

Ideal Letter of Recommendation: Medical School

You are entirely in control of what I get to write about you. This is my checklist of what an ideal letter will say. Your goal is to check as many boxes as you can, and fill in the new boxes with what you believe makes you an exceptional undergraduate! This is not to say that your letter will be the same as anybody else's in the lab- I **promise** to customize and individualize every single letter. But let's be honest with one another- there are many of you, and sometimes I might forget something that you did was that AMAZING! This is also your place to keep track of those things, and to take genuine pride in your accomplishments. A checked box doesn't serve me as well as an anecdote or example; I will be keeping track too!

This document is shared between just us on GoogleDrive. Nobody else has access. Check off the boxes when you feel you're ready; I might check a few here and there when I see exceptional things happening!

Background

Was a student in my class? : _____

Started in the lab: _____

Projects you have worked on to date:

Favorite thing in the lab: _____

Least favorite thing in the lab: _____

Work Ethic

- Was always on time and prepared to work
- Demonstrated good organizational skills, and budgeted time appropriately to complete tasks, while sustaining excellent academic performance
- Followed instructions well, and never needed to be told something twice

Interpersonal

- Worked well with the other researchers in the laboratory
- Could function well as part of a team, and developed rapport with all lab members
- Was a good lab citizen
- Maturity, both psychological and emotional
- Exceptional communication skills
- Excellent moral character

Research

- Demonstrated a meticulous eye for detail
- Took the work seriously, despite it being different from career goals

- Could be entirely trusted
- Lab notebook showed clear, concise writing skills

More

- Recognized their limitations as well as their skills, and sought improvement without risking errors* (Note: in my opinion, this is the most important thing I can say about you in a letter!)
- Noticed positively by other professors in the department
- Able to interact positively at outreach events with people of all ages and backgrounds, and demonstrated the ability to shape information to different audiences

What makes you special? What are some funny moments in the lab? What things have you felt really proud of?

1.

Ideal Letter of Recommendation: Graduate School

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Work Ethic

- Was always on time and prepared to work
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Interpersonal

- Worked well with the other researchers in the laboratory
- Able to work with others in true collaboration
- Was an exceptional lab citizen
- Was a joy to have around the lab; lifted the attitudes of other lab members and contributed to a healthy lab dynamic

Research

- Was resilient to failure* (Note: this, in my opinion, is the highest praise I can give you in a graduate school letter of recommendation.)
- Displayed genuine interest in the research topic from Day 1

- Made an effort to understand where their work fit into the broader research goals of the lab
- Entrusted with training of subsequent undergraduates- did a phenomenal job and will make an exceptional TA
- Asked questions often to clarify concepts
- Asked insightful questions about the research program/projects
- Prioritized the work over the credit (e.g. performed work at a high level without promise of publication, etc.)

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