

ERAS 2009 Application Season Has Begun

Information on the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) 2009 application season is available. If you plan to apply for U.S. residency positions that begin in 2009, visit the ECFMG ERAS Support Services website at <http://www.ecfm.org/eras> for important information. Most medical specialties participate in ERAS. If you apply to programs in participating specialties, you must apply to these programs using ERAS.

At ECFMG's ERAS Support Services website, you will be able to:

- Obtain an ERAS Token, which will allow you to access the MyERAS website to work on your residency applications.
- Find instructions for submitting your supporting documents, such as letters of recommendation and transcripts, to ERAS Support Services for scanning and transmission to the ERAS PostOffice.

If you plan to participate in ERAS, you should also be familiar with the following policies and procedures that are new for ERAS 2009.

ERAS PostOffice Will Be Closed on September 1, 2008

The ERAS PostOffice will be closed on Monday, September 1, 2008 in observance of the Labor Day holiday. The ERAS PostOffice will open at 8:00 a.m., Eastern Time in the United States, on September 2, 2008, at which time ERAS applicants can begin applying to ACGME-accredited residency programs.

New On-Line Document Submission Form (DSF)

ERAS Support Services at ECFMG strongly urges that all ERAS 2009 applicants complete and include the new on-line Document Submission Form (DSF) each time they submit documents to ECFMG for scanning. The DSF is an important addition to ERAS Support Services' document tracking system, and will streamline the preparation of ERAS supporting documents submitted to ECFMG for scanning. It will also enable itemized tracking of these supporting documents through ECFMG's OASIS.

The DSF can be accessed through the ERAS Support Services section of ECFMG's OASIS. You can access OASIS from the ECFMG website. **Complete the DSF on-line in OASIS, print it, and include it with your document(s) each time you submit documents for scanning.** You may access the DSF as many times as needed throughout the ERAS 2009 season.

If your medical school or Letter of Recommendation writers are submitting documents to ERAS Support Services on your behalf, provide them with a printed DSF. They should then include this DSF when they submit your supporting documents.

For detailed instructions on how to complete and submit the DSF, refer to ECFMG's ERAS Support Services website at www.ecfm.org/eras.

Finalizing Letter of Recommendation (LoR) Writers at the MyERAS Site

The Letter of Recommendation (LoR) section of the Association of American Medical Colleges' (AAMC) MyERAS website allows you to create a list of individuals who will write letters on your behalf. New for ERAS 2009, you can finalize your LoR writers **before** you apply to programs. In previous years, an LoR could not be attached to your electronic application until you assigned the LoR to at least one program to which you had applied. This year, as soon as you finalize your LoR writers, ERAS Support Services at ECFMG will receive an update that allows us to scan your LoRs and make them available to programs when you apply. **ERAS Support Services at ECFMG strongly recommends that you finalize your LoR writers once you have registered at MyERAS.**

To finalize an LoR writer, create a new letter writer by clicking "Designate a New Letter of Recommendation Writer" in the Documents section of the AAMC MyERAS website. Fill out the information and click "Save". Repeat this process for all of your designated letter writers. After you have finished designating your letter writers, click the check box(es) next to the writer(s) that you wish to finalize, enter your MyERAS password in the box provided, and click "Finalize".

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once you finalize the letter writer, you cannot edit the designated LoR request. It is your responsibility to follow-up with letter writers and confirm that your LoRs have reached ERAS Support Services at ECFMG in time to meet program deadlines.

ERAS 2009 Repeat Applicants

ERAS 2009 "Repeat Applicants" are defined as ERAS 2008 applicants who will participate in the ERAS 2009 season. **ERAS applicants are "Repeat Applicants" only if they participated in the previous ERAS season.** If you are a "Repeat Applicant," you are not required to resubmit your Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), medical school transcript, or photograph for the ERAS 2009 application season.

You will be automatically identified as a "Repeat Applicant" at the time you make an ERAS 2009 Token request via OASIS. ERAS Support Services will reuse your stored MSPE, medical school transcript, and photograph and upload them to the ERAS 2009 PostOffice within three to five business days from the time you use your Token to register at the AAMC MyERAS website. You will be able to track the status of these existing documents via OASIS.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A photograph will only be reused if it was assigned to a program the previous year.

You should resubmit these documents **only** if they have been modified or if you opted not to submit your MSPE or medical school transcript by selecting “No” on page 12 of your ERAS 2008 Common Application Form (CAF). In this instance, complete the on-line Document Submission Form (DSF), available through ECFMG’s OASIS, and include it with any updated documents submitted to ERAS Support Services. If you wish to submit an updated digital photograph, access the ERAS Support Services section of ECFMG’s OASIS.

If you submit an updated MSPE, medical school transcript, or photograph, ERAS Support Services will use them to replace the documents currently stored in the ERAS database.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Retrieval of stored documents is **only** available to ERAS 2008 applicants. This service is not available for applicants who applied prior to ERAS 2008.

“Repeat Applicants” are still required to submit up-to-date, original Letters of Recommendation (LoRs). LoRs from ERAS 2008 will not be reused for ERAS 2009.

Four-Week Lead Time to Scan and Upload Documents

Due to the increasingly high volume of incoming ERAS supporting documents, ERAS Support Services at ECFMG requires up to **four weeks to scan and upload documents to the ERAS PostOffice.**

On Tuesday, September 2, 2008, at 8:00 a.m., Eastern Time in the United States, you may begin applying to ACGME-accredited programs, and ACGME-accredited programs may begin contacting the ERAS PostOffice to download application files. ERAS Support Services strongly urges all international medical students and graduates to submit supporting documents in time for them to arrive **at ECFMG by August 1, 2008.** Our goal is to have as many supporting documents as possible uploaded to the ERAS PostOffice by mid-September. We are committed to providing the resources necessary to ensure this goal is met; however, your timely submission of documents is critical to achieving this common goal.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Medical Student Performance Evaluations (MSPEs) are made available to programs on November 1, 2008. Therefore, your MSPEs should arrive at ECFMG no later than October 1, 2008.

The standard document types are listed on the Documents page of the ECFMG website at www.ecfm.org/eras/documents.html. If a program requests additional document types not listed at this site, applicants should make arrangements with the programs to have their documents sent directly to the program. This practice is in accordance with the AAMC ERAS policy. ERAS will **not** process these documents.

As stated in the announcement above, “New On-Line Document Submission Form,” all ERAS 2009 applicants are strongly urged to submit a completed Document Submission Form (DSF) each time they submit documents to ERAS Support Services for scanning.

If you waive your right to see a Letter of Recommendation (LoR), you should provide a completed DSF to your letter writer, and request the writer to submit the form along with the LoR. The AAMC’s *Request for Letter of Recommendation/Cover Sheet*, available at www.aamc.org/students/eras/resources/downloads/lorcoverimg.pdf, must also be completed and provided to the letter writer for submission with the LoR. Any LoR that you have waived your right to see is not eligible for return through ECFMG’s Return of Document Service (RODS).

It is important to note that you are not required to submit a DSF when you upload a digital photograph through OASIS. Also, “Repeat Applicants” are not required to complete the DSF for any documents reused from the ERAS 2008 season, including Medical Student Performance Evaluations (MSPEs), medical school transcripts, and photographs.