

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONTENT OF LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Bio 3A – Applying to Health Professional Schools

Biological Sciences Student Affairs Office, UCI

Admissions committees are interested in candidates who have a commitment to excellence, intellectual curiosity, and the personal traits that indicate they are real people with a genuine concern for others. Because these traits are difficult to ascertain from grades and other quantifiable "paper" credentials, it is very helpful if authors are able to cover (when possible) the following points in the letters of recommendation written to health professional schools.

Applicant's relationship to author:

- Author's identification (title, position, institution/company)
- Author's relationship to the applicant (employer, professor, etc.)
- Length of time author has known the applicant
- Frequency of interaction (daily, weekly, etc. and for how long)

Intellectual capacity of the applicant:

- Approach and attitude toward coursework
- Intellectual curiosity/creativity
- Skills gained in a specific course/laboratory/position
- Comparison of applicant to other students in course/lab/position
- Consistency of performance
- Particular contribution to course/lab/position
- Extenuating circumstances which might account for poor performance
- Ability to deal with abstract/ambiguous assignments
- Ability of analyze information

Personal attributes of the applicant:

- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to organize thoughts
- Ability to communicate
- Emotional Stability
- Reliability, maturity, physical stamina, flexibility, honesty, independence, self reliance, originality, and so forth...

Some important points:

- The author of the letter should be addressing only his/her direct knowledge of the applicant (the applicant's resume/personal statement should not be re-worded).
- Each letter in an applicant's file should provide different information about the applicant