

## Writing Guidelines Letters of Recommendation for Health Professional Schools

If you have been asked to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of a Wesleyan student/graduate, it is most helpful if your letter is candid and specific. Please be sure to state in what capacity you know the applicant and how well you know the applicant. Even if you do feel that you know the applicant reasonably well, it is still appropriate to ask for a résumé with additional information about her/his/they academic preparation, employment, community service, research experience, and extracurricular activities. Hopefully, you will be able to spend some time speaking with the applicant about her/his/their interest in the field and practice of healthcare.

It is from letters of recommendation that the admissions committees can learn more about the applicant as a person. Based on your experience with the applicant, please address some of the following:

- communication skills (oral, written, and listening);
- observational abilities, comprehensive vision, and attention to detail;
- qualities of mind, such as the ability to grasp, analyze, and synthesize information and ideas;
- intellectual curiosity;
- aptitude for sustained hard work and commitment;
- cross-disciplinary fluency;
- organizational and problem-solving skills;
- interpersonal skills, such as tact and thoughtfulness;

- integrity and responsibility;
- personal qualities, such as maturity, warmth, and emotional balance;
- resilience and adaptability when confronting challenges;
- contributions to, and concern for, the wellbeing of others;
- cultural sensitivity;
- initiative, flexibility, capacity to engage in productive teamwork
- capacity for improvement and personal growth;
- reflective capacities, knowledge of limits, and willingness to ask for help.

In assessing an application, admissions committees also consider what is sometimes termed *distance traveled*. If you are aware that the applicant has overcome significant obstacles, weathered trying circumstances, learned from some perhaps regrettable mistakes, or persevered in the face of difficulties out of a sense of responsibility, this may be brought to the attention of admissions committees.

Most importantly, consider what qualities and abilities you value in a health care professional and whether you believe this individual has the capacity to become a skilled health practitioner. Make sure that you specify at some point in your letter that you are recommending this person for the specific health profession of their interest.

**Please be sure your letter is dated, includes your full name and title, and is printed on letterhead stationery if you are associated with an academic institution or professional organization (if you do not have letterhead, make sure to include your email address and phone number below your signature).** Your letter should be single-spaced and in 12-point type for readability. Because the letter you submit to veCollect will be used for all the applicant's health professional schools, letters should not be addressed to any specific school or program. A salutation is not required, but you may address your letters generically as "Dear Admissions Committee Members."

You will submit your letter electronically to veCollect. The applicant that has requested your letter will create an “Evaluator” file for you on veCollect and you will receive an email with instructions on how to upload your document. Look out for an email from veCollect, it may go to junk mail. The email sender will look something like this: collect+3d2a24..c00b13d5ffe11@virtualevals.org. Which is basically the word ‘Collect+’ with a series of random letters and numbers that will be specific to your veCollect ID which is generated by Virtual Evals to collect your individual letters. veCollect reviews the letters and is **unable to accept unsigned letters**. The applicant should have provided you with a signed Individual Letter Request Form that includes a Waiver Statement. Please note that the applicant must indicate that they waive their right to see your letter given that the Wesleyan Letter Packet Cover Letter is confidential and as part of the packet your letter needs to be confidential as well. This letter request form also provides you with this basic writing guidelines handout.

**Your *signature* on the letter certifies that it was written in its entirety by you on behalf of the applicant.**

We appreciate the great care and thoughtfulness that characterize the letters of recommendation written for our applicants to health professional programs. Thank you for your efforts on their behalf. Should you have any questions regarding the letter packet or veCollect contact the Health Professions Administrative Assistant, Rosalind Adgers, (860) 685-3376, Boger Hall, Gordon Career Center, 41 Wyllys Avenue, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT 06459, or by email at [radgers@wesleyan.edu](mailto:radgers@wesleyan.edu) or [health.professions.credential.service@wesleyan.edu](mailto:health.professions.credential.service@wesleyan.edu)

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