

Southern Illinois University Health Professions Information Office
Request for Letter of Evaluation for Direct Submission
by the letter writer to AAMCAS, etc.

Applicant Name: _____ **Letter deadline:** _____

Southern Illinois University students and alumni applying to graduate health professional schools are supported by letters of evaluation from faculty, mentors, and others who know them in a professional context. The opinions of those who know the candidate well are essential.

Instructions to submit Letters of Evaluation

Please submit typed letters on letterhead, bearing the date, your name, title, contact information, and original signature saved in pdf format. Your letter must identify the candidate by name.

- If the candidate is applying to professional school this year, they will send you an email link from the requesting application service. Follow the instructions in the email to submit your letter. **We encourage students to alert you when they are planning to submit an application.** If you have difficulty submitting your letter to either service, please contact the Health Professions Information Office and we will help you through the process.

If the student is applying in a later year or if you are unable to utilize the letter services:

- On-campus evaluators may submit a scanned copy of their letter in hard copy or as an email sent from a SIU email address to health-professions@cos.siu.edu. Please forward your original letter with signature to the HPIO (address in footer below).
- Off-campus evaluators must send a paper copy of their letter with original signature to the Health Professions Office (address in footer below). We will upload the letter on your behalf. Please be aware that this may delay the submission of your letter by 7-10 business days.

Your letter will be included in its original form, without change, to the admissions committees of health professional school programs. Please be certain to include contact information in case they have questions or concerns.

Suggestions for Letters of Evaluation

1. Please address your letter, "To the Members of the Admission Committee".
2. If for any reason, you do not feel that you can write a positive letter of recommendation for an applicant, we encourage you to be honest with them and decline to write the letter. A negative or vague letter can be detrimental to their candidacy.
3. If you wish, you may ask the applicant to provide you with a resume/CV, autobiography, examples of class work, and/or other materials that better inform/remind you of their candidacy. Some evaluators choose to meet with applicants to discuss their qualifications, motivation for career, etc.
4. Please indicate how you have come to know the applicant and, when possible and if it is in the student's best interests, rank the applicant among other students you have known/taught.
5. *Examples* that demonstrate competency or excellence in academic performance, attitude, character, motivation, leadership ability, or special accomplishments of the student are especially helpful, as are your estimation of their suitability for their chosen health profession.

6. Medical schools are particularly interested in evidence that demonstrates the following competencies:

- Service Orientation
- Interpersonal skills
- Cultural Competence
- Teamwork
- Oral Communication
- Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
- Reliability and Dependability
- Resilience and Adaptability
- Capacity for Improvement
- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Scientific Inquiry
- Written Communication

These competencies are discussed in more detail on the AAMC Website: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/>

Examples of instances in which you have witnessed these traits are particularly important.

7. It is acceptable for multiple individuals who have worked with students within the same context (e.g., two mentors in a research experience, a professor and TA in a class) to co-write and co-sign one letter of recommendation. A student may approach you asking for this type of letter and it is at the recommenders' discretion to determine whether to write together or separately.
8. Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA), the application services allow applicants to indicate whether or not they waive their right of access to read your letter. **Schools prefer letters to be confidential and the HPIO advises students to waive their rights of access.** If you are uncomfortable with a student having access to your letter of recommendation, please inquire of the student's intentions and inform them if you will decline to write a letter they could see.
9. The purpose of the letter is to recommend the student to a health professional school. We will not release a letter for any other purpose. Please retain a copy of your letter should the applicant request it from you for other purposes (e.g., jobs, internships, prizes, awards, fellowships, grants, or scholarships for which they may apply.)

A note about deadlines: Applicants whose letters are not received in a timely fashion are disadvantaged in the application process. Please make every effort to adhere to deadlines provided by the student. Once you agree to write a letter of evaluation, please monitor your inbox for the email with instructions to upload your letter.

If you have difficulty in this process, please contact Health Professions Information Office at (618) 536-2147 or health-professions@cos.siu.edu with questions or concerns.