

Thank you for taking the time to evaluate our student for their application. Your letter is a vital piece of the portfolio of letters that will support the student's application. We have found that it is helpful to have student-specific information that goes deeper than summary: the more individualized your letter is, the better it will serve the student.

To assist you as you compose your letter, we offer the following suggestions:

- Provide an accurate assessment of the applicant's suitability for their selected program rather than advocate for the applicant.
- 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.); and
 - Whether you are writing based on direct or indirect observations.
- Quality is more important than letter length. Focus on the applicant rather than details about the lab, course, assignment, job or institution.
- **Only** include information on grades, GPA or MCAT scores *if* you are providing context to help interpret them.
- Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly when describing applicants' suitability for this program. Consider describing:
 - The situation or context of the behavior
 - The actual behavior(s) you observed
 - Any consequences of that 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.)
 - Your rationale for the final comparison
- Key areas of interest include the unique contributions the student will make to the program to which they are applying; these might be described through obstacles the student has overcome and how these obstacles led to new learning and growth, or through how the student will contribute to the program's diversity, defined broadly (background, attributes, experiences, etc.).
- Focus on competencies you have seen the student demonstrate:
 - Thinking and Reasoning Competencies: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry, written communication
 - Science Competencies: living systems and human behavior
 - Interpersonal Competencies: capacity for service to others, social skills, cultural competence, teamwork, oral communication
 - Intrapersonal Competencies: ethical responsibility to self and others, reliability and dependability, resilience and adaptability, capacity for improvement.

Once again, thank you for your mentorship of this student and writing them this letter of support.

Dr. Ellen Dawley and Dr. Gregory Weight
Co-Coordinator of the Health Professions Advising Committee