

Tips on Composing a Letter of Recommendation

The selection of medical students for residency programs can be enhanced by the faculty composing organized and revealing letters of recommendations. As programs become more competitive, the letters from the faculty become more important. Hopefully, the following points and buzz words will assist in describing a student and offer insights as part of the overall assessment.

I. Key points to consider:

1. Describe your teaching experience: number of years, frequency, context.
2. Describe the amount of contact that you have had with the student and in what context; i.e., extensive, occasional, frequent, duration, formal, personal, etc.
3. Anticipate student's effectiveness as a resident; i.e., reliable, dependable, ability to accept responsibility, etc.
4. Describe student's intellectual capabilities; i.e., inquisitive, eager, reads the journals, etc.
5. Describe student's interpersonal skills; i.e., ability to relate to patients, support staff and others.
6. Describe ability of student to participate in teaching medical students or other residents.
7. Describe personal characteristics and emotional stability.
8. Review the student's autobiography and include any pertinent points about background or personal interests.
9. Be certain letter is neatly typed and on official letterhead stationery.
10. Address letter: Dear Residency Director.

II. Buzz Words for Letters of Recommendation:

Accountable	Good Knowledge	Pleasant
Accurate	Integrity	Punctual
Ambitious	Humorous	Reliable
Analytical	Independent	Resourceful
Articulate	Initiative	Responsible
Assertive	Inquisitive	Steady
Attentive	Intellectual	Systematic
Calm	Kind	Tactful
Compassionate	Likable	Thoughtful
Dedicated	Methodical	Trustworthy
Dependable	Meticulous	Well-read
Determined	Motivated	Willingness
Devoted	Organized	
Eager	Outgoing	
Enthusiastic	Outstanding	
Ethical	Patience	
Flexible	Perseverant	
Friendly	Personable	

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