

To letter writer,

The applicant identified below has asked you to provide a letter of recommendation. He/she has waived the right to view your letter.

No student will have access to your letter. However, if the student has NOT waived their right to view your letter, they may request access to the letter by contacting the Preprofessional Advisement Center.

Applicant name: Sarah Barnes

Applicant email: Cougars@byu.edu

Recommendation description: Medical/dental/

### **BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR LETTER**

Be sure your letter:

- Is in **PDF** format.
- Includes an **actual signature**
- Includes a **date**
- Is on **official letterhead** (if you do not have official letterhead, include your contact info at the top).

PLEASE review these letter writing guides:

- Attachment entitled recommender\_instructions.pdf

### **UPLOAD YOUR LETTER HERE**

[Upload your letter for Sarah Barnes here](#)

**OR**

*copy and paste this URL into your web browser's address bar*

[http://ppalettertracker.byu.edu/recommender\\_page.php?reqid=9b824c6cb617](http://ppalettertracker.byu.edu/recommender_page.php?reqid=9b824c6cb617)

Sarah Barnes has included the following personal message:

"Thanks, Letter Writer!"

### **HELPFUL RESOURCES:**

For further guidelines about what to include in a letter of recommendation please click [HERE](#).

For help in navigating Letter Tracker please review [THIS](#) tutorial.

If you prefer to submit your letter by mail, please follow submission instructions on the attached cover sheet.

If you are unable to upload your letter through the link or are experiencing other difficulties you may email the letter to [healthprosec@byu.edu](mailto:healthprosec@byu.edu), and the letter secretary will upload it for you.

**PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL.** If you have any questions please contact us at [healthprosec@byu.edu](mailto:healthprosec@byu.edu) or 801.422.3044.

### **3 Attachments**

(Attachments included in the email are found below)

Sarah Barnes

Provo, UT 84604

Code: 9b824c6cb817

To submit your letter by postal mail, you must include this form with your signed letter in order for BYU's Preprofessional Office to match the letter to the applicant's file. Letters received without this completed form or without your signature will be returned to you. Do not send supporting materials (e.g. resumes) with your letter.

Please mail this form and your signed recommendation letter, preferably on letterhead, in a sealed envelope directly to BYU's Preprofessional Office at the address below. If the applicant provides you with an envelope addressed to the Medical School Admissions Committee and bearing his or her return address, please place your signature across the bottom portion of the envelop flap after sealing. Please do not staple your letter to this form.

**BYU Preprofessional Office – Letter of Recommendation**

**Brigham Young University**  
3328 WSC  
Provo, UT 84602



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

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of evaluation for a medical school applicant!

The guidelines are intended to enhance the letter-writing process by providing a general framework of best practices and relevant content for letter writers to follow. They are optional and can be applied to both individual and committee letters.

## Guidelines

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 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.



## 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.

### *Thinking and Reasoning Competencies*

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**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.

### *Science Competencies*

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**Living Systems:** Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems.

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

### *Pre-professional Competencies*

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**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 their responsibilities to society locally, nationally, and globally.

**Social Skills:** Demonstrates awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways 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 social and 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.

**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.

## Additional Information

To access the Letters of Evaluation Guidelines on our website, please visit: [aamc.org/advisors](http://aamc.org/advisors).

To learn more about the Competencies for Entering Medical Students, please visit: [aamc.org/competencies](http://aamc.org/competencies).



Dear Letter of Recommendation Writer,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness to write this letter. Writing letters can be time consuming, but great letters increase a student's chances of getting accepted to the program of their choice. Whether you have written hundreds of letters or this is your first, please allow me to offer some guidelines and advice below.

**If you are unsure of what to include in your letter. Please consider the following (as suggested by AMCAS):**

1. Briefly explain your relationship with the applicant:
  - a. How long have you known the applicant?
  - b. In what capacity have you interacted?
2. Focus on behaviors you have observed directly when describing an applicant's suitability for the specific health profession. Consider describing:
  - a. The situation or context of the behaviors.
  - b. The actual behaviors you observed.
  - c. Any consequences of the behaviors.
3. Consider including unique contributions that an applicant would bring to an incoming class, such as:
  - a. Obstacles that the applicant had to overcome and how those obstacles have led to new learning and growth.
  - b. Contributions that an applicant would bring to a school's diversity, broadly defined (e.g., background, attributes, experiences).
4. Admissions committees find comparison information helpful, if you make comparisons, be sure to provide context. Include information about:
  - a. The comparison group (e.g. students in a class you taught, students in your department, co-workers).
  - b. Your rationale for comparison.

**If you are going to write a negative letter or only know the student well enough to write a short, form-type letter, please inform the student.**

One dean of admissions said, "The only thing worse than no letter at all is a bad letter." Perhaps you do not have a high opinion of this student and you feel that it is your place to be honest with an admissions committee. However, it is equally important that you let the student know this. Please inform the student that you will need to include the negative experiences you have had with them, and allow them to choose whether or not to have you write the letter.

More common, however, is when the letter writer clearly does not know the student they are writing about, resulting in a letter that is very short and only includes information such as "Steve Smith took Chem 105 from me. He earned an A. He is a fine student." These letters can be as harmful to students' applications as negative ones. If you feel unable to write a meaningful, insightful letter, please let the student know.

**Please keep in mind the deadline the student has given you.**

We strongly encourage our students to give letter writers at least two weeks to write letters, which should hopefully give you enough time to draft and send off the letter. If you find yourself unable to meet the deadline the student has given you, please contact the student, so they can make arrangements as needed.

#### **Letter Checklist**

1. Address the letter to the "Admissions Committee"
2. If your letter is not on a letterhead, include your contact information.
3. Sign the letter (do not use Adobe Signature for this)
4. Upload in PDF format
  - a. If you prefer to mail a copy of your recommendation, please include the cover sheet provided.

Sincerely,

Kris Tina Carlston, JD, MBA  
*Director, Preprofessional Advisement Center*