Letters of Recommendation

Summary

The PPAC Letter Tracker is a free service offered by BYU for managing letters of recommendation (LORs), for those applying for medical, dental, and podiatry school. Students are not required to use Letter Tracker; there are other third party services that allow letters to be uploaded. If students use Letter Tracker, they can request letters and letter writers can upload their letter. This keeps letters in a centralized, confidential location. Once all letters are received, students can request to send them in a packet to specific application services. These letters are held in the database for five years.

Step 1: Collecting LORs
- Winter semester before you apply: identify potential letter writers and personally ask them for a LOR. Letter writers have busy schedules; start asking early, and check back politely and often to be sure the letters come in on time.
- Create a Letter Tracker account.
- Request the letter from your letter writer through Letter Tracker. This will send them an email with a link to upload your letter. You will receive an email when your letter has been uploaded by the writer. You can also go onto Letter Tracker to see the status of your letters at any time.

Step 2: Filling out LOR Section on the Application
- Application services open in May and June. Fill out the LOR portion (called Letters of Evaluation) of the application. As soon as you have completed your application, you are encouraged to submit it. Letters are not a required part of the primary application.

Step 3: Submitting a Packet Request on Letter Tracker
- After you have filled out the LOR portion of your application, create a packet from letter tracker. When you create this packet you will select which application service it will be sent to. You will receive a confirmation email from Letter Tracker when your packet has been sent. Letters are not needed until secondary applications; the earliest they will be looked at is the beginning of July.
- Your packet of letters has now been sent to the application services and will be sent to your schools.

Step 1: Collecting LORs

When you ask for a letter from a potential letter writer, confirm that they will write a positive letter. Letters should have the same date as the year you are applying. If your letter writer does not receive the email with the link from Letter Tracker, have them check their junk email. If they have problems uploading the letter, send another request and/or have them directly email the letter to healthprosec@byu.edu.

To request a LOR through Letter Tracker:

- Create an account on the PPA website (ppalettertracker.byu.edu) using a BYU netID.
- After logging in, click "Request a Letter."
- Enter the necessary information for the letter writer.
- Before submitting a letter request, waive your right to view the letter. We encourage waiving this right because medical schools require confidentiality.
- Then click "Submit". The letter writer will then receive an email telling them who requested the letter and how to write and submit a LOR to Letter Tracker.
- Letters will be uploaded to the Letter Tracker account as they are received.

Step 2: Filling out LOR Section on the Application

Once the application services open, fill out the LOR portion on the application. On the application services letters of recommendation are called letters of evaluation. Filling out this part of the application will allow the letter secretary to upload your letter packet onto your application. Schools will then have access to your letters.

AMCAS:
- Log onto AMCAS and go to the LOR section (you may need to complete additional sections before you can fill out this section).
- Select the letter type as "Letter Packet"
- Complete the LOR section with the information below. Because Letter Tracker sends LORs as one packet, Dr. Kaiser's name should be entered as the "Evaluator."
- When you have completed requesting a letter packet your AMCAS Letter ID will be created. This will be necessary when you create your AMCAS packet through Letter Tracker.

> BYU Letter Packet Information:
> Dr. David Kaiser
> Prehealth Advisor
> healthprosec@byu.edu
> 801-422-3044
> Brigham Young University
> 3328 WSC
> Provo, UT 84602

AACOMAS:
- Log onto AACOMAS and go to "Evaluations" (you may need to complete additional sections before you can fill out this section.)
- Use the above BYU Letter Packet information to fill out the Evaluation Request.
- Pick a "Due Date" (regardless of indicated date, the letter secretary will submit your packet within 1-2 business days unless there is an issue.)
- Write a "Personal Message" (you have to write a message in order to be able to submit the request, but it will be seen by only the letter secretary).
- Select the boxes that say "Permission to contact reference" and "Permission for schools to contact reference."

TMDSAS:
- Log onto TMDSAS and go to "Letters of Evaluation" (you may need to fill our other portions of the application before accessing the LOR portion of the application).
- Go to "Supporting Documents" then "Letters of Evaluation." State the letter type as "HP Committee Packet" and the institution as Brigham Young University.

Step 3: Submitting a Packet Request on Letter Tracker:

After completing the LOR section on AMCAS, AACOMAS, and/or TMDSAS, log into Letter Tracker. After you are on Letter Tracker first click "Packets," and then click "Request a packet." Select which application service you are using. You may submit a different packet to each application service (e.g., one for AMCAS, AACOMAS, and/or TMDSAS). However, you may only submit ONE packet to each application service, so be sure ALL of your letters are in your Letter Tracker account before you send them. Then enter the necessary ID numbers from the application services. Finally, select the letters you would like to submit in your packet. This is the order your letters will appear in the packet. Then click "Submit."

FAQs

Q: How many letters can I have on file at the preprofessional office?
A: You can store as many letters as you want on Letter Tracker. But, because most letter writers spend extensive time preparing a letter, avoid the inconsideration of asking for letters that will not be used.

Q: How will I know what letters have been submitted to Letter Tracker?
A: A confirmation email is sent out whenever a LOR is uploaded to Letter Tracker. The LORs also appear automatically on your Letter Tracker account once they are uploaded.

*Remember: letter packets cannot be sent until they are requested. Additionally, the PPAC does not send transcripts, personal comments, pictures, etc.

Q: How many packets can I send to AMCAS, AACOMAS, and TMDSAS?
A: Letter Tracker will send only ONE packet per application service. This means that all schools within that application service will receive the same packet of letters. **Before submitting a packet request, please confirm that Letter Tracker has received all LORs.**

Q: Does BYU have a Committee Letter?
A: BYU does not do Committee letters. Instead we do letter packets. It is nearly impossible for big universities to have a committee packet letter due to the large number of applicants. If you get the required letters, you will fulfill all the requirements. Schools have never expressed concerns about getting a letter packet instead of a committee letter.

Q: Is it advisable to send the schools more letter than they want if I use a letter packet?
A: Sending schools a letter packet with more letters than they allow is acceptable. We send our letter packet in a single PDF to make it easy for them to upload. The schools have never had a problem with getting a letter packet in place of the maximum letters they requested. You should not overload them with letters, but if you send a packet, that will be fine.

Q: Do I have to use BYU Letter Tracker or is there other ways to collect letters?
A: You can use many different sources to collect letters. Letter Tracker is a free service offered from BYU. There are other third party letter collecting agencies such as Virtual Evals or Interfolio that cost a small fee to use. Letter writers can also just upload letters directly to the application service.

Q: What are the benefits of using Letter Tracker?
A: You can have your professors upload letters anytime. If you have your letter writers upload letters directly to the application service, they have to wait until the application services open (May/June). Letter Tracker is also free as opposed to other third party systems.

Q: How many letters can I have in a packet?
A: You can submit 5 letters in a packet to AMCAS or AACOMAS. You can submit 4 letters