recall what made this medical school essay successful that time, although this alone should not become the only basis when writing your residency application but only a reference for some hidden clues.

- See if the school has their writing center that might be able to help you in writing your residency application essay. If so, you can go ahead and ask them about some pointers on how this essay should be written if they would be generous enough to share some with you.

- What is your central theme, an important element in writing the content because with that you can have a clear direction on how this essay should go? With a central story, you will not have to worry about getting lost on what message you are trying to put across. The central idea of your residency essay will help in gluing your ideas.

- Write with clarity, and by saying that means you should avoid vague and ambiguous statements that would clog up your essay and would confuse the readers saying, “What’s that for or where am I?” In short, avoid stuffing your application with ambiguous words. What is the quick fix? Make use of concrete examples to explain your experiences, goals and life. This can make you stand out because you can give reader a clearer idea on who you are and what you are actually good at. They say that short is sweeter than stuffing...
with so many words that don't do your application any good. Instead, think of precious space of the application and well valued time of the screening committee.

- **START STRONG!** Make sure that you grab your audience attention by hooking him up to proceed and to read from the very first to the last word of your essay. A hook may be in the form of a riddle, a quote or a story—some cool attention grabbers that will keep your reader engaged in your story.

- **End strong, too!** Part of having a powerful beginning is a flawless ending. And how do you do that? Make sure that you have a conclusion that can go back to your beginning statement as well as refresh readers of your main story or theme. You should strike well enough that your residency application should be filled with very strong ending. In short, you should make a good impact on how your essay will be instilled to the minds of the readers.

- You may ask your departmental program director to look at your statement and criticize it. They will be able to review your essay and will then analyze it for you, as they have seen many essays in their careers. In this case, they may be the best ones that can give you a brief preview on how your work went.

- If your work is not good enough, you should not be afraid to start over again.

- Remember that the readers want to read a positive essay and not about the negatives of the profession.

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**The Red Flags**
1. Never underestimate the importance of your personal statement as well as the difficulty and time involved in developing it.

2. Avoid the lack of logical flow in your essay. Pause a while if you are losing grip of what you are trying to say. In short, when you are noticing that you are jumping from a focus to another, then it may help to leave for a bit before resuming in writing. If you have finished your essay, but you feel unsatisfied, you may need to consult several people to review or analyze what you did. If you fall short of your goal of coming up with a striking tone, then you may need to revise the piece several times.

3. Avoid starting to write when there is only one week to write. In short, you should work on the essay a few months before the submission to ERAS. In most cases, people you ask for letters of recommendation would require a copy of your personal statement before they decide if they would write your LoR.

4. Avoid spelling and grammar mistakes—maybe one of the biggest blunders to commit in writing. They would kill your ambition of getting into a reputable residency school. Many applicants failed because they have not taken enough time in reading and editing their essays.

5. Watch out for clichés! They are a no-no in your application because these wordings have been used a thousand times and may be too annoying to see, especially that many unique terms and statements could be used in grabbing your reader’s attention.

6. Don’t think of writing with the help of a group or several groups because you are solely responsible for whatever you will input in your essay; perhaps, it is your application and not theirs. Getting their help in brainstorming the essay might cause confusion and misdirection of your personal statement.

“Don’t send in cutesy applications! You’re a grown up and are not applying for college where you could inject strangeness. “

7. When writing, be straight to the point and answer whatever questions are put up by the program where you are applying.

8. Feeling confused yourself—it will take you nowhere! Perhaps, this is not the time to feel this way and start procrastinating by delaying writing until it is only about one week before the submission deadline. Again, start months ahead.

9. Trying to impress and playing safe—it will lead to a clouded essay that will not let you shine in your application.
10. Making things complicated. Some applicants think they would impress by including topics that they could not even discuss when being asked during the interview, such as volunteer activities.

“The residency application is PURE BUSINESS. Don’t play cute, but mean business.”

The residency personal statement is your time to shine and to be noticed. Remember that most of them are open-ended and not asking specific questions. However, you should still follow what the program is asking you to include in your essay as well as their guidelines.

