



Health Careers Advising Instructions for Recommenders

Applicants: please provide this form to each letter writer

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of this applicant to medical or other health profession schools!

Letters of recommendation are due to Health Careers Advising by May 26, 2023.

If you have any questions, contact Brown's Health Careers Advising team at hco@brown.edu.

Important Notes:

- Your letter **must appear on institutional or organizational letterhead, and should include your contact information**. If you are unable to use institutional or organizational letterhead, please provide your name, all forms of contact information by which you can be reached in case of questions (email, address, phone), and the name of the institution/organization at which you are currently employed or where you were employed when you worked with the applicant. **Brown University instructors, faculty, and staff may use our Letter of Recommendation Form** (available at go.brown.edu/HCAapplicants), if they prefer.
 - Your letter **must have a hand-written or digitally verified signature** - not just your typed name. We recommend using <https://smallpdf.com/sign-pdf> if you are not able to do this in the application in which you have written your letter.
 - Your letter will be compiled into a letter packet along with a cover letter from Brown University's Health Careers Advising and the other individual letters of recommendation secured by the applicant. This packet will be sent to all the schools to which your recommendee is applying. For this reason, please **address your letter "To the Admissions Committee"** (or with another general salutation). Your letter should specify your support of the applicant's admission to medical or other health profession school - **do not specify support of their application to any particular school**. Unless the applicant or Brown's Health Careers Advising team informs you that the applicant has *not* waived their right of access, the contents of the letter will remain confidential. Please be completely candid with applicants about the type of recommendation you will be able to write, especially if you have reservations about the quality of your support or whether you will be able to complete your letter by May 26, 2023.
 - Please retain a copy of the letter for your files.
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Guidance on Content:

Your letter should highlight the applicant's academic performance, character, motivation, attitude, leadership ability, and special accomplishments. Also note how you believe these characteristics indicate the applicant's suitability for a career in the health professions and how the applicant has demonstrated a commitment to a health career. Use concrete examples from your direct observations of the applicant to illustrate your points.

Note: The fourth page of this document is an optional form that applicants may complete in order to provide information that will help you to craft a letter that is individualized, specific, and helpful for medical school admissions decisions.

The Health Careers Advising staff strongly recommends that, if you have observed them, it is beneficial to describe specific examples of how the applicant has demonstrated any of the following [competencies that the Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\) has identified](#) as "necessary for success in medical school":

- **Thinking and Reasoning Competencies** (Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Inquiry, Written Communication)
- **Science Competencies** (Living Systems: Human Behavior)
- **Pre-professional Competencies** (Service Orientation, Social Skills, Cultural Competence, Teamwork, Oral Communication, Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others, Reliability and Dependability, Resilience and Adaptability, Capacity for Improvement)

Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation (provided by AAMC):

1. Provide an accurate assessment of the applicant's suitability for medical school rather than advocate for the applicant.
2. Briefly explain your relationship with the applicant:
 - How long have you known the applicant?
 - In what capacity have you interacted (e.g., faculty, premedical advisor, supervisor)?
 - Are your observations of the applicant direct or indirect?
3. Quality of information is more important than letter length. Focus on the applicant rather than details of the lab, course, assignment, job, or institution.
4. Only include information on grades, GPA, or MCAT scores *if* you also provide context to help interpret them. Grades, GPA, and MCAT scores are already available within the application.
5. Focus on behaviors you have observed directly when describing an applicant's suitability for medical school. Consider describing:
 - The situation or context of the behaviors.
 - The actual behaviors you observed.
 - Any consequences of the behaviors.

6. Ask the applicant for permission if you plan to include any information that could be considered potentially private or sensitive.
7. Consider including unique contributions that an applicant would bring to an incoming class, such as:
 - Obstacles that the applicant had to overcome and how those obstacles have led to new learning and growth.
 - Contributions that an applicant would bring to a medical school's diversity, broadly defined (e.g., background, attributes, experiences).
8. Admissions committees find comparison information helpful. If you make comparisons, be sure to provide context. Include information about:
 - The comparison group (e.g., students in a class you taught, students in your department, co-workers).
 - Your rationale for the comparison.

For more detail and helpful guidelines, see [Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation for a Medical School Applicant](#) from AAMC, ["Med School Recommendations That Helped Applicants"](#) from US News & World Report, and ["Avoiding Bias in Recommendation Letters"](#) from Georgetown University Center for Research and Fellowships.

Instructions for Submitting Letters of Recommendation:

Letters of recommendation are due to Health Careers Advising by May 26, 2023.

The Health Careers Advising team uses Brown's [UFunds](#) system to securely and confidentially collect letters of recommendation on behalf of applicants to health profession schools.

If you have any questions or encounter technical difficulties, contact Brown University's Health Careers Advising team at hco@brown.edu.

- When the applicant enters your contact information in UFunds you will receive an email with a link to log into the system. Brown faculty and staff log in with their Brown credentials. Non-Brown recommenders log in with the email address at which they received the link.
- Before uploading, please save your letter as a PDF file. The letter should be on your institutional/organization letterhead and include your name, contact information, and a hand-written or digitally verified signature.
- Please fill out the brief recommender information form and then click **"Choose File"** to attach the PDF. Then click **"Save,"** which will transmit your letter to Health Careers Advising.
- If the applicant is applying to both MD and MD/PhD programs and you have written distinct letters for each type of program, you will be able to upload both.

Insights for Recommendation Letters (Optional)

Applicants - you may use this form to provide your recommenders with your personalized information to enable them to write recommendation letters that are individualized, specific, and helpful for medical school admissions decisions. Please answer these questions thoughtfully and with care.

Your name: _____

Recommender's name: _____

Please review [the AAMC Core Competencies for Entering Medical School Students](#). Select 3-4 competencies that you believe you demonstrated through your participation in your recommender's course or experience, and use a concrete example to share how you have demonstrated it. *Example: I demonstrated a service orientation and sensitivity to others' needs by my care and attention to patients while I was an intern in the medical practice, specifically when an elderly patient needed a translator and I was glad to apply my bilingual skills to the situation.*

1.

2.

3.

4.

Share a specific and relevant anecdote that you demonstrated in your recommender's course or experience that illustrates your commitment to a career in medicine.

What details, if any, are you hoping that this recommender's letter will address that your other recommendation writers may not (ie a specific AAMC competency or skill, or your participation on a research project, or your contributions to a group project in a class)?

If your time with the recommender includes something negative, include your explanation for why this happened, if there is one. If not, just write N/A.

Confirm that you have an up-to-date résumé to share with your recommender. If you need assistance with your resume, please see [these resources at CareerLAB](#).

I have shared an up-to-date résumé with my recommender