Letter of Evaluation (LOE) Acknowledgement

Dornsife Office of Pre-Health Advisement Letter of Evaluation (LOE) Overview

The Office of Pre-Health Advisement provides a letter of evaluation 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 2015 application cycle, students will be able to create online accounts on March 15, 2014. Note: For those who chose not use our service, letters of evaluation may be sent via one of the following services: AMCAS Letter Writer Application or Interfolio.

To the Student:

1) It is important that you request your Letters of Evaluation on or before Friday, April 11, 2014. It is your responsibility to submit this page to our office by the above date.

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

3) Your evaluators are being asked to attempt to prepare all letters of evaluation no later than Friday, August 1, 2014. Please see “Submitting LOE to our Office” on page 3. This is a “soft” deadline. It is up to the student to remind the evaluator.

To the Evaluator:

Thank you for considering this request to write a letter of evaluation for this applicant. Your support is greatly appreciated. Letters of evaluation 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. Attached is a copy of the guidelines from the AAMC. These should also be useful for other professional schools.

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

2) Late letters of evaluation can delay the consideration of the applicant’s packet indefinitely; therefore, we request that all letters be submitted to our office no later than Friday, August 1, 2014. See “Submitting LOE to our Office” on page 3. This is a “soft” deadline. It is up to the student to remind the evaluator.

3) Automatic e-mail reminders will be sent to you once a month until LOE is received.

I, __________________________________________have received a request for a letter of evaluation on behalf of _________________________________________ . Date: ________________________________

(Evaluator Name) (Applicant Name)

See over for more LOE information.
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Pre-Health Letter of Evaluation (LOE) Service
Cover Sheet
This completed and signed form must accompany each letter of evaluation and returned to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement no later than Friday, August 1, 2014.

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

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 revaluation written about them unless they voluntarily waive their right to do so. Students electing to use the Letter of Evaluation (LOE) 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

this letter of evaluation.

(Applicant’s Name)

Applicant Signature:________________________________________________________

Evaluator Information and Signature

Evaluator’s Signature

Evaluator’s Name & Title (printed) DATE

Department/Institution

Telephone Fax

See over for more LOE information.
Acceptable Letter Format

- Letters of Evaluation must be typed on official departmental or business letterhead and evaluator’s signature. **NOTE:** Letters received NOT on official letterhead or signature will NOT be accepted.
- Address the letter to “Committee on Admissions.”
- Include the applicant’s full name.
- Include an address, phone number, and email address, if it does not appear on your letterhead.

Submitting letters to the Office of Pre-Health Advisement

- A letter may be hand-delivered to HNB 120 by the evaluator or the applicant, provided that it is in a sealed envelope with the evaluator’s signature across the seal.
- A letter may be sent through campus Mail Code: 2520
- A letter may be mailed to:
  University of Southern California  
  Office of Pre-Health Advisement  
  ATTN: Pre-Health Service  
  3641 Watt Way, HNB 120  
  Los Angeles, CA 90089-2520
- 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 Evaluation will NOT be accepted.

If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nathalie Zuletta, Administrative Assistant, at (213) 740-4844.
Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of evaluation for a medical school applicant!

The following guidelines aim to improve the letter writing process in order to benefit both letter writers and admissions committees. They are organized into two sections that describe (1) tips about how to write a letter and (2) key areas of interest to medical schools.

How to use the guidelines
Please note that use of these guidelines is optional. They are intended to help you think about your letter and facilitate the writing process.

Medical schools do not expect any one letter writer to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant. In fact, they require multiple letters specifically because no one letter writer is expected to know everything about an applicant.

A Special Note for Writers of Committee Letters
Medical schools value committee letters because they provide an integrated and institutional perspective on an applicant’s readiness for medical school. They provide a comprehensive evaluation of applicants based on direct observation and the synthesis of information provided by faculty and others at an institution. This integrated perspective provides unique and valuable information about applicants.

While we recognize that many committee letters already incorporate the concepts included in these guidelines and key areas of interest, we believe that the material provided here can only complement the current committee letter process by enhancing its effectiveness. Those who work with individual letter writers can use these guidelines and key areas of interest as educational tools to encourage greater focus in individual letters. Writers of committee letters may also wish to re-fashion the overarching committee letter produced by their school to more closely reflect the central points provided here.

Additional Information
For more information on the AAMC admissions initiative:
http://www.aamc.org/ai

For more information about holistic admissions and mission-based efforts to promote diversity, visit the Holistic Review Project website:
https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview/
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 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.

3. Quality is more important than letter length. Focus on the applicant rather than details about the lab, course, assignment, job or institution.

4. Only include information on grades, GPA or MCAT scores if you are providing context to help interpret them. Grades, GPA, and MCAT scores are available within the application.

5. Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly when describing applicants’ suitability for medical school. Consider describing:
   – The situation or context of the behavior
   – The actual behavior(s) you observed
   – Any consequences of that behavior

6. 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

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### A.) Unique Contributions to the Incoming Class

– Describe obstacles that the applicant had to overcome, and if applicable, how those obstacles led to new learning and growth
– Explain how the applicant may contribute to a medical school’s diversity, broadly defined (e.g., background, attributes, experiences, etc.)

**Note. If you write about any information that could be considered potentially sensitive, confirm with the applicant that s/he is comfortable with the inclusion of that information.**

### B.) 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 & Reasoning Competencies

**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 conveying information to others using written words and sentences

#### Science Competencies

**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

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#### Interpersonal Competencies

**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 his/her 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; and 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 & 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

#### Intrapersonal Competencies

**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; and 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