

SCCO requires 3 Letters of Recommendation (LORs) from three different sources. All LORs MUST be submitted through OptomCAS:

- **Mandatory Source:** An optometrist who can state through documented experience that you know what the profession of optometry entails and possibly a statement about your suitability to be a healthcare provider, specifically a doctor.
- **Recommended Source:** A professor with whom you have done personal work (such as assisted on a specific project or served as a TA or reader), or with whom you took a course.
- **Recommended Source:** An employer or extracurricular activity advisor who can comment about your maturity, diligence and conscientiousness.

Aside from the mandatory LOR from an optometrist, the other sources are suggested options to best complete a balanced LOR sample. You can use any professional person as a Recommender to submit an LOR on your behalf.

OptomCAS and LORs:

LORs are critical to the review of your application. **Before you enter your LOR information** in the section of your OptomCAS application, it is suggested you contact the individuals to confirm they will authorize your LOR and to find out which format they would prefer (electronic or paper). If they choose to submit your LOR electronically, please confirm their preferred contact e-mail address.

The LOR requires completion of two parts: a Rating of Attributes (Part I) the LOR (Part II). The narrative can be typed directly into the space provided within your online application or can be cut and pasted from a word processor. Because some word processor characters will not correctly translate into text, Recommenders are **strongly encouraged** to compose their letter in a text-only word processor (e.g., Notepad, not Word), review the letter for errors, then cut and paste the final version into the text box. **OptomCAS is currently NOT set up to receive PDF formatted LORs.**

Designate your Recommenders early in the application process. We strongly encourage you to enter your LOR information within your centralized application as the first step, as to expedite the Recommender's receipt of the Recommendation Request Form. Because OptomCAS recommendation requests may be caught by spam filters, applicants are encouraged to contact their Recommenders to ask them to allow their e-mail systems to "permit" the OptomCAS reference mail address: optomcasinfo@optomcas.org.

Check the status of your Recommender's responses through the Status Section on the main page of the OptomCAS application. Those who use the electronic LOR format will automatically receive a duplicate request one time per month until they either submit the requested recommendation or deny the request.

It is not necessary to wait until your recommenders have responded to submit your application.

Enter up to four (4) recommender names on your OptomCAS application. Recommenders may submit LOR electronically (preferred method) or as paper references to OptomCAS.

The applicant will provide the names, addresses and e-mail addresses of a maximum of four (4) people providing LORs. OptomCAS will send the Rating of Attributes form to the recommender to be completed and returned.

If your Recommender chooses to submit an electronic LOR, enter only their e-mail address and leave the mailing address fields blank.

If your Recommender chooses to submit a paper LOR, complete the mailing address fields and leave the e-mail address blank. For paper-format LORs, you will need to print the appropriate Rating of Attributes forms and send these to your Recommender(s) to complete. These forms will be made available and printable if you select the paper format option and will not be made available until your application is opened.

Committee Letter of Recommendation:

Yes, SCCO will accept a Committee Letter. It counts as one LOR.

Some pre-health advising offices compile academic/personal information and will also coordinate the collection of LORs in order to provide a "Committee Letter" for pre-optometry students. If the Committee Letter of Recommendation is a compilation from several individuals and contains one Recommendation Request Form and one letter, it will be considered as one LOR. The individual writing the recommendation must complete the Rating of Attributes on the Recommendation Request Form; OptomCAS will accept the name of a college pre-health profession advisor in lieu of the evaluator(s) on the recommendation form.

Using a Letter Service:

College and university letter services may submit recommendations to OptomCAS.

However, applicants who are submitting letters through college and university letter services cannot submit letters that are dated more than two years (24 months) prior to the opening of the current OptomCAS session. As an example, for the 2009-2010 application cycle, only letters filed through a college and university letter service from July 15, 2007 and forward will be considered.

If you are submitting LORs through a letter service, you must have the original author(s) of the LORs complete the Rating of Attributes, which is Part I of the Recommendation Request Form.

OptomCAS will not receive LORs through Virtual Evals.

LORs (Part I and Part II) Need to Be Co-Signed by a Faculty If Written by a Teaching Assistant:

An LOR from a Teaching Assistant must be co-signed by a Faculty person. This requirement applies not only to the LOR (Part II of the requirement) but to the rating of attributes (Part I of the requirement) as well.

LORs (Part I (Rating of Attributes) and Part II (the actual LOR) with this double-signature line requirement are best submitted in hard copy through OptomCAS.