Q. Is there an advantage to having a complete ERAS application as soon as the system opens to programs in July?
A. Being the first ERAS application that a program receives has no particular advantage. The best strategy is to know any deadlines that programs to which you apply may have and to make sure your application is complete and submitted well in advance.

Q. Who should I ask to write a letter of recommendation (LOR) for me?
A. In general, you should request LORs from physicians/faculty that have sufficient experience working with you to comment about your strengths in a meaningful way. You might want to start by telling them the specialty to which you are applying and asking if they feel they know you well enough to write a favorable letter on your behalf. Provide the author with your CV and offer to meet to explain about the program you are seeking and why you feel it would be a good fit (see caution below). This detail is often helpful to the author and makes for a more compelling LOR.

Another consideration is to obtain LOR’s that will be valued by the residency program. For example, letters of recommendation from physicians within the specialty should be sought when applying to Emergency Medicine and the surgical specialties, whereas letters from a variety of providers may be more useful in primary care. Caution: if you are applying to more than one specialty, make sure you submit the right LORs to the right program. It would probably not help your application to Orthopedic Surgery to have your LOR describe your lifelong desire to become a dermatologist.

Q. Should I waive my right to view a letter of recommendation so that I can read it first?
A. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects your academic record; it is your right under FERPA to see what evaluators say about you. ERAS requires that letters of recommendation (LORs) state whether you do or do not waive your right to see it. While there is no strict rule, programs generally expect that the student will waive his/her right to read the LOR. To retain the right to read the letter might insinuate that you did not trust what the author might say. If you do waive your right, make sure to let the author know to include this in the LOR. And while you can’t ask to see the letter if you waive your right, the author may still voluntarily share it with you.

Q. Do I need to have all my LORs prior to submitting my application or can I add additional letters of recommendation after the fact?
A. You should request LORs early to avoid any delays. Keep in mind that some programs may not consider an application "complete" for review until a designated number of LOR's are received. Additional letters can be added to your ERAS application later in the process. It may be wise to contact the program to alert them when a new LOR is added.

Q. I have an “ET” on my transcript. Should I wait to complete my ERAS application until that is resolved?
A. Transcripts in ERAS are by definition incomplete and a moving target. Updated transcripts can be submitted to ERAS later in the application season. But keep in mind that failure or remediation of a course will also be reflected in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE, sometimes referred to as the Dean’s letter). There is likely more to be lost by delaying an ERAS application than can be gained by waiting for an updated transcript.

Q. Are the AOA ID and NMS Match ID the same number?
A. No. The AOA ID and NMS Match ID are two different numbers. To obtain an NMS Match ID register with NMS at www.natmatch.com