

## Health Professions and Prelaw Center

### A SHORT GUIDE TO THE RECOMMENDATION SERVICE FOR PRELAW STUDENTS

#### The Eight Steps of the Recommendation Process:

**Step 1:** This document is only an outline. Be sure to read the **complete information** on dealing with this complex process online at the “LOR for Prelaw Students: Basic Procedures” section of HPPLC’s prelaw website [[www.hpplc.indiana.edu/law](http://www.hpplc.indiana.edu/law)].

**Step 2:** Identify potential writers—to be safe, *plan for more than you will need!* See the above website for specific suggestions and cautions.

**Step 3:** Obtain BOTH forms below FOR EACH OF YOUR WRITERS:

a. **HPPLC waiver form** (“Evaluation Form for Law School Applicant”) — **give ONE to each writer** when you ask for a LOR. They will return this form to HPPLC with their letter.

b. **Credential Assembly Service (CAS, formerly LSDAS) LOR form.** Print this from your LSAC account. **Do NOT give to your writers;** bring to the HPPLC office.

**Step 4:** Ask your recommenders **at least 6 WEEKS in advance if possible.**  
*Try to get two letters in your file by the end of your junior year.*

**Step 5: Mandatory:** Make sure all letters *and forms* are *signed* and are actually IN YOUR FILE *before* you request that they be sent.

**Step 6:** Optional: ask a HPPLC Prelaw Advisor to review your letters.

**Step 7:** Request HPPLC send your recommendations to the CAS *at least 4 weeks prior* to submitting applications.

**Step 8: Mandatory:** Check your CAS account and contact ALL law schools to be sure your LOR were sent and received. THIS IS CRUCIAL!

#### Note the following potential DELAYS built into the system and beyond your control:

1. **Time for recommenders to write and send letters:** *plan on at least 6 weeks.*
2. **HPPLC backlog** during peak season: *up to 10 business days.*
3. **CAS processing delay** during peak season: *2 weeks—occasionally longer.*
4. **Detection and correction of errors made by others:** *possibly another 2 weeks.*

**TOTAL TIME: 3+ MONTHS between your request and arrival at the law schools!**

**Note: YOU WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS. PLAN AHEAD!**

**Every year applicants are DENIED simply because they failed to understand the multiple procedures necessary for getting LOR to the CAS and then to the Law Schools ON TIME.**

**IT IS NOT EASY. ASK FOR HELP.**

The following policies are necessary for the Recommendation Service to maintain the credibility and integrity that is required by law schools:

1. In accordance with Indiana University policy, the contents of your file, including all recommendation letters and forms, **become the exclusive property of HPPLC** and can only be forwarded as provided herein.
2. This service is for IUB students applying to law schools. Letters may not be forwarded or otherwise released to any individual, **or you, even if you have not waived your FERPA right to read the letters.**
3. While every effort is made by HPPLC to send your letters out ASAP after a request is submitted, it can take up to **ten business days** to process your request.
4. Information of immediate importance (HPPLC closings, deadlines to submit requests before holidays, changes in policy, etc.) can happen **without notice** and will be communicated only through email. Students with a recommendation file **MUST** maintain a current subscription to the HPPLC Prelaw Email Listserve and use their official IU account.

**WHO TO ASK:** *Law schools prefer academic letters (i.e., professors, AI's, etc.).* Other sources can be anyone with whom you've had a *professional* relationship: employers, volunteer or internship supervisors, coaches, military superiors, etc. Check the HPPLC website for specific details.

**Before you ask for a letter, choose whether or not you will waive your right to read it:**

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA") gives you the right of access to an evaluation written about you; it also allows you to give up or "waive" this right. While you alone must make the decision, most law schools generally recommend that you consider waiving your right.

**Open file:** If you **do NOT waive your right**, you may see your recommendations. However, this right is **strictly limited**. It may be done only **in person** in the HPPLC office and in the presence of HPPLC personnel. We cannot provide you with hard or e-copies, faxes, or read you the letter over the phone.

**Closed file:** If you **waive your legal right** to see your recommendations, you may **never** legally gain access to recommendations in your HPPLC file.

The HPPLC "waiver" form has a place for you to indicate your decision.

### **Warnings:**

1. IF it is getting late--you can send your letters directly to all of your schools AND to the CAS. In addition, **you CAN submit applications before your CAS file is complete**—e.g., **before** all of your LOR are received and/or processed. Consult a Prelaw Advisor AND your law school(s) for details.
2. BE PREPARED FOR HUMAN ERROR: Your writers, the CAS, HPPLC, and even YOU can make mistakes. Please allow more than enough time to detect and correct any errors. It is YOUR responsibility to monitor all activities conducted on your behalf. Assume nothing, and double-check everything. Constantly monitor your CAS account, and each law school!!!

***\*\*Law schools will not care why your material is incorrect or late.\*\****

Remember, HPPLC Prelaw Advisors are here to help. Let us know if you have questions, concerns, or need clarification of any aspect of the application process! We look forward to meeting with you. Call 812.855.1873, email [hpplc@indiana.edu](mailto:hpplc@indiana.edu), or drop by our office in Maxwell Hall 010.