Instructions to Writers of Letters of Recommendation for Applicants to Health Professions from Johns Hopkins Applicants

Johns Hopkins applicants to medical and other health professions schools are supported by the submission of letters of recommendation from faculty, administrators, and others both inside and outside of the University. The secure, reliable, and efficient web-based service that we ask you to utilize for the collection and storage of letters of recommendation is called veCollect.

Note: As per the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the veCollect service allows applicants to indicate whether or not they waive their right of access to read your letter.

What is important to cover in your letter?

Please make an assessment of this applicant as a student, a worker, etc., and as a future professional in the specific health career of intent. Health Professions Schools do not expect you to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant. However, the hope is that you will focus on the applicant’s competencies. The personal competencies associated with successful medical students and future physicians are listed below and appear in this brochure: https://www.aamc.org/download/332578/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf

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<th>Intrapersonal Competencies</th>
<th>Interpersonal Competencies</th>
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<td>o Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others</td>
<td>o Service Orientation</td>
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<td>o Reliability and Dependability</td>
<td>o Social Skills</td>
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<td>o Resilience and Adaptability</td>
<td>o Cultural Competence</td>
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<td>o Capacity for Improvement</td>
<td>o Teamwork</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>o Oral Communication</td>
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Here are some guidelines for writing your letter:

1. Health professions schools require that your electronic letter be on letterhead bearing the date, your name, title, and signature.
2. Provide an accurate assessment of the applicant’s suitability for health professions school.
3. Briefly explain your relationship with the applicant: a) how long you have known the applicant, b) in what capacity you have interacted (e.g., faculty, supervisor, etc.); c) and whether you are writing based on direct or indirect observations.
4. Focus on the applicant rather than details about the lab, course, assignment, job or institution.
5. Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly when describing applicants’ suitability for health professions school. Consider describing: a) the situation or context of the behavior, b) the actual behavior(s) you observed, c) any consequences of that behavior.
6. 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, etc.) b) your rationale for the final comparison.

In addition:

• In the letter, include the date, student’s name, and the salutation: *For example, “Dear Committee on Medical School Admissions:”*
• Do not refer to a specific medical school (e.g. “applicant to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine”). Refer to medical school generically (e.g., “applicant to medical school”).
• If at all possible, health professions schools prefer that your comments be kept to a single page.
What are the steps in submitting your letter through veCollect?

(1) The applicant is instructed to provide you with background materials (e.g., a resume, an unofficial transcript, perhaps an essay).
(2) You will receive an email from veCollect with specific instructions on how to transmit your letter.

What if I am unable to use veCollect?

If you are unable to utilize veCollect, we ask that you prepare a paper copy of your letter, signed and on letterhead, along with the “Recommendation Waiver Form” the will be provided to you by the applicant. Applicants will have the option on this form to waive or not waive their right to see your letter of recommendation. Health professions schools prefer receiving letters where applicants waive their right of access. Both you and the student must sign the Recommendation Waiver Form. Health professions schools require that your electronic letter be on letterhead bearing the date, your name, title, and signature. You can send your recommendation as an email attachment to preprofessional@jhu.edu.

Thank you for your support of Johns Hopkins University students applying to medical and other health professions schools.