

# Letters of Recommendation in UAConnect

The Graduate School is implementing a new UAConnect hosted process to facilitate Letters of Recommendation (LOR). The entire process is driven by both automated communications sent from UAConnect and actions taken by the student. Using this new process, no intervention will be required from either academic department or admissions staff to collect letters of recommendation.

## Overview

The new Letters of Recommendation process is entirely driven by the student with automated system generated emails being the primary means of communication for both the applicant and the recommenders. Applicants are granted access to Applicant Center as soon as their application is loaded into UAConnect. A communication is sent to each applicant requesting they add recommenders through his/her Applicant Center in UAConnect. Each recommender entered receives an email containing instructions on how to complete the recommendation process. Also included in the email are questions asked to be referenced in their letter of recommendation. Academic departments have the option to customize the questions which are presented to each recommender for each academic plan/degree option. Recommenders have the option to either upload a letter of recommendation to ISIS or decline to participate. With proper permissions, all uploaded letters are viewable by the respective UA department. Throughout the entire process, emails are sent to each applicant to provide status updates.

If a department chooses to not participate in the LOR process, applicants to their programs will not receive any communications regarding letters of recommendation nor will they have access to the pages in their Student Center.

## Setup

Each academic department can choose whether they want to opt in or out of the new LOR process. On the new setup page, coordinators can dictate how many references are required for each of their academic plans as well as the questions they want presented to recommenders. The questions will appear on all communications sent to the recommender as well as the upload page available to them to upload their letter of recommendation. Recommenders are requested to respond to these questions in their letter of recommendation. At this time, there is not an option of doing sliding scales or drop down boxes to collect responses. An alternative to this would be to re-phrase the question to request a descriptive response (ex. From a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the highest how would you describe the applicants ability to... ).

The Setup page is available in UAConnect by navigating to: *Main Menu > Student Admissions > UA AD Custom Components > UA\_GRAD > SETUP > UA GS Acad Plan LOR Setup*. It is advisable to make this page one of your favorites in UAConnect so you don't have to remember the navigation. You can do that by first navigating to the page you want to "bookmark", then click on Favorites in the navigation. An option will be available entitled "Add to Favorites". After saving, this Favorites link will be available to you any time you sign into UAConnect regardless of the machine you are at.

It is important to note that only coordinators assigned by each academic department will have access to setup these questions. If you are a coordinator and do not have the functionality in UAConnect described in this document, please contact [Lynn Mosesso](#) or [Susan Byram](#) at the Graduate School.

An example of the setup page is shown below.

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### UA Letters Of Recommendation Setup

\*Academic Plan:

Number of LOR Required:

USE LOR Defaults:  GRE NEEDED:

Use Question	Question Asked on LOR
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 1: <input type="text" value="How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 2: <input type="text" value="Please comment on the applicant's qualifications for graduate study including strengths and weaknesses and"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 3: <input type="text" value="Please comment on personal qualities of the applicant and provide any additional information you think will aid"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 4: <input type="text" value="Please indicate your overall recommendation of the applicant on the basis of their qualifications and potential f"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 5: <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 6: <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 7: <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 8: <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 9: <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Question 10: <input type="text"/>

Save Return to Search Previous in List Next in List Notify Add Update/Display Include History Correct History

The number of LOR Required field is the number of references you require in order to be considered for admittance into your degree program. If you choose to participate in the LOR process you must select a number of 1 or greater. If left blank or zero, your academic plan will be considered to be inactive for LOR and applicants will not receive the necessary communications or ISIS permissions to add references.

The USE LOR Defaults checkbox is available if you decide you do not want to create your own questions but would rather use the default questions provided by the Graduate School. The default questions are as follows:

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?
2. Please comment on the applicant's qualifications for graduate study including strengths and weaknesses and your evaluation of academic performance in relation to other students you have known.
3. Please comment on personal qualities of the applicant and provide any additional information you think will aid the selection committee in its evaluation of the applicant.
4. Please indicate your overall recommendation of the applicant on the basis of their qualifications and potential to be successful in graduate school and promise of professional success.

If you check the USE LOR Defaults checkbox, the default questions (listed above) will replace any questions which may have been added in the lower portion of the setup page. If you do want to use any of the default questions you will need to copy those to your setup page. Questions will be presented to the recommender in the order they are listed on the setup page.

Please ignore the GRE NEEDED checkbox. This field is being used for internal (admissions) processes and has no bearing on your required LOR setup.

The bottom section of the setup page is where you, as a graduate coordinator, will create the questions your program would like the recommender to include in their letter of recommendation.

