



ERAS Support Services at ECFMG Return of Document Service (RODS)

ERAS Support Services at ECFMG's Return of Document Service (RODS) allows international medical students and graduates who apply to residency programs via the AAMC's Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) to request the return of eligible documents. ERAS Support Services expects to begin accepting RODS requests for the ERAS 2008 season via ECFMG's OASIS in February 2008.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) listed below provide detailed information about the service.

1. What is the Return of Document Service (RODS)?

RODS is an optional service for ECFMG ERAS residency applicants who wish to have eligible ERAS application documents returned to them. You can access RODS on-line via OASIS on the ECFMG website to request return of your eligible documents. These documents will be returned via courier service or U.S. postal mail.

2. Can I make a written RODS request?

No. The RODS system is fully automated. Therefore, written requests will not be accepted. All RODS requests must be made on-line via OASIS.

3. Which documents are eligible for return?

All documents that you submit to ECFMG ERAS for the current application year, with certain exceptions, are eligible for return. In keeping with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if you waive your right to see Letters of Recommendation (LoRs), these letters will not be returned. We will confirm whether you waived your right to see the letter by reviewing the content of the LoR; in some instances, letter writers document in the content of the letter whether you have waived your right to see the letter. Additionally, we will review your Request for Letter of Recommendation/Cover Sheet to verify whether you waived your right to view the letter. Also, in accordance with established policies set by certain medical schools, documents issued by these medical schools may not be eligible for return.

4. What is the cost for RODS?

The cost is a one-time, flat rate of \$15 per ERAS application year, plus a discounted rate for courier service shipping, if you select this method of return. Shipping rates vary, depending on destination.

5. I do not want to incur the cost of international shipping. Can I have my documents sent to a relative or friend in the United States?

Yes. You will be able to enter a shipping address, and ECFMG will send your documents to the address that you provide. If you select U.S. Postal Service as your preferred method of shipment, there is no additional shipping cost. ECFMG will not assume responsibility if documents do not reach their destination.

6. Will I be able to track the shipment of my documents if I select courier service?

Yes. The courier service will send you a confirmation e-mail with a tracking number and an expected delivery date to the shipping address you provided. ECFMG will not assume responsibility if documents do not reach their destination.

7. If I request delivery via U.S. postal mail, will I receive a tracking number?

No. Additionally, ECFMG will not send your documents by U.S. registered mail. ECFMG will not assume responsibility if documents do not reach their destination.

8. I made a mistake and entered my international address, instead of my U.S. address, in the shipping information section. Can I adjust my shipping address?

During the request process, you can amend your shipping address, and RODS will show the shipping costs for the new address. However, once you submit your shipping address, it cannot be changed.

9. When can I request return of my documents for the ERAS 2008 application year?

ERAS Support Services expects to begin accepting RODS requests for documents associated with the ERAS 2008 season in February 2008. Requests will be fulfilled in the order that they are received.

10. How long will it take to process my request?

Processing time is approximately four weeks. This does not include shipping time. Requests will be fulfilled in the order that they are received.

11. I want my documents before the NRMP Scramble. Will I receive them prior to the Scramble?

ECFMG cannot guarantee the return of your documents prior to the Scramble. Programs to which you have applied will be able to retrieve electronic copies of your submitted documents using the ERAS Program Directors' Workstation.

12. How can I pay the required fees?

You can pay the RODS fee, and any applicable shipping costs, on-line using a major credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover) or by electronic check from your U.S. checking account. To pay by electronic check, you must have either a valid U.S. Driver's License or a U.S. Social Security Number.

13. Will I be able to confirm if my RODS request has been fulfilled?

Yes. The status of your RODS request will be available via OASIS.

14. What if ECFMG cannot locate documents I submitted?

In the event a document cannot be located, ECFMG ERAS will attempt to secure a new document for you. If a new document cannot be secured, electronic copies will be available.

15. Am I required to request return of my documents?

No. RODS is an optional service. If you do not request return of your documents, they will be destroyed when the current ERAS application cycle ends.

16. My program is requesting original documents to be returned, but I have waived my right to view the LoRs. What should I do?

Instruct the programs to retrieve the documents electronically using the ERAS Program Directors' Workstation. If there are unusual or extenuating circumstances, program coordinators may send a written inquiry to eras-support@ecfm.org. The subject line should include your name and USMLE/ECFMG identification number. Programs must detail the unusual or extenuating circumstances and provide their contact information in the e-mail.

17. I submitted other miscellaneous documents, such as the ERAS Document Submission Form and California Application Status Letter. Will these documents be returned to me?

Yes. We will return all submitted documents, except for LoRs that you waived your right to see.

18. I have sent documents to other departments within ECFMG. Can I request return of these documents?

No. This service is only for documents submitted to ECFMG ERAS.

19. I have applied to programs via ERAS in previous years. Can you send me those documents?

No. At this time, RODS is only available for the current ERAS application cycle.

20. Is there a deadline for RODS?

Yes. For documents submitted for the ERAS 2008 application cycle, you must request return of your documents by May 31, 2008.

21. Will my documents be destroyed if I do not request their return?

Yes. If you do not submit a RODS request for return of your documents by May 31, 2008, they will be destroyed.

22. Can I request a copy of my Common Application Form (CAF)?

No. Only paper documents submitted to ECFMG ERAS will be returned. You can print a copy of your CAF from MyERAS before May 31, 2008.

23. I have also applied to a program outside of ERAS. Can my documents be sent directly to the program?

No. Documents can only be returned to applicants.