Letter of Recommendation (LOR) Instructions

Dornsife Office of Pre-Health Advisement Letter of Recommendation (LOR) Overview

The Office of Pre-Health Advisement provides a letter of recommendation storage and forwarding service to help streamline the health professional school or graduate school application process. The Office of Pre-Health Advisement stores original letters, then scans them into a file, and forwards them to the health professional school centralized application service designated by the applicant. All letters submitted to our office become the property of the University of Southern California and will be released to the original author, upon request, or to health professional or graduate programs, upon the applicant’s request. For the 2014 application cycle, students will be able to create online accounts on March 15, 2013.

To the Student:

1) It is important that you request your Letters of Recommendation by Friday, April 12, 2013. It is your responsibility to submit this page to our office by the above date.

2) The top portion of the LOR cover sheet (Page 2) must be completed and signed by you. Once complete, it must remain with your recommender.

3) Your recommenders are being asked to prepare all letters of recommendation no later than Thursday, August 1, 2013.

To the Recommender:

Thank you for considering this request to write a letter of recommendation for this applicant. Your support is greatly appreciated. Letters of recommendation are a crucial part of an application to health professional schools or graduate schools. Your candid evaluation of this applicant’s abilities and potential will greatly aid in the admissions process.

1) Please be sure you have completed and signed the LOR cover sheet (page 2) or the LOR will be considered incomplete and will not be processed. NOTE: The LOR cover sheet must accompany each letter of recommendation.

2) Tardy letters of recommendation can delay the evaluation of the applicant indefinitely; therefore, we request that all letters be submitted to our office no later than Thursday, August 1, 2013. See “Submitting LOR to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement” - page 3.

I, __________________________________________ have received a request for a letter of recommendation on behalf of __________________________________________.

(Recommender Name)                      (Applicant Name)

See over for more LOR information.
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Pre-Health Letter of Recommendation (LOR) Service
Cover Sheet
This completed and signed form must accompany each letter of recommendation and returned to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement no later than Thursday, August 1, 2013.

Applicant Information and Signature
NOTE: This form must remain with your Recommender.

Last Name:__________________________________________ First Name:__________________________________

USC ID/AAMC/AADSAS/AACOMAS #:______________________________________________________________

Health Profession Application: Please Circle One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allopathic Medicine (M.D.)</th>
<th>Dentistry</th>
<th>Physician Assistant</th>
<th>Pharmacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)</td>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Optometry</td>
<td>Other__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, students are entitled to read letters of recommendation written about them unless they voluntarily waive their right to do so. Students electing to use the Letter of Recommendation (LOR) Service are asked to designate their file as “confidential” by signing the Waiver and Release statement below affirming or waiving their right to inspect letters submitted to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement.

Please Circle One:

I, ________________________________, hereby WAIVE OR DO NOT WAIVE my right to access
(Applicant’s Name)
this letter of recommendation.

Applicant Signature:________________________________________

Recommender Information and Signature

Recommender’s Signature

Recommender’s Name & Title (printed) | DATE

Department/Institution

Telephone | Fax

See over for more LOR information.
Acceptable Letter Format

1. Letters must be typed on official departmental or business letterhead (don’t forget to sign).
2. Address the letter to “Committee on Admissions.”
3. Include the applicant’s full name.
4. Include an address, phone number, and email address, if it does not appear on your letterhead.
5. Seal the letter in an envelope and sign across the seal.

Most Helpful

1. Relationship between the applicant and recommender: extent of knowledge about applicant and specific examples about behavior.
2. Information on personal characteristics of applicant: integrity, honesty, reliability, professionalism, determination, leadership, and motivation.
3. Contrasted strengths and weaknesses: narrative and global comparison with other applicants.
4. Description of applicant’s social skills: e.g. interpersonal skills, ability to interact in groups and establish peer relationships.
5. Academic performance of applicant: academic aptitude and scholarship in a manner not addressed in application; clarification of unique circumstances.

Least Helpful

1. Repetition of information from applicant: e.g. grades, test scores, and nonacademic accomplishments listed elsewhere.
2. Unsubstantiated superlatives or vague generalities: use of accolades and broad praise without supporting examples.
3. Comments regarding grades in one particular class: detailed description of performance in one course without giving insight into intellectual ability, motivation, or other pertinent characteristics.
4. Lack of a strong relationship between applicant and recommender: letters that convey lack of first hand acquaintance.
5. Inclusion of irrelevant information: e.g. detailed descriptions of faculty and/or student research, religious beliefs, or hearsay.

**NOTE:** Applicants should not be asked to write their own letters of recommendation.

Submitting letters to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement

- A letter may be hand-delivered to FIG 107 by the recommender or the applicant, provided that it is in a sealed envelope with the recommender’s signature across the seal.
- A letter may be sent through campus Mail Code: 1266
- A letter may be mailed to University of Southern California
  Office of Pre-Health Advisement
  ATTN: Pre-Health Service
  3535 S. Figueroa Street –FIG 107
  Los Angeles, CA 90089-1266
- A letter may be e-mailed to prehealth@dornsife.usc.edu on electronic letterhead and must include an electronic signature. No word documents please. PDF is highly recommended. **NOTE:** FAXED Letters of Recommendation will NOT be accepted.

If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nathalie Zuletta, Administrative Assistant, at (213) 740-4844.

Adapted from Providence College, Letter Request Form