You may add up to 10 questions. If you want to use the question, be sure to select the adjacent 'Use Question' checkbox. Any questions that do not have this checkbox selected will not be included in the communications sent to the recommender. Coordinators may change their setup at any time.

Use Question	Question Asked on LOR
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Question 1: How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

After all of the changes have been made, select the Save button at the bottom of the page.

Things to remember:

- To participate in the new LOR process, you must have a numeric value of 1 or greater in the Number of LOR Required field. If you choose to opt out, make the value equal to zero.
- The LOR Defaults checkbox will trump any questions you may have setup on the page. If you want to ask your own questions on the LOR request, uncheck this box.
- Be sure to select the 'Use Question' checkbox for any question you want to appear to the recommender. Any question without this checkbox selected will not be presented to the recommenders.
- At any time, you may go into UAConnect and change these options and questions. This is not a limited time setup.

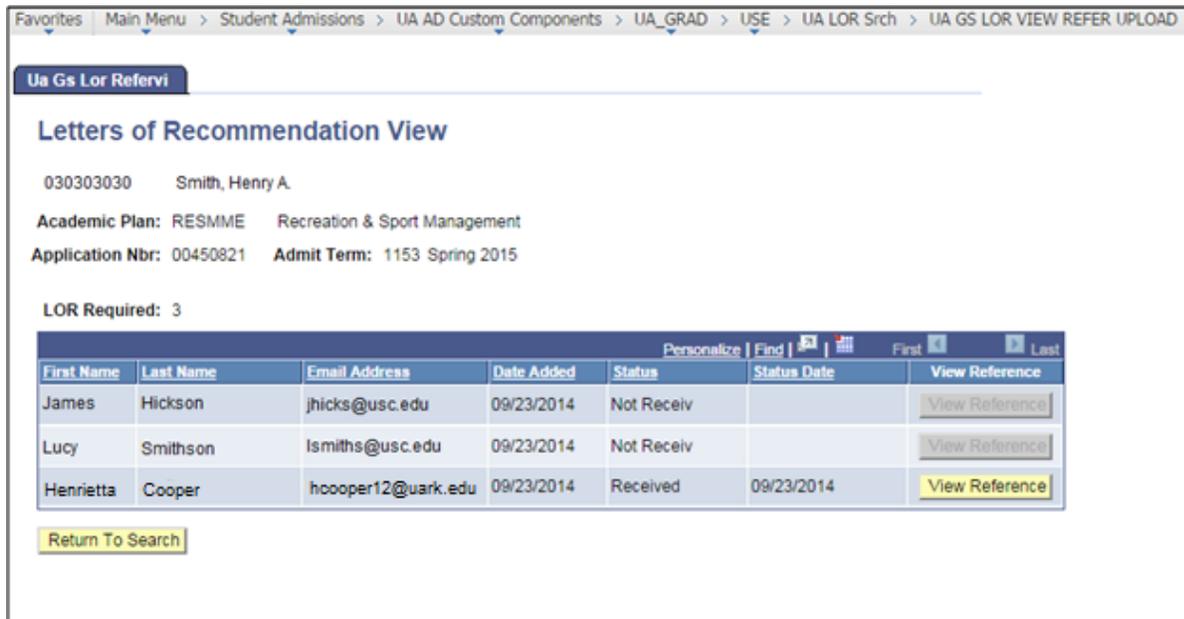
### **Viewing Recommendations**

All coordinators that have access to setup LOR questions in UAConnect will have security to view uploaded recommendations. As letters are received, a unique report will be sent to your uark email (from gradinfo@uark.edu) if you have any recommendations ready to be reviewed. The report will only list applicants for the degree programs you are a coordinator for. The report lists the Academic Plan, the admit term, the student ID and Name, if they are planning to pursue their degree 100% online, and the recommender's information. Additionally, there is a column entitled "Link". If clicked, the link will take you directly to their review page in UAConnect. You must already be logged into UAConnect for this link to work. If not, you'll be prompted to log into UAConnect. After logging in, select the link again and it should work. Remember to have popup blocker turned off for uconnect.uark.edu. Many of the pages

used to review recommendations will not work if it pop-up blocker is enabled in your browser for ISIS. An example of the email you will receive is shown below.

