

Law School Reference Letters -- Guidelines for Letter Writers

To Letter Writers:

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for application to law school. It is advisable for applicants to submit two academic letters of reference. In addition applicants may want to submit a letter of reference from an employer, civic leader, or program director. Admission officers tend to read and carefully consider these letters as part of their decision-making process. 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 address the following areas or questions:

1. Indicate in what capacity you have known the applicant?
2. Assess the applicant's academic skills and potential (if applicable) – How well does the student read write and analyze? Was the course he/she took with you a particularly rigorous one? If so, why? Discuss specifically the student's work in the course (s). For example, mentioning the topic of a student's paper, or the types of comments he/she contributed to class discussions makes 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 can 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, individuals with whom you have worked?)

Please submit the letter on letterhead and sign it. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pre-Law Advising at 772-4889. Thank you for taking the time to write on behalf of the applicant.