Additional Tips

Since you now know that your application essay is all business, you should realize that it is not a novel writing contest or a poetic masterpiece. It is not even a mystery story. Therefore, recognize and accept that your personal statement is a clear explanation of the reasons you are applying for a career in the particular specialty. Most of them would ask the reason you have chosen the residency program, the expectations you got from the program and the goals you have as well as the way you see yourself would improve your knowledge and skills for pursuing it.

“Because you have made it through the medical school, you are expected that you know what your heart desires to pursue next to become your specialty.”

Having that said, you should display your passion into your essay because it will highlight your focus in the career you wish to take in the future. This will also help the committee to see your career’s trajectory.

How to Put Content Altogether

First part, tell them what made you interested to take this specialty and how you were able to build you experience in the industry. For instance, you should show that you have your clear reason for choosing a career in internal medicine for instance. This will help the readers understand what has made you decided to choose the program.

Next thing is to discuss the methods or ways you would apply to enhance or improve your experience by the time you were accepted in the program. In addition, mention what you were looking for in the residency, but avoid talking about a specific location, as you may be transmitting the same residency personal statement to other facilities and not only to one. In short, this section
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should highlight you would go about taking your knowledge and skills to the next level by attending the residency.

In the last part, tell them what you are planning to do from the knowledge you would acquire from the program after you have completed it. Again, write in a concise and clear manner. Be very, very specific in this portion.

There you have what you need to know about writing your residency personal statement to make yourself a standout among the rest of the pack. Remember that there is no one size fits all when it comes to writing your essay because there is always something unique about an applicant that is not found in another. Therefore, display your uniqueness by highlighting how you can become a great addition to the program. What you have just read here are tips for your reference, but it is your sole responsibility that you apply them based from your particular case. Therefore, ensure you write a very clear content to make yourself and your application shine the brightest!
Chapter V: How to Prepare, Ask and Write a Letter of Recommendation (LoR)

After learning about writing a residency personal statement, read on to find out how to ask a letter of recommendation (students) and how to write a letter of recommendation (advisors, mentors or program directors, among others).

The letter of recommendation (LoR) is required by all programs and applicants need up to four of them, depending on the requirement of the residency. Without even saying, this is an integral part of an application because it will not go through without. Most of the time, one is required to support application.

Programs may request as many LoRs, so read the requirements well to figure out how many of them are needed to complete your application. Students are suggested that they ask this letter from someone who knows them well and who knows how well they do their work, as in the instance of volunteer activities you have participated in your career.

“Ask a recommendation letter from a strong writer or the one that can write an impressive and persuasive letter.”

He or she must be able to construct a letter that will make you a very strong candidate. In most cases, the LoR comes from the Department Chairman. As an applicant, you should set up meetings with the author of your letter and present him your personal statement. Most of them would ask for a copy as well as that of your CV or curriculum vitae.

From time to time, you should remind him of the deadline of the application as well as your need to submit the letter to the ERAS system. Commonly, applicants should select their writers between May and June and should be able to ask the faculty for the letters between July and middle of August, but you should find out if you also need a letter from the chair.

In the period of August and September, you are advised to follow up the LOR to find out if your letter have been created or submitted.

Using the MyERAS system, you can make a list of the authors to write the letter on your behalf and once you have activated your “Token,” you can assign your writers from using the platform.
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When you have selected the writer for your letter, you can print out the request form that will be given to your writer. This will contain the instructions regarding the content as well as the deadline of the submission from the writers.

However, you should reserve slots so that the ERAS coordinator can attach the documents to your application using the assigned DWS that can be done before applying to any program through the ERAS system or before the receipt of your LOR document to the OMSE that will be scanned by the coordinator.

Once you have finalized the request, the coordinator will be notified to scan the letter so that it can be available to the programs where you have applied.

In the case of many applications, you can make or submit many letters but not over four letters should be assigned to ONLY ONE PROGRAM.

What is the Letter Request Form?

The main role of the form is to inform THE WRITERS on the content as well as the submission of the letter and is only generated and honored through the ERAS system once you have chosen the letter writer. In addition, it works by giving directions to the writer about transmitting the letter to upload on ERAS and can allow the student to waive the rights of him seeing the letter.

*If the LOR was requested prior to your ERAS application, it can be submitted without AAMC identification, but it will not be honored as part of the application. Therefore, it will NOT BE SCANNED.

