



Your letter should also include the elements listed below.

**1. Extent and Nature of your relationship with the applicant:**

- Length of the relationship: How well do you think you know the applicant?
- Nature of the relationship: eg. Professor – student, laboratory supervisor, employer, etc.
- Types of interactions: eg. Class discussions, academic advising, casual conversation, social interactions, etc.

**2. Specific, noteworthy observations considering the applicant:** from work situations, classes or personal association. Information on course grades and ranking, completion of notable projects, papers, or research, difficulty of the course or work, and other aspects are helpful.

**3. The distinctiveness of the individual:** What separates him/her from his/her peers? Pertinent qualities not mentioned above. Consider items such as persistence, commitment, working with others, sense of humor, work ethic, intellectual curiosity, integrity, maturity, preparation, and the like.

Below are some additional suggestions when it comes to writing letters of recommendation.

Professional school Admissions Committees are particularly interested in your perceptions of the applicant’s academic and personal attributes as they relate to his/her potential for success as a student in a rigorous curriculum and eventually as a practitioner. Listed below are several areas of interest to Admissions Committees. To the extent you feel you are sufficiently knowledgeable, you should provide an assessment of the applicant’s qualification in each area.

**1. Evidence of Motivation for the Profession:**

- Service to others
- Awareness of the profession

**2. Academic Performance and Intellectual Ability:**

- Intellectual maturity: to what extent is the applicant a mature, self-motivated learner?
- Intellectual capacity and retention: ability to absorb, integrate, and work with a large quantity of information; the ability to think critically and independently.
- Intellectual keenness, depth, and insight: ability to grasp, analyze, and understand complex material and concepts; ability to think critically and independently.
- Initiative and resourcefulness: ability to manage resources at hand and to develop and manage new resources; ability to work both independently and as part of a team; individual research skills.
- Originality and imagination: ability to envision and define new perspectives and approaches.

**3. Personal Attributes:**

- Maturity and emotional stability: personal development, performance under pressure, consistency, ability to cope with life situations.
- Self-confidence: To what extent does the applicant have a sense of his/her limitations and a willingness to ask for help?
- Judgment: ability to analyze a problem or situation and respond appropriately; common sense, decisiveness.
- Dependability and Responsibility: reliability, promptness, conscientiousness
- Industry and Motivation: energy, perseverance, stamina, endurance.
- Individual distinctiveness: what distinguishes this student from others?

**4. Relationships with Others:**

- Interpersonal skill: ability to work with others; rapport, cooperation.
- Leadership and followership: propensity to lead, willingness to follow; attitude toward supervision.
- Communication skill: ability to articulate; clarity of oral and written expression.
- Empathy: ability to identify with the needs of others.

**5. Your level of Recommendation:** Admissions Committees frequently key in on the wording of a recommendation. Whenever appropriate, indicating the “highest recommendation” is strongly encouraged. Below is the system we have utilized in the past, but please feel free to utilize your own personal scale:

**Highest recommendation.....Outstanding**  
**Highly recommended.....Superior**  
**Highly recommended.....Excellent**  
**Recommended.....Very good**  
**Recommended with reservation.....Good, Fair**