Advice for Those Writing Letters of Recommendation for Notre Dame Applicants to Medical, Osteopathic, or Dental Schools
Please return by June 1st

You have been asked to write a reference letter for a health professions school. It is preferable to compose a separate letter on letterhead for the applicant. Professional schools weigh these letters heavily, when considering applicants. The letter of recommendation can be especially effective if you use specific examples whenever possible. Please consider including in your letter any of following items that might be relevant to your understanding of the student:

Please address the letter to “Dear Admission Committee”

1) Describe your relationship with the student: In what capacity and for how long have you known the student? If you have taught the applicant in the academic setting, please include a description of your course.

2) Briefly describe who you are (in no more than one sentence).

3) Include a course description of your course or experience in which you directed or taught the student.

4) Comment on the student's intellectual ability as compared to that of other students you have known. Are there any extenuating circumstances that should be considered when interpreting an atypical grade?

5) Academic tasks: Does the student follow through on assignments and pursue suggestions for additional learning? With what degree of independence has he/she worked? How rigorous was the academic program?

6) Work/Lab/Volunteer/Extracurricular activities: Does the student come to work prepared? Would you trust him to work unsupervised? Describe his/her depth of involvement and achievement in these activities.

7) Communication skills: Evaluate the applicant's ability to communicate both verbally and in writing.

8) Personal characteristics: How would you describe this student as a person? Listing the strongest point first and giving specific examples, comment on the student's maturity, dependability, integrity, initiative, motivation for learning, concern for others, emotional stability, flexibility, self-discipline, ability to achieve goals, creativity, capacity for leadership, sense of humor, humility, and problem solving skills.

9) Interpersonal skills: How does he/she relate to peers, faculty, supervisors, ancillary staff? How does he/she respond to critique? Describe the student's capacity for collaboration.

10) Potential as a health professional: How has the student demonstrated motivation for medicine/dentistry? Describe his/her level of commitment to a health career. Do you believe he/she would make a good health professional?

11) May the admission committee contact you about your letter?

Professional schools will only accept letters on letterhead with a signature