



WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Medical Professions Advisory Committee
106 Central Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02481

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Dear Letter Writer,

Thank you for taking the time to write a letter of recommendation for our Wellesley student or alumna applying to a graduate program in the health professions. Admissions committees value your letter because you offer insights into the applicant that are not available elsewhere, adding considerable depth to the application. We will attach your letter in full to the committee letter written by the Wellesley Medical Professions Advisory Committee (MPAC). Please note that occasionally MPAC committee letters are shared with fellowship programs and post-baccalaureate admissions offices as well.

All letters must be on letterhead, dated, and signed. They are due by May 26. To submit your letter, follow the link below (click on it or copy and paste the URL into your browser):

<https://goo.gl/forms/3xvqX4YildYWPR2y1>

Please ask the student or alumna if she has waived her right to see your letter. If she has waived that right, the letter is confidential. If she has not waived her right, the letter is not confidential and the applicant will be given access to the letter if requested. We encourage our applicants to request confidential letters.

Often letter writers ask us what information is helpful to admissions committees. The attached guidelines from the Association of American Medical Colleges were developed to give writers an idea of the core competencies admissions committees seek in an applicant. Although these guidelines were developed for medical school applicants, they may be useful for writing a letter for any health professions school applicant. Please do not feel restricted by the guidelines; the content of the letter is entirely up to you.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort on behalf of our Wellesley College applicants. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 781-283-3145 or lwhite3@wellesley.edu

Sincerely,

Lynn White, MD
Helen Wallace '33 Director of Health Professions Advising
Wellesley College

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)

Guidelines for Writing a Letter of Evaluation for a Medical School Applicant

For the guidelines in their entirety, please follow this link:
<https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf>

The following guidelines aim to improve the letter writing process in order to benefit both letter writers and admissions committees. They are organized into two sections that describe: (1) **Tips** about how to write a letter and (2) **Key areas of interest** to medical schools.

How to Use the Guidelines:

Medical schools do not expect any one letter writer to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant. In fact, they require multiple letters specifically because no one letter writer is expected to know everything about an applicant.

Tips About How to Write a Letter:

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: 1) How long you have known the applicant; 2) In what capacity you have interacted (e.g., faculty, pre-medical advisor, supervisor, etc.); and 3) Whether you are writing based on direct or indirect observations.
3. Quality is more important than letter length. Focus on the applicant rather than details about the lab, course, assignment, job or institution.
4. Only include information on grades, GPA or MCAT scores if you are providing context to help interpret them. Grades, GPA, and MCAT scores are available within the application.
5. Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly when describing applicants' suitability for medical school. Consider describing: 1) The situation or context of the behavior; 2) The actual behavior(s) you observed; and 3) Any consequences of that behavior.
6. Admissions committees find comparison information helpful. If you make comparisons, be sure to provide context. Include information about: 1) The comparison group (e.g., students in a class you taught, students in your department, co-workers, etc.), 2) Your rationale for the final comparison.

Key Areas of Interest:

A. Unique Contributions to the Incoming Class

--Describe obstacles that the applicant had to overcome, and if applicable, how those obstacles led to new learning and growth

--Explain how the applicant may contribute to a medical school's diversity, broadly defined (e.g., background, attributes, experiences, etc.)

Note: If you write about any information that could be considered potentially sensitive, confirm with the applicant that s/he is comfortable with the inclusion of that information.

B. Core, Entry-level Competencies

Describe how the applicant has, or has not, demonstrated **any** of the following competencies that are necessary for success in medical school.

Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students:

Science Competencies

Living Systems: Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs

Human Behavior: Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being

Thinking and Reasoning Competencies

Critical Thinking: Uses 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

Written Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences

Interpersonal Competencies

Service Orientation: Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society; locally, nationally, and globally

Social Skills: Demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect

Cultural Competence: Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds

Teamwork: Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals

Oral Communication: Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed

Intrapersonal Competencies

Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others: 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; 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

Resilience and Adaptability: Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks

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