

Graduate School Recommendation

Information That Will Help Faculty Write Strong Letters of Recommendation for Graduate School

The following form should help you provide faculty with the best source of information possible when writing letters of recommendations for graduate or professional school. I suggest that you give a completed copy of this form to each faculty member who has agreed to write a letter of recommendation.

Your thoughtful and thorough response to the items will contribute to a more effective letter of recommendation. Offer to clarify or amplify on any item that you think might improve the faculty's understanding of your skills and achievements (e.g., a marked discrepancy between GPA and GRE scores).

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1. Name: _____
2. Date of first contact (how long you have known the instructor): _____
3. Graduate Record Examination scores:
Verbal: _____ Quantitative: _____ Analytic: _____ Subject: _____
4. Miller Analogies Test: _____
5. Attach a copy of the computer listing of all classes (or transcript).
Overall GPA: _____ Psychology GPA: _____
6. Classes you have taken from this instructor:

7. Submit copies of your best written work in psychology, such as research reports, term papers, and the like.
8. Provide an addressed stamped envelope for each school to which you plan to apply.
9. Enclose a copy of the recommendation form in each envelope. If no recommendation form is available, simply enclose a note to that effect.

The result of a survey of 143 graduate programs in clinical, experimental, and industrial-organizational psychology (Herbstrith, Mauer, & Appleby, 1990) indicated that the following skills and characteristics (listed in order of their rated importance) are what these programs are most interested in learning about candidates from letters of recommendation.

One of the most successful ways in which you can convince a graduate school admissions committee that you possess these skills and characteristics is to have the people who write your letters of recommendation describe you as a person who possesses them. In order to help faculty write the strongest letter possible, please provide a specific example of something you have done during your college career that indicates that you possess these skills and characteristics and that will support statements with specific evidence. For example, if you want faculty to say that you possess "teaching skills/potential," you may want to describe how you created a variety of types of test questions in your Tests and Measurements class, you gave oral presentations in your classes, and you volunteered to teach a class while the instructor was out of town.

It is not necessary for you to fill in all the blanks: no one possesses all these skills and characteristics. Give this task some careful thought. Your time will be well spent, and faculty will be able to write you a stronger letter of recommendation.

Motivated and hard working	
High intellectual and/or scholarly ability	
Research skills	
Emotionally stable and mature	

Writing skills	
Speaking skills	
Teaching skills/potential	
Works well with others	
Creative and original	
Strong knowledge of area of study	

Strong character or integrity	
Special skills (e.g., computer or lab)	
Capable of analytical thought	
Broad general knowledge	
Intellectually independent	
Possesses Leadership Ability	

- Provide the following information for each school to which you want letters of recommendation.

	University	Department or School (e.g., Psychology, Educational Psychology, Counselor Education)	Specialty (e.g., school, developmental, clinical, counseling, I/O)	Degree (e.g., masters or doctoral)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

- Describe your professional goals or aspirations. Be specific versus saying, "I want to be a clinical or I/O psychologist."

- Describe relevant volunteer or paid work, field placement, and/or research experience. Describe the tasks you performed and/or the responsibilities you had versus only the title or positions you held. Assume that the person writing the letter knows **NOTHING** about your background! Use the reverse side of this page if you need more space.