

February 14, 2018

Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Recommendation

To the Writer

Your evaluation is a critical part of a student's application to medical, dental, other health professional schools, graduate schools, and for scholarship applications. It will not be used for prospective employment. Your response and service to students is appreciated.

The following guidelines may be helpful to you in preparing a letter of evaluation for a health professions applicant.

1. Context in which you are/were associated with the applicant.
2. Nature of the work or research done by the individual.
3. Your evaluation of the applicant's performance, as compared with other individuals in comparable positions.
4. If applicable, courses in which you taught applicant and grade earned.
5. Personal attributes and any special personal strengths that might contribute to the individual's success as a health professional.

It is sometimes helpful to consider your own personal physician or dentist and those traits you find of major value in his or her treatment of you and your family members. Interpersonal skills, as well as intellectual acuity, can be important to this relationship. Specific examples of an individual's behavior or performance will carry more weight than general statements. The more you make the person come alive, the more effective this evaluation will be.

Your Evaluation is most useful when:

- It is typed on your departmental/office stationary or at least contains your written name and contact information
- It is dated
- It contains the student's entire name;
- It contains your name, title and **signature**. Please convert Word documents to a PDF before emailing to hpo@dls.rutgers.edu (because signatures are frequently dropped from Word documents)
- In certain circumstances, it may be useful to write about a particular program to which the student is applying
- An Evaluation Form completed and signed by the student is included

Letters of recommendation are confidential documents and must be treated as such. Therefore, students are not authorized to hand-carry documents unless they have the permission of a HPO staff member and the seal of the envelope has been signed by the writer. Please return it via mail, in the envelope provided by the student. You may also fax (732-445-6341) or email (hpo@dls.rutgers.edu) your letter to the HPO office.