How to Ask and Secure the Best LoRs

One of the biggest challenges you could have is to ask and secure STRONG AND PERSUASIVE LORs because you can INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF BAGGING ONE OR A FEW INVITATION SLOTS by having them.

They will give you the advantage you need in your residency programs because they normally have VERY LIMITED SLOTS for an interview; therefore, it is your job to make yourself a big favor to go and ask the best authors for your letters of recommendation.
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These programs have very strict guidelines as well, so they commonly filter applicants very carefully in choosing the participants for their programs. Great recommendation letters will give you the power to gain the edge over other applicants.

- Who should you approach to write your letter?
- How would you approach them?
- What are the details to give your writers?

We will try to make the tips very clear and simple for you to understand as well as how to submit your letters to the ERAS support system.

The Writer

The potential authors are the practitioners who are very familiar with your medical knowledge and clinical abilities. They should also be well aware of your work attitude and ethics. In addition, you should choose the one or a few that knows your interpersonal skills with patients and their families and with your superior and colleagues. They are also those that know how you are doing an excellent job as a team player.

Some potential may be the program director, physicians in the same field or high-ranking medical school professor. On the other hand, some programs may require you to ask a recommendation letter from the chair of the specialty department.

For students with clinical experiences, many program directors would expect to see letters coming from the people or someone from that particular specialty to reflect and show how you fared in performing in the clinical setting.

On the other hand, you can ask these letter writers to evaluate your skills to succeed in the United States residency training if you would be asking the LOR from another country and not from the US.

To get started with this one, you may consider giving the letter writers with the copies of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education or ACGME Core Competencies—this will include all the guidelines to measure a US resident’s performance.

You might consider not submitting an LOR about your experiences over two years before the residency application because the program directors usually expect to see the most current skills you have as a potential participant.
Chapter V: How to Prepare, Ask and Write a Letter of Recommendation (LoR)

**The Time to Request LOR**

The earlier is the better because your writer can start taking note of your personal characteristics and knowledge earlier, and so he can make sure that he can include the reasons you are a great candidate for the program. In short, it is your own benefit to ask your letter writers to write earlier than the deadline so that they could have more time to evaluate and assess your performance and so that you could submit earlier than the deadline.

Speaking of deadlines, monitor the required timeline for the application season. You can visit the ERAS Support Services to review these timeframes.

In the earlier stage of your clinical rotation if you were a medical student, you should have a meeting with the clerkship director to tell him of your intentions to apply for a United States residency program. Here, you can request him to support your application by writing an LOR for you as well as ask him to inquire about the performance standards needed so that you could meet the requirements. In the process, he will be able to write a positive letter of recommendation for you. In all cases though, you should avoid pressuring the writer but your main goal is to ask him for a sincere LOR.

**The Docs to Give Your LOR Writer**

By giving him enough information about you and your qualifications, he would be able to make a competitive and specific recommendation letter for you and would be able to have a clearer picture of your assets, skills and knowledge. You can also help him make a great portrait of your image as a potential resident by giving him enough information about you.

Give him a copy of your CV so that he can become familiar of your experiences and background. This copy will serve as an insight about your passion in trying to get into a medical education as well as will highlight your future goals when you have finally become a specialist.

Let him know about the specialties you are considering in the training as well as the reasons for such. You can also ask him about giving you his insights about a specific letter of recommendation per specialty, an LOR that will focus on convincing the director that you are passionate about this particular field in medicine.
Chapter V: How to Prepare, Ask and Write a Letter of Recommendation (LoR)

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This specialty-specific letter of recommendation will also explain that you are qualified to take up that residency in that specialty. Take note, though, that such customized LOR should not be the same to submit to other specialties.

If you wish to submit the same to more than one specialty, you may ask the writer to write a general letter to fit all specialties; otherwise, you can ask him for multiple specialty specific recommendation letters.

Make sure that your writer understands the timeframe to submit your letters of recommendation as well as other supporting documents so that you could have them transmitted before or when the program director has started reviewing applications.

Remember that he may select not to reads your letter of recommendation after the deadline passed. Give your writer all the details on how your letter should be transmitted to the ERAS system.

Waiving Your Rights to View the LoR or Not?

