

Letter of Recommendation Guidelines

A good letter of recommendation should provide an accurate assessment of the applicant's suitability for a master's degree program. It is best to have letters from individuals who know you well and can assess you in more detail and should contain the following elements:

- Briefly explain your relationship with the applicant: How long you have known the applicant
- In what capacity you have interacted (e.g., faculty, pre-medical advisor, supervisor, etc)
- Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly when describing applicants' suitability for clinical research. Consider describing: The situation or context of the behavior

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, etc.) and your rationale for the final comparison

It is also helpful if the letter can address other competencies such as

- **Critical Thinking Skills:** the use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world
- **Scientific Inquiry:** Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated
- **Ethical Responsibility:** Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; and develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning
- **Reliability and Dependability:** Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance
- **Capacity for Improvement:** Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback

Key Reminders

- ✓ Ensure the letter is prepared on the Organization's Official Letterhead
- ✓ Request that your recommendation letter be at least 500 words in length (typed & double-spaced)
- ✓ Including Title/Position/Credentials of Recommender; as well as date & signature
- ✓ Must address applicant's academic/professional traits as an individual and clinical research scholar

Sample Recommendation Letter # 1

Dear Admissions Committee:

I am writing to today to recommend Sally Pupil to the UCSD Master's Degree-based Program in (Clinical Research/Leadership of Healthcare Organizations/Health Policy and Law). I have known Sally for 2 years, and she has worked directly with me as a student during one of those two years.

It should go without saying that and she is a remarkable student with great talent. She not only does what is required of her, but also seeks out opportunities to expand her knowledge. She chose to go above and beyond in all assigned coursework.

Sally has always taken her role seriously and is passionate about her results. Sally is a natural leader, and works hard for her beliefs. She's at her best in a group environment, and is consciously proactive at getting full involvement of all other team members to derive the best results possible. She has a very effective personal style, and I am certain she will be looked to as a leader where ever she goes.

I have the deepest personal and professional respect for Sally, and sincerely believe she will bring her unique energy, optimism, and tireless hard work and dedication to your program. She has my highest endorsement. If you have any questions about this recommendation or my endorsement of Sally, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will gladly try to help.

Best regards,

Name/Title/Credentials Institution
Address/Phone Number/E-Mail Address

Sample Recommendation Letter # 2

To Whom it May Concern,

It is a true pleasure for me to write this letter of recommendation for Sally Pupil, who was my student in Anatomy 101 at Doctor's Medical School in 2012. Sally is, without question, one of the four or five most outstanding students I have ever had at Doctor's Medical College.

Sally is a careful thinker with an eye for detail and a devotion to logic. She has the ability to draw upon her experiences and observations to develop thoughtful conclusions and opinions in a variety of areas. Sally demonstrated strong intellectual curiosity. She participated eagerly in discussions and provided insight for her peers as well as for me as her instructor. Her performance in my class was far above average.

Sally demonstrated exemplary team and leadership skills. Without needing to be asked, she assumed responsibility for helping classmates in a number of ways. She was helpful in sharing accurate knowledge and in synthesizing information. She served as a group leader. She was able to organize students to be productive and thoughtful.

Sally has outstanding academic skills. In her coursework, she always achieved a high level of recognition. Her writing skills stood out above her classmates. She consistently performed above and beyond the required level of work.

Sally is not just an outstanding student, she is personally delightful. She is comfortable communicating with a variety of people. She is engaging to speak with and energetic. She possesses a wide range of abilities, yet she remains humble.

I wholeheartedly recommend Sally as a student for your program. In fact, I can hardly think of a student that I would recommend more highly. I envision her as a leader of the future.

Sincerely,

Name/Title/Credentials Institution
Address/Phone Number/E-Mail Address