

Graduate/Professional School Recommendation File Service Policies

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Effective September 20, 2009, we are no longer creating any new files, but we will continue to provide service to current file holders through their expiration date. As we phase out the Recommendation File Service (RFS), the duration of your file(s) cannot be extended beyond its expiration date. To retain access to your letters beyond that date, you may create a file with and send your letters to www.interfolio.com. See the RFS instructions on career.ucsd.edu for details.

For Current File Holders

Our file service can facilitate the collection, maintenance and forwarding of recommendation letters for applications to professional or graduate school. The file service will not forward letters in support of applications for employment, internship opportunities, fellowships or scholarships (except those which fund professional or graduate study, provided that your writer has authorized that use).

The following policies are designed to protect the integrity of your letters, to protect your writers, and to operate within federal, state and University privacy laws. We reserve the right under the UCSD Student Conduct Regulations to report to the proper authority deliberate violations or attempts to violate these policies including, but not limited to, falsifying school or program names or addresses, sending or attempting to directly or indirectly send yourself letters you have waived your right to see, forging or doctoring letters, or otherwise knowingly using the RFS for improper purposes (job applications, non-designated programs, etc.). Violation of the policies may result in the loss of use of your file and/or other institutional action.

Fees

CREDIT CARDS ARE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE PAYMENT METHOD. ALL FEES ARE **NON-REFUNDABLE**.

- **Distribution Fees:** Each distribution of your letters is \$5 (\$10 after 9/6/11). You may purchase multiple distributions at once. Each distribution may be used to send your selected letter(s) through U.S. mail to ONE school or application service OR (for "Medicine" files only) to send your VE Account letters to MULTIPLE osteopathic schools selected at one time. Make sure you purchase only the amount that you need as NO REFUNDS ARE ISSUED.

For distribution by U.S. Mail, first class postage and labeled envelopes are included in the distribution fee. Express and Priority Mail are available for an additional cost.

- **VirtualEvals Fees:** Students applying to osteopathic (DO) medical schools may choose to electronically distribute their "Medicine" file letters through a VirtualEvals (VE) Account to those schools. Each VE Account costs \$15 (\$20 after 9/6/11) to set up and can be used for only one application cycle. VE Accounts may be established and used only between July 1 and March 31 of each medical school application cycle. VE cannot be used to send letters to MD or MD/PhD programs.

Specific Purpose of File

Each file is for ONE specific file type of professional or graduate school program only (e.g., Medicine, Law, Life Sciences). Letters that are written for one specific type can only be sent to that type of program. For example, if you are applying for both dental and pharmacy programs, you must have two separate files and request separate letters of recommendation for each. We will not transfer letters from one file to another, nor share the same letter between multiple files. "Medicine" files can be used for MD, DO, or MD/PhD programs. If you have established one type of file with the RFS system and decide to apply for different type of program, consider opening a file with Interfolio.

Access to Letters

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, gives you the right to review the letters held on file for you or waive that right. The UCSD Career Services Center will not reveal the confidentiality status of your letters to the institutions to which you apply. Each time you request a recommendation letter from a writer, you will need to fill out a

“Waiver and Routing Form” on which you will indicate whether you want to waive or retain your right of access to that particular letter. A completed form must be received with each letter. Updated letters will have the same waiver status as the original unless a new Waiver & Routing Form indicating a different waiver status is submitted along with the updated letter.

Retention of File

Professional and graduate school recommendation files will be retained until three years after their last distribution prior to September 20, 2009, or, if your file was not distributed prior to that date, five years after the file was first created.

Letters of Recommendation

- 1) Files are the property of UC San Diego. Letters of recommendation are transferable to Interfolio at your request; the RFS will maintain your file until its expiration date even after transfer to Interfolio. The UCSD RFS is not affiliated with Interfolio – questions or issues with their service should be directed to Interfolio.
- 2) When requesting a letter of recommendation, give your writer the completed “Waiver and Routing Form” indicating whether or not you have waived your right to access the letter. It is within your letter writer’s rights to decline to write a letter if you don’t agree to waive. Ask your writer to return the completed “Waiver and Routing Form” with their letter. Letter writers may rescind letters at any time by request.
- 3) Recommendation letters must be typed on **letterhead stationery** and must include **signatures**. If your writer doesn’t have letterhead, the letter must include the writer’s contact information (address, phone, email). Original (not-scanned) signatures are preferred.
- 4) You and your writers are responsible for seeing that the letters are given to us in a form suitable for scanning or copying. Letters should be neatly and accurately typed. We cannot re-type or correct the letters. We cannot alter the letters in any way, or add information (ID numbers, dates) to the letters.
- 5) A file may not contain more than ten letters.
- 6) The file service is only for letters of recommendation. We cannot forward photographs, copies of credentials, transcripts, institutions’ pre-printed recommendation forms, resumes, *curriculum vitae* or other materials. We will forward matching forms for application services such as LSAC, AMCAS, PharmCAS, AADSAS, etc. These forms must be received before a request for distribution is made. Other than AMCAS, we do not check for application forms before mailing letters.

Distribution

Your requests will be sent from our office directly to a professional and graduate school admissions office ONLY. We will not release your file or any letters directly to you for transmission or delivery, nor will we release to a third party (except at your request to Interfolio or osteopathic medical schools through the VirtualEvals system). Distribution requests must be made online. **Your request will be processed and letters will be sent within 5 full business days after the date of receipt.** Requests received on either weekends or holidays will be treated as if received on the next business day. **WE HAVE NO RUSH SERVICE.** For U.S. Mail distributions, you may choose to pay extra for Express or Priority mail. This controls the speed at which the U.S. Postal Service handles your mailing, not the speed at which it leaves our office.

Barring technical issues, letters sent to the AMCAS (MD medical) application service will be transmitted electronically. No other electronic distribution – fax, email, upload, etc. – is available.

It is your responsibility to make sure that the correct address is provided in your distribution requests and that your letters were received. Although we make every effort to be accurate, ultimately it is your responsibility to check that the correct letters are received by the institution you requested. We are not responsible for letters lost by the U.S. postal service or by the schools receiving them.

Updating Your File

You may have letters updated, new ones added or obsolete letters removed from your file. We will return a copy of a letter to a writer to be updated at your request. You may have a letter removed by submitting written, dated and signed instructions to our office.