

Dear Recommender:

On behalf of the Winthrop House Premedical Committee, thank you for agreeing to write a recommendation for one of our premedical students. We know how valuable your time is and we are grateful that you have offered to help further our student's academic and professional aspirations.

This letter is designed to provide helpful information regarding the letter writing process. It includes important deadline information coupled with guidance from the Harvard's Office of Career Services on how to write a medical school recommendation letter.

The deadline for submitting letters to the Winthrop House Office is Monday, June 30th. However, that deadline is dependent upon students providing you the means and materials necessary to write the letter. Students are responsible for ensuring that they provide you with sufficient time to meet the June 30th deadline. Past experience has demonstrated that students who fail to complete the premedical application materials on time, including letters of recommendation, experience delays in the application process. Such delays ultimately have a substantial negative impact on an applicant's chances for admission to medical school. We therefore respectfully request that you make every effort to submit the letters to us on time. If you are waiting for the student to complete the current semester before writing your letter of recommendation, or if there is another reason why you will not be able to submit your letter on time, please inform the student of this and complete your letter as close to the June 30th deadline as possible.

All letters of recommendation need to be signed and submitted on appropriate letterhead. If you are a Teaching Fellow or laboratory supervisor, please have the professor or Principal Investigator, co-sign your letter and add any relevant additional comments about the course and/or the applicant. Winthrop House Office's mailing address is: Resident Dean's Office, Winthrop House D-11, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA 02138

Finally, if you feel that you are unable to write them a strong letter of recommendation please let the applicant know. Lukewarm (or negative) letters of recommendation decrease an applicant's competitiveness.

To assist you in your letter-writing efforts, we have included advice from the Harvard Office of Career Services. They recommend the following to those writing letters of recommendation for applicants to medical school:

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?

Thank you again for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of our student. We hope that you found this letter very helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

Yours Truly,

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