

Law School Reference Letters Guidelines for Letter Writers

Dear Letter Writers:

Thank you for taking the time to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of a law school applicant. Law school admission officers carefully consider these letters as part of their decision-making process.

Generally, law schools require applicants to submit two academic letters of reference, but will often accept additional letters. Applicants may opt to submit an additional letter from a professor, or alternatively, a letter of reference from an employer, civic leader, or program director.

The most useful letters are detailed and contain specific information about the applicant's intellectual abilities, character, and interests. Letters likely to have an impact will address the following areas or questions:

1. In what capacity have you have known the applicant?
2. Assess the applicant's academic skills and potential (if applicable). Consider how well the student critically reads and analyzes materials. Is the student effective at synthesizing information and presenting a coherent argument in writing? Is the student articulate in class, offering insightful contributions? Was the coursework he/she took with you particularly rigorous? If so, why? Discuss specifically the student's work in the course(s). For example, mentioning the thesis of a student's paper, or the types of comments he/she contributed to class discussions will make the recommendation substantive and convincing.
3. Include information about the applicant's personal qualities (i.e. integrity, determination, motivation, leadership, maturity, reliability). Does the applicant have special interests, striking personal qualities, or an interesting background? If you are familiar with a student's extra-curricular or employment activities you might also note these.
4. Information regarding the applicant's social skills (e.g. ability to interact with others in groups, interpersonal skills).
5. What information do you have about this applicant that may be relevant and is not likely to be available from other sources?
6. How does this applicant compare to other students you have taught (or if you are an employer, to other individuals with whom you have worked?)

Please submit your signed letter on letterhead to the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) along with the appropriate LSAC form provided to you by the student. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pre-Law Advising at (212) 772-4889. Thank you for taking the time to write on behalf of the applicant.