



ERAS Application FAQ

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GENERAL

Is it necessary or advantageous to have my ERAS application completed as soon as the system opens to programs in July?

There is no particular advantage to having your ERAS application be among the first received by a program. Your best strategy is to be aware of any individual program deadlines and make sure your application is complete and submitted well in advance.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (LOR)

Who should I ask to write me a letter of recommendation (LoR)?

Request LoRs from physicians or clinical faculty that have sufficient experience working with you to discuss your strengths in a meaningful way. Avoid asking residents. Look into whether the programs you're applying to have any specific requirements for letter writers. Also consider obtaining LoRs that will be most valued by the residency program. For example, LoRs from physicians within the specialty should be sought when applying to Emergency Medicine and to the surgical specialties, whereas letters from a variety of providers may be more useful in primary care.

How should I approach a potential letter writer?

Try to ask for letters near the end of your rotations, while you are fresh in your prospective letter writer's memory. If you have to contact them later, it can be helpful to include a photograph of yourself among the materials you provide. Be professional, courteous, respectful of their time, and mindful of the significance of your request. If communicating by email use formal language, e.g., begin with "Dear Dr. X," until or unless they say otherwise. You might begin by letting them know what specialty you're interested in and asking if they know you well enough to write a favorable letter on your behalf. Provide the author with your CV and offer to meet to talk about the program(s) you are seeking and why you're a good fit. This is often helpful to the author and makes for a more compelling LoR. Caution: If you are applying to more than one specialty, make sure you submit the right LoRs to the right programs. [\(back to top\)](#)

Should I waive or retain my right to review a letter of recommendation (LoR)?

Under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you have the right to review confidential LoRs unless you explicitly waive this right. The ERAS Letter Request Form that you provide to each LoR author allows you to indicate whether or not you waive your right; therefore, the author will know if you intend to read their letter or not. While there is no strict rule about this, a student is generally expected to waive his or her right to read the LoR as this provides some reassurance to programs that the letter is candid and truthful. It is almost always in your best interest to waive your right, and at the same time, do your best to select letter writers who are most likely to provide you with a strong letter of support; most will tell you if you ask. Even if you waive your right, some recommenders might still show you the letter they have written. [\(back to top\)](#)

Do all my LoRs need to be ready / available prior to submitting my ERAS application or can I submit my application and add additional letters later?

To avoid delays request LoRs early in the process. Additional letters can be added to your ERAS application at a later time; however, keep in mind that some programs may not consider an application "complete" for review until a designated number of LoRs has been received. It may be wise to contact the program to alert them when a new LOR is added.

MATCH

Am I automatically registered for the Match when I apply through ERAS?

No, the Match is totally distinct from ERAS and you must register separately. In fact, if you are applying to both osteopathic and allopathic programs, you must register for *both* matches. The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) runs the ACGME (allopathic) match <http://www.nrmp.org> and the National Matching Service (NMS) runs the AOA (osteopathic) match <https://www.natmatch.com/aoairp/>.

Are the AOA ID and NMS Match ID the same number?

No, they are two different numbers. To obtain an NMS Match ID, you must register with NMS at www.natmatch.com. ([back to top](#))

I'm not sure yet whether I will participate in the MD match, but in the meantime I would like to submit my application to DO programs. Can I do this?

In the Personal Information section on ERAS, you can't save your answers unless every question is complete, including the question about your intent to participate in the NRMP (MD match) and your NRMP ID number. However, you needn't let this hold up your application. If you're undecided or haven't yet registered for the MD Match, you can simply click "no" to the NRMP question and then submit your application for DO programs. Later, if and when you register for the MD match, you can go in and change your answer to "yes" and add your NRMP ID number.

What happens if I match with an osteopathic program, but I am also registered to participate in the allopathic match?

If you match with an osteopathic program in February, you will be automatically dropped from the allopathic match, which takes place in March.

What happens if I do not match?

