

ERAS Support Services at ECFMG Policy on Original Documents for Letters of Recommendation,(LoR) and Medical Student Performance Evaluations, (MSPE)

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In concert with the existing policy established for all U.S. Medical Graduates applying for residency programs and to maintain the integrity of documents reviewed by program directors via ERAS, ERAS Support Services at ECFMG requires that all International Medical Graduates (IMGs) submit “Original” LoRs effective with the 2007 ERAS season. Additionally, all IMGs who submit a Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) as part of their ERAS application are also required to submit an original MSPE. ERAS Support Services at ECFMG does NOT require original medical school transcripts. IMGs must NOT submit their original medical school transcripts.

ERAS Support Services at ECFMG will not delay the processing of an ERAS application if the IMG cannot supply an “Original” LoR or MSPE. However the document will be annotated as described below.

“Original” Letters of Recommendation (LoRs)

The LoR must be written on official institutional letterhead, manually signed by the letter writer in **“colored ink” other than black ink**. For enhanced authentication, the IMG should request from his/her letter writer(s) to affix an institutional seal on the LoR.

Original LoRs not written in English must include an official English translation; that is, any document not in English must be accompanied by an English translation, prepared by and certified to be correct by medical school official (for example, a Dean or Registrar), a government official (for example, a Consular Officer), or a professional translation service. The translation must appear on official stationery and must bear the original signature and title of the medical school official, government official or representative of the translation service. If the translation service is a private company, the letterhead stationery must identify the company as a translation service.

The IMG is urged to submit LoRs that are up-to-date and meaningful in content. The letter writer should be a physician who is familiar with the IMG’s clinical abilities and knowledge, as well as his/her interpersonal skills. The IMG who submits LoRs that are substantive in content will ultimately provide the program director with information pertinent to the residency selection process.

MSPE (formerly known as the Dean’s Letter)

The MSPE must be written on medical school letterhead with the medical school seal affixed, and signed by the designated medical school official. If the document is not in English, an official English translation (defined above) must accompany the MSPE. If the IMG cannot obtain an MSPE, he/she can indicate this on the ERAS application at the appropriate place.

The term “Dean’s Letter” is no longer used. The IMG is urged to approach his/her respective Dean’s office to acquire a MSPE. The content of a MSPE should provide an “evaluation” of the IMG’s performance during the course of his/her medical school years relative to his/her peers. The MSPE should not act as “predictor” of an IMG’s future performance but provide information about the IMG’s academic performance.

ECFMG’s Determination of Original Documents

ECFMG will make a **visual inspection** to determine if the document is an original or a copy. ECFMG will not conduct a primary source verification of these document types. If the IMG cannot submit an “Original” document and the submitted document(s) is (are) determined by ECFMG to be a copy, ERAS Support Services at ECFMG will stamp the document(s) to read as follows:

COPY–Originals Required For This Document Type ERAS Support Services

The annotation stamped on the document will be viewable by Program Directors. Certified English translations accompanying submitted documents will be marked as a copy if the underlying document is determined to be a copy.

Note that the implementation of requiring original documents will not cause processing delays nor will documents be rejected if copies are submitted.