

Subject: Employer letter of recommendation for law school information

Dear Recommender:

The USC Dornsife Career Pathways Pre-law and Graduate School Advising team would like to thank you in advance for supporting our pre-law students. A strong letter of recommendation can be the deciding factor in a candidate's law school admission journey.

Most law schools prefer that candidates use the Law School Admission Council's Credential Assembly Service (CAS) to collect and disperse letters of recommendation. The general process stands that a recommender submits one letter through a unique link sent by CAS. When the candidate is ready to apply, CAS sends copies of that letter to all schools the student is applying to. A handful of schools still prefer that the letters of recommendation come to the school directly from the recommenders. That is increasingly rare, and it is the candidate's responsibility to tell the recommender exactly where the letters should go and to provide proper envelopes and postage.

Most law schools operate on a "rolling admissions" basis, whereby they start reviewing applications and potentially extend offers of admission as early as late October. Applying early gives candidates a distinct advantage, therefore, we encourage candidates to apply as early as possible in the process.

Please be frank with candidates about your timeline for writing and submitting your letter of recommendation so they know what to expect and how to follow up if needed. If a candidate applies to law schools early, but a recommender sends the requested recommendation later in the admissions cycle there are two possible scenarios. In one scenario, the candidate's file remains stagnant until the recommendation letter is received, costing the candidate any benefit they may have received from an early application. In the other scenario, the candidate's application is reviewed and a decision is made without benefit of the recommendation. Please help the candidate develop realistic expectations by sharing the time you feel you need to produce and submit the letter into CAS.

If you do not feel able to provide a strong recommendation, please let the candidate know to help give them enough time to request a letter of recommendation elsewhere.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time and energy to reflect on this candidate's qualifications for law school and write a letter of recommendation. If needed, the next page shares a few insights related to writing recommendation letters. If there is anything we can do to make the recommendation letter writing process easier or more efficient, please let us know.

Best regards,

Pre-Law and Graduate School Advising Team
Dornsife Career Pathways



INSIGHTS REGARDING WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR LAW SCHOOL

- If the candidate has not already provided you with their resume, unofficial transcript, and a reasonably developed draft of their law school personal statement, feel free to ask for them if useful to you in the writing process
- In your recommendation letter, highlight skills law schools are particularly interested in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Logical analysis
 - Ability to read and understand large quantities of complex written information
 - Writing
 - Oral communication
 - Research
- Give concrete and detailed examples of how the candidate exhibited relevant skills in the workplace. For example:

“Our department receives over one hundred emails per day. One of William’s primary duties is to manage the inbox each day, analyze the content of each piece, decide which pieces need my attention and which pieces can be delegated to other staff members, distribute the emails to be delegated, and prioritize the remaining emails for my attention. Because of the nature of our work, the emails we receive often include very complicated, and highly confidential, subject matter. William consistently exhibits the strong organizational skills, the ethical fiber, and the mental acuity necessary for such a challenging position.”
- If you can, compare the candidate favorably to his/her peers. For example, “Never before in my 15 years of practice have I had a (job title) in whom I could place so much trust and in whom I have had so much confidence.”
- If selection for the position was highly competitive, explain the circumstances in some detail.
- Provide context for your evaluation by sharing some about your own background, the job itself, the kind of business or organization you are, and the history of the candidate in the job.
- Discuss how much your organization has benefitted from the candidate’s employment within your department.
- Do not hesitate to share details which might help the law school admissions committees gain quality insights into the candidate’s character, aptitude, and potential success for a law-related career.