

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

(Posted July 12, 2006; revised June 25, 2007)

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 students and graduates (IMGs) submit **original** LoRs. 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; do **not** submit original medical school transcripts.

ERAS Support Services at ECFMG will not delay the processing of an ERAS application if you 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 and manually signed by the letter writer in an **ink color other than black**. For enhanced authentication, request that your letter writer(s) affix an institutional seal to the LoR.

Original LoRs not written in English must include an official English translation; that is, an English translation prepared by and certified to be correct by a 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.

You are urged to submit LoRs that are up-to-date and meaningful in content. The letter writer should be a physician who is familiar with your clinical abilities and knowledge, as well as your interpersonal skills. Submitting 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 you cannot obtain a MSPE, you can indicate this on page 12 of the Common Application Form (CAF).

The term "Dean's letter" is no longer used. You are urged to approach your respective Dean's office to acquire a MSPE. The content of the MSPE should provide an "evaluation" of your performance during the course of your medical school years, relative to your peers. The MSPE should not act as "predictor" of your future performance but provide information about your 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 you 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.** Official English translations accompanying submitted documents will be marked as copies if the underlying documents are determined to be copies.

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