Letters of Recommendation Ready for Review								
Generated: 9/23/2014								
Acad Plan	Admit Term	Link	Student ID	Student Name	Online?	Application Nbr	Reference Name	Completed
CLCSPH	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	010101010	Bethany, Mary Jo	N	00450822	Dr. Patricia Smitt	9/16/2014
CNSLMS	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	020202020	Scott, James M.	N	00450820	Sgt. Steve Winkler	9/11/2014
CNSLMS	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	020202020	Scott, James M.	N	00450820	Mary Steenburgen	9/12/2014
CNSLMS	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	020202020	Scott, James M.	N	00450820	Dr. Gary Westacott	9/16/2014
CNSLMS	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	020202020	Scott, James M.	N	00450820	Louis Engry	9/18/2014
RESMME	1153	<a href="#">Link</a>	030303030	Smith, Henry A.	N	00450821	Dr. Henrietta Cooper	9/23/2014

After selecting the link, you will be taken to a page in UAConnect that looks like the one shown below. Conversely, you can navigate in UAConnect using (*Main Menu > Student Admissions > UA AD Custom Components > UA\_GRAD > USE > UA LOR Srch*). This is another page in UAConnect you may want to add to your favorites.



To view the uploaded letter of recommendation, simply select the **View Reference** button. The document will load in its native viewer (or default program setup on your computer). As an example, .docx will load in Microsoft Word, .pdf will load in Adobe Acrobat. To accommodate the diverse group of people these requests may be sent to, UAConnect will allow multiple file types. File types which can be uploaded include .docx, .doc, .rtf, .txt, and .pdf.

If you selected the 'Return to Search' button on this page, or navigated to the page manually in UAConnect, you'll see the following search screen. This page allows you to filter all recommendations by using the available search options shown in the image below. This functionality provides an additional method for analyzing your applicant pools. If you were to select the calendar looking icon circled in red below, it will allow you to export your search results to Excel for additional analysis or documentation.

Permissions for this page may be assigned to fully appointed department personnel, not just the coordinator. A security request will have to be completed for each person before these permissions can be added.

Favorites | Main Menu > Student Admissions > UA AD Custom Components > UA\_GRAD > USE > UA LOR Srch

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### Letters of Recommendation Search

Empl ID

Academic Career GRAD

Academic Program

Academic Plan

Status

Admit Term

National ID

Last Name

First Name

**Search Results** Personalize | Find |  First 1 of 1 Last

Select	Application Nbr	Admit Term	Application Date	Academic Plan	Empl ID	First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	National ID
1	Select								

## Other Information

### Applicant Center

Shortly after submitting an application for admission, applicants are granted a university id, an email address, and access to Applicant Center in UAConnect. A link to 'Request Letters of Recommendation' is available if: 1.) they have an application with action equal to 'APPL' or 'DDEF', 2.) applied for a participating academic plan, and 3.) their LOR requirements aren't exempt because of a completed prior application.

Application Status					
Career	Program of Interest	Admit Term	Application Date	Status	
Graduate	Political Science	Fall 2017	06/08/2016	Applicant	

**Other Tasks**

- [Request Letters of Recommendation](#)
- [Upload Documents](#)
- [Communications / Uploaded Documents](#)

 **Required to Complete Your Application**

 **Required for Enrollment**

[Go to Student Center](#)

## Letters of Recommendation Page

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Henry Smith

Letters of Recommendation Add Refer

**Application History** Find First 1 of 1 Last

Application Nbr: 00450821 Academic Plan: RESMME Recreation & Sport Management  
Admit Term: 1153 Spring 2015

The program which you are applying to requires 3  
letters of recommendation. Please add the name and email for each of your references. An email will be sent to them with instructions on how to complete your letter of recommendation.

Name	Ref Email	Ref Add DT	Ref Comp DT	Ref Status	Resend	Delete
Dr. James Hickson	jhicks@usc.edu	09/23/2014		Not Receiv	Resend	-
Dr. Henrietta Cooper	hcooper12@uark.edu	09/23/2014	09/23/2014	Received		-
Dr. Lucy Smithson	lsmiths@usc.edu	09/23/2014		Not Receiv	Resend	-

Applicants can add references, resend recommendation requests, and remove (inactivate) references from this page. At any time the applicant can go to this page to modify their references or review the status of their submissions.

### Recommender Emails

For the Letters of Recommendation process, there are four different types of communications that may be sent to recommenders and three which are sent to applicants.

The first email a recommender will receive is sent immediately after the applicant enters the recommender's information. The email is populated with the information the coordinator had entered on the setup page (either the default questions or their own). The questions for the recommender to respond to would appear where 'Criteria #' is shown in the example.

## Initial Email

Dear Reference Name,

Student Name has designated you as a recommender for his/her admission into the Graduate School at the University of Arkansas. Within the next 14 days, please use the link provided below to submit a letter of recommendation for Student Name.

