

Letters of Recommendation

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

Authors: Peter DeBlieux, MD; Sam Keim, MD; Carey Chisholm, MD

Balance how well the letter writer knows you with how well they are known to the EM residency directors' community. A stellar letter from a community family practice preceptor will carry less impact than a solid letter from an EM program director that I know and trust. My concerns about that community practitioner is that they may be comparing you to a different group (or with a different yardstick) than the EM applicant pool. Likewise, they may not understand attributes that make an excellent EM resident. They can provide information about your work ethic and interpersonal skills. Therefore, you need to have at least one letter from an EM program director. Most directors also want to see a letter from every EM program that you did a rotation with (the absence raises questions about how well you did). EM directors will use a SLOR (Standard Letter of Recommendation) that can be found on the CORD home page.

Authors: Adrienne Birnbaum, MD; Wallace Carter, MD

Students interested in a career in EM may feel pressure to make the "proper" contacts with faculty. Some pointers to keep in mind follow. First, a lukewarm letter of recommendation from a renowned leader in EM may make a less favorable impression on residency admission committee members than an enthusiastic evaluation from a less well-known faculty member that has worked closely with you and had an opportunity to get to know you personally. If you have not worked particularly closely with any individual who can write a letter for you, the preceptor of the student rotation will often be able to write a letter based on a composite of comments from individual faculty members that you have worked with. Be sure to choose an appropriate time to discuss your career issues with faculty members. In general, it is more appropriate to set up a meeting with a faculty member than to try to discuss personal issues during a hectic ED shift. Under the proper circumstances, most faculty members, including program directors and department chairs will be enthusiastic about discussing EM with students interested in a career in EM.

What is a SLOR? (Michelle Lin, MD)

In order to generate more evaluative data on EM applicants, the Council of Emergency Medicine Residency Directors designed a Standardized Letter of Recommendation (SLOR) form as a template for Emergency Medicine physicians writing letters of recommendation. This stand-alone document can be downloaded from the Council of Residency Directors ([CORD](#)) in EM website.

Standardized Letter of Recommendation (PDF)

<http://www.saem.org/SAEMDNN/LinkClick.aspx?link=StdLettofrec.pdf&tabid=271&mid=768>