You can upload the copy of the letter through the AAMC portal if you are not waiving your rights to see it but your letter writer will have to upload it himself through the letter of recommendation portal of the AAMC if you waive your rights to read your LoR.

By taking the latter step, you should provide him with the Letter Request Form that will have all the details needed for him to upload your LOR, but this form may only be available after you finalized and selected the LOR under the MyERAS application portal. In this case, decide if you are waiving your rights to view the letter or not.

All the LORs have their letterhead that will include the writer’s contact details and that should be signed by the writer.

What Happens When You Waive Your Rights to See LOR?

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You will not be able to read the letter permanently if you have chosen to waive it, meaning that your writer is free to speak about you to the program director without your influence. The decision to do so is your final choice.

Keeping a professional and good relationship with the letter writer is necessary so that he could write a positive LOR about you. The program director may directly contact the letter writer during the application stage.

Another great idea is to write a thank you note to the people who have submitted the letters of recommendation for you. Even if the writer is taking much time to write your letter, you should remain polite and professional of following up. You should be polite to everyone helping in your application as well as to those staffs and assistants. Once you have become successful, you can thank your writers again for being a part of your success.

There are no limits as to the number of recommendation letters to submit using the ERAS system, but you can only assign a maximum of four in every program.

How to Write a Letter for Residency

If a residency applicant has asked or requested you to write an LOR for him, you can start drafting the letter while his performance is fresh and memorable. You should not submit it, however, if he is still preparing for his applications and has not requested that the same to be submitted.

In this section of the e-book, you will learn how to make a strong LOR for a student so that you could help him reach his goals of becoming a specialist in a field he has chosen to take. To get started, you should ask the applicant to give you a copy of his most recent CV and his personal statement highlighting his goals and strengths he believes he possesses and could bring to the program.

- Assessment of His Strengths
- Assessment of how he would perform as a potential practitioner
- His assets that set him apart from the rest

Acceptable Guidelines in Most LORs

1. Limit it to one or two pages.
Chapter V: How to Prepare, Ask and Write a Letter of Recommendation (LoR)

2. Explain your relationship with the applicant, including your knowledge of his clinical, academic or research abilities. You can also mention how long you have known this applicant.

3. Customize the letter so that you could make him stand out as a future doctor. You can mention his advocacy as well as comment on specific details, including his analytical skills, intellectual abilities and work attitude. You can also highlight his communication skills and personal achievements, among other elements that would separate him from the rest.

4. Be specific to avoid ambiguity in the letter. You should give specific stories or examples about your experiences with the student that would display his clinical acumen and leadership skills. You can also display how professional this student is.

5. Do not comment on race, age and marital status, among other personal remarks unnecessary, although you can make personal comments if you consider them important in showing his potential and performance. Ask the student before doing so, however.

6. Finish with an overall sincere recommendation to indicate that the student is very much skilled and qualified for the residency as well as for becoming a great specialist one day. You could also highlight how you would be willing to consider this applicant if you were in the director’s shoes.

7. In the ending sentences, you should also indicate you are willing for any additional request of information about the student, so add in your contact details if they are not on the letterhead.

8. Check the letter for any spelling, grammar and typos errors, in particular to the student’s name.

9. Other tips to remember include,
   a. Addressing it to the program director: e.g. Dear Program Director
   b. Write the student’s AAMC ID
   c. Make sure his name’s spelling is correct
   d. Sign the letter through scanning a printed copy and adding the image of your signature to it
   e. Make use of an official letterhead; otherwise, include your recent contact details.
   f. Transmit or submit it in PDF format.

There you have what you need to know about asking or writing the letter of recommendation, a very important component to make or break a residency application. Next stop is to learn about the commonly asked interview questions when applying for residency. Brace yourself and be
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ready for some battle out there by becoming equipped with the right knowledge on what the
POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS could be. Check them out next.
Chapter VI: Common Residency Application Interview Questions

Once you have been invited for an interview, the next thing you know is that you have ‘butterflies in your stomach.’ You should not worry, though. We have researched and prepared the most commonly asked questions during interviews.