If you are only registered in the osteopathic match but do not match, then you may participate in the post-match Scramble. The MSUCOM Career Guidance Web Site has a "[Scramble Toolkit](#)" to assist you with this process. If you are registered in the NRMP but do not match, then you may participate in the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP).

MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (MSPE)

Is the MSPE considered one of my Letters of Recommendation?

No, the MSPE (a.k.a. Dean's Letter) is a separate document. It is not a recommendation at all, but rather a comprehensive evaluative report. ([back to top](#))

When will my MSPE be added to my ERAS application?

The College will be notified by ERAS when you submit your application to a residency program. Only once you've applied will your MSPE be uploaded; however, **ERAS will not release your MSPE to any program until October 1**. If you applied to a program prior to October 1 (i.e., July – September), your MSPE will be released on October 1 and your updated application will be pushed out to those programs by ERAS. If you begin to apply to programs after October 1, the turnaround time to release your MSPE is approximately 3-4 days after you submit your application. ([back to top](#))

Can my MSPE be released before October 1 if I have already started to interview?

No, it cannot. All MSPEs for all students, osteopathic and allopathic, are released by ERAS (not MSUCOM) on October 1. Program Directors are aware of this.

How do I make changes/additions to my MSPE?

Email Dr. Falls at Bill.Falls@hc.msu.edu to request changes.

What is the process by which the MSPE is generated?

The Associate Dean of Student Services and staff write the MSPEs using information gathered from several sources, including the students' academic and clerkship files, as well as forms completed by each student. Students must complete and submit the "Authorization for Release of Information" and "Extracurricular Activities" forms via e-mail to the Associate Dean's office. Each student's "Authorization for Release of Information" form must have been received in order to submit his or her MSPE to ERAS.

Students will be contacted individually if either of these forms is missing at the time that the letters are being drafted. When received, the forms are printed and placed in each student's file. Office staff complete a first draft of the MSPE letters incorporating information such as degrees earned, board scores, extracurricular activities, scholarships, and publications. The student's MSUCOM Official Grade Report is appended to the end of the letter. Once drafted, the Associate Dean completes his section and staff finalizes the letters for upload to ERAS. ([back to top](#))

TRANSCRIPTS

Where should I send my MSU transcript?

Navigate to <https://reg.msu.edu/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx> and have your transcript sent electronically to TRANSCRIPT@COM.MSU.EDU C110 East Fee Hall, Attention: Lynn Spragg.

What does an ET on my MSU transcript mean?

An ET refers to an Extension of the grading period and means that not all requirements of the rotation have been completed, verified, or posted to your schedule. Causes include (1) you have not completed all rotation requirements, or (2) the attending evaluation has not yet been received, or (3) the MSU Registrar had not yet received updated information at the time you ordered your transcript, or (4) the course coordinator has not yet changed the grade. Although the ET grades on your transcript will not affect your ERAS application *per se*, they could prevent you from receiving an interview offer, so do your best to get them resolved.

Should I wait to submit my ERAS application until all ET grades have been resolved?

Transcripts in ERAS are inherently incomplete until degree conferral. Updated transcripts with resolved ET grades can be submitted to ERAS later in the application season. There is likely more to be lost by delaying an ERAS application than can be gained by waiting for an updated transcript.

What is the turnaround time to have an ET grade changed?

Turnaround time varies considerably depending on the individual circumstances. The single best thing to do is to watch your schedule, and when you see that all requirements for the rotation are posted, contact the appropriate course coordinator and request a grade change. ([back to top](#))

Do I need to wait for my COMLEX transcript to be uploaded or can I submit my application with it still in the "authorized" status?

Submit your application. Once you do this you will be prompted to pay the release fee for your COMLEX transcript. The transcript will take 3-5 business days to appear in your application.

Once I complete COMLEX Step 2 CE or PE, do I need to order another COMLEX transcript and pay the fee?

NBOME does not automatically download newly released scores if they were not available at the time of your initial order. After you receive your updated COMLEX scores, go back into ERAS and re-release your COMLEX Transcript. You will not be charged a fee. [\(back to top\)](#)