



OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

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ADVICE FOR THOSE WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR HARVARD APPLICANTS TO MED SCHOOL

The letter of recommendation will be especially effective if you use specific examples and instances whenever possible. Discuss any of the following areas that may be relevant to your understanding of the student.

- 1) Describe your relationship to the student: In what capacity you have known him and for how long?
- 2) Comment on the student's intellectual ability and rank as compared with Harvard and non-Harvard students, this year and/or previous years. Are there extenuating circumstances that might account for any atypical grades?
- 3) Academic tasks: Does the student follow through on assignments and pursue suggestions for additional work? How rigorous was her academic program? With what degree of independence has she worked?
- 4) Work/lab/volunteer/extracurricular activities: Does he come to work/lab prepared? Would you trust him to work unsupervised? Describe his depth of involvement and achievement in these activities.
- 5) Communication skills: Assess the student's ability to communicate both in person and in writing.
- 6) Personal characteristics: How would you describe this student as a person? Comment on the student's maturity, emotional stability, concern for people, problem-solving skills, tenacity in reaching goals, curiosity, creativity, capacity for leadership, self-discipline, integrity.
- 7) Interpersonal skills: How does she respond to criticism? How does she relate to others? Describe her capacity for collaborative work with others and attitudes toward supervision.
- 8) Potential in field of medicine: How has he demonstrated his motivation for medicine? Describe his commitment to a medical career. Do you believe he would make a good medical student/colleague/professional?