

Tips From Program Directors

CaRMS 2022-2023

Class of 2023



Requesting Reference Letters



Don't Ask for it on Day 1

It is best to not wait until your last day either, providing sufficient time to observe you in your elective.

Giving lead time (*halfway through rotation/elective*) will provide the preceptor an opportunity to gather examples to highlight your skills.

It is not recommended to ask for a reference letter by email weeks after you have finished.

(some extenuating circumstances may override this advice. If this is the case, explain your situation.)



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Ask People who know you best

If there is a physician who does a specialty that is different from what you are applying to that is ok if they know you well.



If you work with someone in 1st or 2nd year, consider working with them again in 4th year. Getting a before and after of a student allows a preceptor to see how much you've grown.

Reference letters are more effective when written by someone who has worked with you clinically. The reviewer wants to know how you worked within a clinical environment, where you assumed responsibility for patient care.

When a PD reads, "this person came to me for a half day clinic once and seemed pleasant" they often think, *why, of all the people they worked with in clerkship, did they have this one write them a reference?*

For LIC students, ensure you request a letter of reference from your supervisor. It would be a red flag if this was not provided, given you have worked with them the entire year.



Quick Tips

1

Asking for a reference letter can feel a bit uncomfortable. Remember, preceptors know you will need them and it might be considered odd if you DID NOT ask for a letter.

2

You should have at least one letter from someone within the discipline to which you are applying.

3

Advise the person writing a letter for you what you are applying to and they can tailor the letter appropriately.

4

It is appropriate to ask a preceptor to write more than one letter if you are applying for more than one discipline. Ensure you provide them with your approach to CaRMS. Make their job easy!





If the program requires 3 letters of reference, **ONLY** submit 3 letters. Follow program instructions - it looks good on you! Additional letters are not considered by programs.



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● Think Positive



- Almost ALL reference letters are highly positive.
- Please remember, reference letters are just ONE part of the application. Focusing too much on or fearing reference letters may lead to being more stressed than students need to be.
- Students should always remember to ask if their preceptor is willing to write a "strong, supportive reference."

One reference letter will not be the "one and only" deciding factor for your application.

(your application in CaRMS, to any program, is a cumulative score on several components)

The bigger issue is actually if a letter is missing from someone you've worked with for a long stretch, or if there are no letters from within the discipline you're applying to.

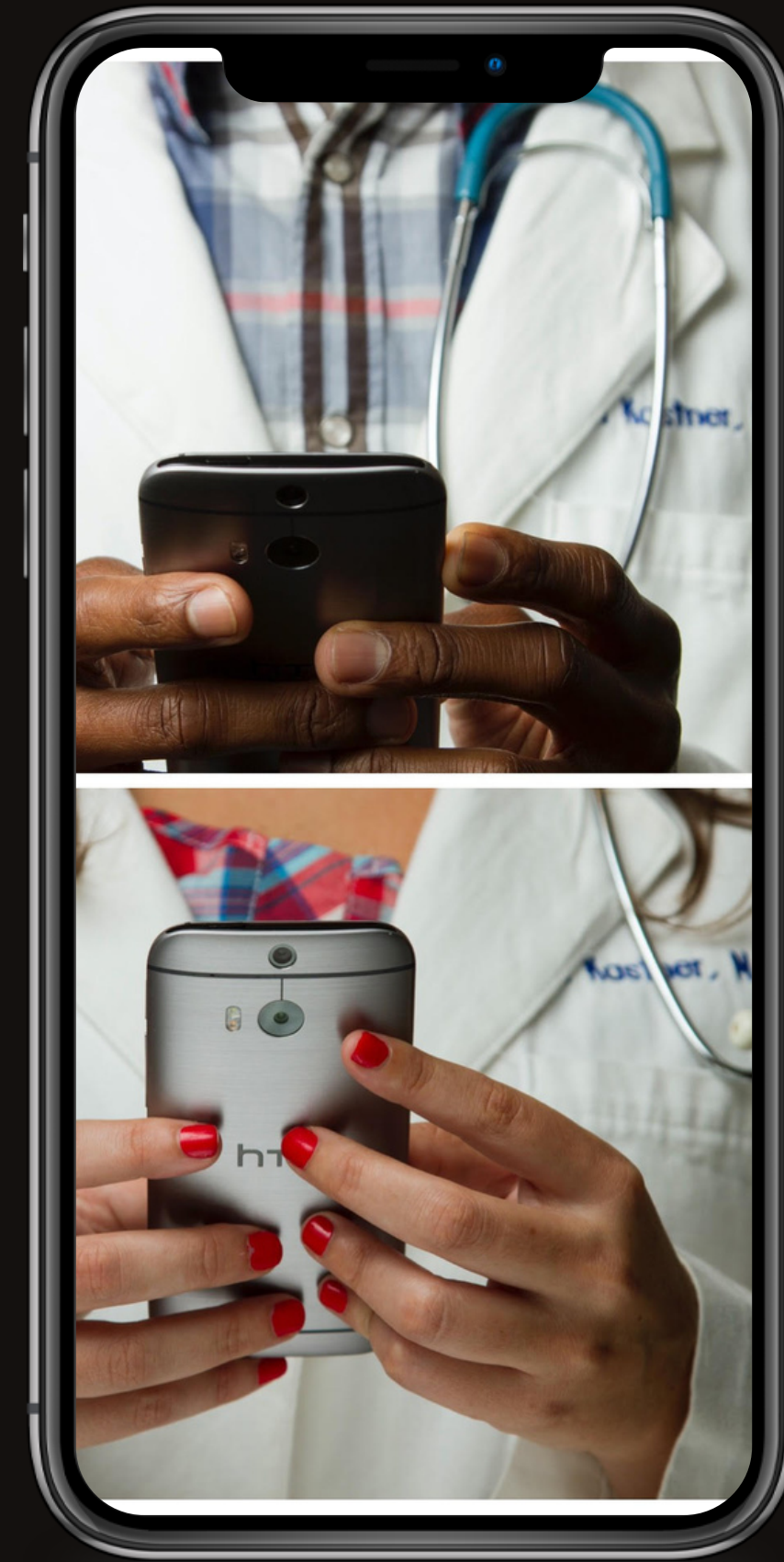
Offer to send a reminder.

This reminder could include:

a) Most current CV (the one you are using for CaRMS)

b) The evaluation from the elective/rotation (if available)

c) If applicable, include a reminder about a prominent clinic scenario they were involved in with you.





Thank you!

Reach out if you have questions.