The Medical Residency Commonly Asked Questions

1. Why would you be a great participant in our residency program?
2. What are your reasons for applying?
3. What are your expectations or what would you want about our program?
4. What can you contribute to our residency?
5. What is your learning from your previous experiences?
6. Can you demonstrate your skills of initiative?
7. Do you have other interests aside from medicine? If so, what are those?
8. What are your strengths and your weaknesses?
9. What are your reasons for choosing this specialty?
10. Describe your medical education.
11. Describe your clinical experience, if any.
12. What made you so sure that this is the right specialty for you?
13. Describe your experience in USMLE examinations.
14. Have you worked in any unit related to this specialty, or ICU perhaps?
15. Have you experienced working in a US hospital? If so, how was your experience working with nurses, doctors and other medical professionals?
16. Have you experienced teaching medical students?
17. Have you published in the medical industry?
18. Did you experience assisting in surgeries? Tell me about it.
19. If you would be interested in a research activity, tell me about it.
20. Have you presented in a medical group?
22. What are your expectations from a training program? Do you have any questions about ours?
23. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?
Chapter VI: Common Residency Application Interview Questions

24. Tell me about your long-term goals.
25. What medical books or publications have you read lately? Tell me about them.
26. Do you have plans of practicing in this state?
27. Tell me what you know about the latest treatment for a particular illness related to this specialty.
28. Describe your decision-making skills. What was the hardest decision you ever made and how did you arrive at that decision?
29. What was the most disappointing clinical experience you had?
30. What would be your next step/s if you do not match this residency?
31. Have you applied to other programs? What are they?
32. What is the status of your visa?
33. What was the most difficult time in your life? How did you resolve it?
34. Do you have any convictions or values you think that would hinder your decision with a particular clinical situation in this program?
35. How do you deal with pressure and stress?

Although this list is not exhaustive, it can help you get a glimpse of the questions commonly asked during the interview. What are you waiting for? Go ahead and practice in front of the mirror today!

Following next are a few tips to know when preparing for the interview. Check them out!

## Interview Tips

### Follow up
Schedule interviews as early but not to the point of appearing like you are very pushy or anxious. Know that some programs only implement INTERVIEW BY INVITATION ONLY. Most of the time, program directors are trying to finish interviews by January so that they would be able to attend any admin details in order that they would meet any National Resident Matching Program deadlines. This is sponsored by the,

- American Medical Association
- Council of Medical Specialty Societies
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- American Board of Medical Specialties
- American Hospital Association
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The NRMP will conduct a match for optimizing the rank ordered student choices as well as those of the program directors. The results of the match are announced usually by the third week of March.

You should have a few interviews before going to the most important ones you consider and should schedule the most priced ones for the best results.

Research the Residency Program
You can target the program questions if you would be able to learn as much of the program before going to the interview. Do research about the latest developments in the specialty you are interested as well as about their priorities, including clinical abilities, community involvement and/or research, among others.

Review the Application
Check all the documents, including the CV and personal statement so that you could prepare when you need to discuss them with the interviewer. You can also prepare for some questions you might be asked with, but you don’t need to memorize all of them. Just take notes and review them on the way to the interview.

Plan the Trip
You might want an interview be scheduled on the same day as the time when there will be teaching conferences and morning rounds. You can also consider staying another day to talk with some residents.

Dress Well and Appropriate
The interview is just like a job interview. Dress appropriate and well to reflect your professionalism. Slacks and sweaters are okay to wear, but put on the best dress for the safest attire during the interview.

Avoid Being and Looking Nervous
Commonly, applicants are nervous as they enter the room, but these can be avoid by,

- Being on time
- Getting the names of the interviewers
- Greeting the interviewer by his name
- Offering a handshake
- Looking your interviewer in the eye
- Smiling

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- Letting them sit down before you do
- Refusing a tea or coffee if you are feeling nervous
- Taking a deep breath before answering the questions

There you have your pointers to prepare for the interview when applying for a residency slot. Be sure to put your best foot forward by being natural in answering the questions and dealing with the interviewer as well.
Conclusion

Thank you for standing by and reading this entire guide from cover to cover! That’s about it. Everything you need to know about your ERAS application is all here (We hope we did not miss anything).

Feel free to come back to any section or chapter you might want to review before sending in your application for residency.

We hope that you would be selected for your chosen specialty program!

To Your Success in the World of Medicine,

Your Guides to ERAS Application 😊
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