



LEVERETT HOUSE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

December 1, 2016

Dear Recommender:

On behalf of the Leverett House Health Professions Advisory Committee, thank you for agreeing to write a recommendation for one of our premedical students. We are grateful for your generosity with your time and appreciate your involvement in our students' application process. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some helpful information about the letter writing process. It includes important deadline information as well as advice from Harvard's Office of Career Services regarding for the process of composing a medical school recommendation letter.

The deadline for submitting letters to the Leverett House Office is April 14, 2017. Students are responsible for ensuring that they provide recommenders with sufficient time to meet this deadline. Students who fail to complete application materials, including letters of recommendation, by the deadline are at risk for having delays in the processing of their application. In our experience, such delays can have a substantial negative impact on an applicant's chances for admission to medical school. We therefore ask that you make every effort to submit the letters to us on time. If you are waiting for the student to complete the current semester before writing your letter of recommendation, or if there is another reason why you will not be able to submit your letter on time, please inform the student of this and complete your letter as close to the deadline as possible.

All letters of recommendation need to be signed and submitted on appropriate letterhead. If you are a Teaching Fellow or laboratory supervisor, please have the professor or Principal Investigator, when possible, co-sign your letter and add any relevant additional comments about the course and/or the applicant. Our mailing address is:

Leverett House
Office of the Allston Burr Assistant Dean of Harvard College
28 DeWolfe St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

We also ask that you let the applicant know if you feel that you are unable to write them a strong letter of recommendation. Lukewarm (or negative) letters of recommendation decrease an applicant's competitiveness.

To assist you in your letter-writing efforts, we have included advice from the Harvard Office of Career Services. They recommend the following to those writing letters of recommendation for applicants to medical school:

The letter of recommendation will be especially effective if you use specific examples and instances whenever possible. Discuss any of the following areas that may be relevant to your understanding of the student.

1. Describe your relationship to the student: In what capacity you have known him and for how long?
2. Comment on the student's intellectual ability and rank as compared with Harvard and non-Harvard students, this year and/or previous years. Are there extenuating circumstances that might account for any atypical grades?
3. Academic tasks: Does the student follow through on assignments and pursue suggestions for additional work? How rigorous was her academic program? With what degree of independence has she worked?
4. Work/lab/volunteer/extracurricular activities: Does he come to work/lab prepared? Would you trust him to work unsupervised? Describe his depth of involvement and achievement in these activities.
5. Communication skills: Assess the student's ability to communicate both in person and in writing.
6. Personal characteristics: How would you describe this student as a person? Comment on the student's maturity, emotional stability, concern for people, problem-solving skills, tenacity in reaching goals, curiosity, creativity, capacity for leadership, self-discipline, integrity.
7. Interpersonal skills: How does she respond to criticism? How does she relate to others? Describe her capacity for collaborative work with others and attitudes toward supervision.
8. Potential in field of medicine: How has he demonstrated his motivation for medicine? Describe his commitment to a medical career. Do you believe he would make a good medical student/colleague/professional?

Thank you again for agreeing to write this letter recommendation; we greatly appreciate all your time and effort on behalf of our students. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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