In your letter of recommendation, please be sure to include the following:

- Criteria 1
- Criteria 2
- . . .
- Criteria 10

<https://gradref-tst.uark.edu?token=9135C60877949D585514B490FF9BF71BC69474773A71A0397EAAB2D25EE40240D670DE80560F809F73A34E6C0D23CDBB63922BD371D5CEF0D43DED7CD7E36B4D>

Please save your letter in one of the following formats: .docx, .doc, .pdf, .rtf, or .txt.

Thank you for your timely response.

Graduate School Processing

Graduate School and International Education

340 N Campus Drive  
Ozark Hall 213  
1 University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Phone: (479) 575-6469 Fax: (479) 575-5055  
<http://grad.uark.edu>, <http://iao.uark.edu>

## Reminder Email

Every 14 days that a recommender hasn't responded to a LOR request, an email is sent to the applicant requesting that he/she go to Applicant Center in UAConnect and select the 'Resend' button for their reference. A reminder email is then sent to their recommender immediately. A copy of the email is on the next page. The purpose of including the applicant in this process is so he/she remains actively involved in the process.

Dear Reference Name,

On September 23, 2014 you received an email requesting your assistance in submitting a letter of recommendation for Student Name . This is a reminder that Student Name is still waiting on your recommendation for admittance to the Graduate School at the University of Arkansas.

In your letter of recommendation, please be sure to include the following:

- Criteria 1
- Criteria 2
- . . .
- Criteria 10

[https://gradref-tst.uark.edu?  
token=9135C60877949D585514B490FF9BF71BC69474773A71A0397EAA82D25EE40240D670DE80560F809F73A34E6C0D23CDBB63922BD371D5CEF0D43DED7CD7E36B4D](https://gradref-tst.uark.edu?token=9135C60877949D585514B490FF9BF71BC69474773A71A0397EAA82D25EE40240D670DE80560F809F73A34E6C0D23CDBB63922BD371D5CEF0D43DED7CD7E36B4D)

Please save your letter in one of the following formats: .docx, .doc, .pdf, .rtf, or .txt.

Thank you for your timely response.

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### Recommender Deleted Email

The applicant has the option to remove references as long as a response hasn't already been collected. The recommender would receive an email like the example provided below.

Dear Reference Name,

On September 23, 2014 you received an email requesting your assistance in submitting a letter of recommendation for Student Name. Please disregard that request. Student FName has indicated the recommendation request is no longer necessary for his application to the Graduate School at the University of Arkansas. Thank you for your willingness to participate in the recommendation process at the University of Arkansas.

Sincerely,

Graduate School Processing

Graduate School and International Education

340 N Campus Drive  
Ozark Hall 213  
1 University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Phone: (479) 575-6469 Fax: (479) 575-5055  
<http://grad.uark.edu>, <http://iao.uark.edu>

## Confirmation Email

The last email type that a recommender will receive is the confirmation email. The recommender has the option to either upload a document or decline to participate. The same email is sent regardless of their action. An example is provided below.

Dear Reference Name,

Thank you for responding to the letter of recommendation request for Student Name. Your response has been collected and at this time no other action is required. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact our office using the contact information listed below.

Sincerely,

Graduate School Admissions

Graduate School and International Education

340 N Campus Drive  
Ozark Hall 213  
1 University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Phone: (479) 575-6469 Fax: (479) 575-5055  
<http://grad.uark.edu>, <http://iao.uark.edu>

## Applicant Emails

Applicants are sent three different types of emails. The first one they receive shortly after their application is loaded into UAConnect. It informs them that the plan they applied for requires letters of recommendation. It details how to log into Applicant Center in UAConnect and how to add references. The second email is sent to the applicant when 14 days has elapsed since a reference was added but no response has yet been received. The email instructs the applicant to go to Applicant Center and hit the 'Resend' button to send a reminder email. The last email type is a status update. Anytime an applicant's recommender uploads or declines a recommendation, the student is notified. The purpose of these emails is to keep the student informed and up to date with this portion of the admission process.

## Making an applicant exempt from LOR

If an applicant has previously applied and completed all of their admission requirements (including letters of recommendation), a decision can be made to allow the applicant to be exempt from requesting new letters of recommendation. On Application Maintenance in UAConnect, an admissions analyst has the option of selecting the 'Prior Application' checkbox for the new application. This will automatically waive the LOR requirement for the applicant as well as remove the security in Applicant Center to request additional recommenders. An email is then generated and sent to the applicant informing him/her of the change.

Academic Institution: The University of Arkansas

Academic Career: Graduate

Application Number: 00450821



Application Data

\*Application Center: GRAD  Grad Admis

\*Admit Type: RE  Readmit

\*Application Date: 09/10/2014

Academic Level:

\*Created On: 09/10/2014

\*Notification Plan: Regular

Prior Application

Application Method:

Previous Attendance

From Date:

To Date: