Letter of Recommendation Competencies

Thinking, Reasoning, & Science
critical thinking %
quantitative reasoning & analysis # %
scientific inquiry %
intellectual merit !
technical knowledge & skills # &
science knowledge %
obtain & process information #
ability to perform creative research !

Intrapersonal
ethical responsibility %
reliability & dependability %
resilience & adaptability %!
capacity for improvement %
make decisions & solve problems #
plan, organize, & prioritize work #
motivation to succeed !
work independently !

Interpersonal
service orientation %!
social skills %
cultural competence %!
teamwork # %!
oral communication # %
written communication # %!
leadership skills !
ability to sell & influence others #

# Top competencies employers look for in employees - Forbes Magazine

% Core competencies for entering Medical Students - AAMC
(American Association of Medical Colleges)

! Competencies for Research Fellows - NSF
(National Science Foundation)
Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation for a Medical School Applicant

Admissions Initiative

School Applicant

Guidelines for Writing a Letter

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of evaluation for a medical school applicant!

The following guidelines aim to improve the letter writing process in order to benefit both letter writers and admissions committees. They are organized into two sections that describe (1) tips about how to write a letter and (2) key areas of interest to medical schools.

To provide an integrated and institutional perspective on applicants, medical schools value committee letters. They provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current practice and promote diversity, holistic admissions, and mission-based efforts to promote inclusion.

We encourage you to consider the following guidelines when writing your letter of evaluation.

Please note that use of these guidelines is optional. They are intended to help you think about your letter and facilitate the writing process. Medical schools do not expect any one letter writer to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant. In fact, they require multiple letters specifically because no one letter writer is expected to know everything about an applicant.

A Special Note for Writers of Committee Letters

Medical schools value committee letters because they provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current practice by enhancing its effectiveness.

Those who work with individual letter writers can use these guidelines and key areas of interest as educational tools to encourage greater focus in individual letters. They provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current practice by enhancing its effectiveness.

Those who work with individual letter writers can use these guidelines and key areas of interest as educational tools to encourage greater focus in individual letters. They provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current practice by enhancing its effectiveness.

Those who work with individual letter writers can use these guidelines and key areas of interest as educational tools to encourage greater focus in individual letters. They provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current practice by enhancing its effectiveness.
Interpersonal Competencies

Service Orientation: Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Health and Well-being: Responds appropriately to feedback ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Human Behavior: Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Resilience and Adaptability: Consistent fulfills responsibilities to society and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, attributes, experiences, etc.; demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and used; is able to contribute to discussions of science, hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: Behaves in honest and ethical ways; cultivates personal and professional integrity; demonstrates knowledge and skill in the ethical and moral reasoning and applies them to participate in the discourse of science ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Written Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences; listens and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Oral Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens and responds appropriately to feedback ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Critical Thinking: Uses logic and reasoning to identify, evaluate, and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and used; is able to contribute to discussions of science, hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Logical Reasoning: Applies quantitative reasoning and mathematical processes to integrate and synthesize information, and to explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and used; is able to contribute to discussions of science, hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Quantitative Reasoning: Applies quantitative reasoning and mathematical processes to integrate and synthesize information, and to explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and used; is able to contribute to discussions of science, hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Problem Solving: Applies knowledge of the scientific phenomena in the natural world and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and used; is able to contribute to discussions of science, hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences ...

 – your rationale for the final comparison

Time Management: Effectively manages time in order to complete and submit assignments on time ...