

WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

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23

MAKE AN
IMPRESSION
WITH
IPC, GULF



INTERNATIONAL PLACEWELL CONSULTANTS, GULF
Since 2003

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

A letter of recommendation is a letter written on behalf of an applicant by someone who can vouch for that person's educational or professional performance. This letter is typically sent to an admissions officer or considering a candidate for admission or a scholarship.

THE LETTER

Letter of Recommendation is a tool to convince the admission officer that you are a worthy candidate and that your qualification and dedication are well suited to the course. It provides the admission committee with substantial information to have a positive impact.

It is a distant interview of sorts wherein the admission officer relies on the recommendation of an expert which successfully establishes you as a perfect applicant.

REMEMBER

The letter may be obtained from the Professor/Head of Department/Principal.

Ensure that the personal and academic achievements and performances are highlighted

It should be a realistic assessment of the students – substantiating the analytical capacity and the leadership qualities with healthy communication skills.

STRUCTURE

Opening

Establish the relationship between the students and the referee. Include the period of knowing the student

Body

Include the Characteristics of the students that are relevant to the course

Include knowledge of the subject that the student has gained during studying with you. Incorporate areas of strength and any awards/recognition that the student has received

Share personal experience with the student and any specific responsibilities that were effectively completed

Emphasize the ability of the student to work in a team, Leadership qualities, and Motivation factor

Ensure that the student is seen as dedicated, hardworking and goal-oriented with qualities to deal with challenges.

While the transcripts establish the academic criteria, the Recommendation letter allows the officer insight into your personality and passion for the course.

Choose the referee wisely since this document has a substantial effect on the decision of the admissions officer. It may be obtained from a person who has known you in an academic or a professional capacity and can provide substantial details about your achievements.

Ensure that the Recommendation Letter highlights the strengths and achievements of the student

The document should be a fair account with a distinction made between opinions and facts

The letter should be more than just a character certificate. It should reflect the strengths of the student.

It should reinforce that the student would be a beneficial student for the university

SUMMARISE

Specifically, recommend the student as a GOOD FIT for the university.

Ascertain that the student, as well as the university, would gain from the presence of the student at the university.

BRAG SHEET

A Brag Sheet is a way to assist your counsellors and teachers to write a befitting Letter of Recommendation. This gives an insight into your achievements and accomplishments both inside and outside your school.

1 The subjects/classes I took with you:

List the name of the courses that you took with the teacher and the grade when you did.

2 The top three adjectives I would use to describe myself:

List the most important aspect you would like the recommender to mention

3 The lesson that I most enjoyed with you was:

Describe a lesson or unit in the class that you enjoyed and why

5 I chose you to write my Letter of Recommendation because:

Illustrate why you have chosen this teacher to write your Letter of Recommendation

4 The project/s that I undertook with you:

Describe a project you worked on in the class that you are proud of

6

These are some of my achievements that you may not know about me:

Share something your teacher probably doesn't know about you

7

Select 1-2 attributes, from the list, and share an example of time you demonstrated those characteristics.

Academic achievement, intellectual promise, quality of writing, creative and original thought, productive class discussion, the respect accorded by faculty, disciplined work habits, maturity, motivation, leadership, integrity, reaction to setbacks, concern for others, self-confidence, initiative, and independence

Dear [name of teacher],
Thank you for agreeing to write the Letter of Recommendation on my behalf. The Letter is an important component of my application to the University. I hope you find the additional information about me helpful for writing this document.

Sincerely,
Signed
Name of Student
Date

8 Additional Information

Share any additional information that is not already stated and you want the recommender to know before writing your letter of recommendation

Letter of Recommendation

Advice for Students

LOR should provide the admissions team with the information and impressions that they cannot glean from the rest of the application. A well-written letter for an outstanding applicant shows impressive characteristics beyond their self-advocacy. It provides a complete sketch of the student and the context of their accomplishments supported with facts and anecdotes wherever possible.

A strong teacher recommendation brings a student to life for the admissions team and provides honest appraisals of the student's academic performance and intellectual promise. They must communicate the teacher's classroom experience with the student.

5 Enough Time

You do not want to put your recommenders in a situation where they do not have enough time to write a thoughtful letter about you and your accomplishments. Begin early! It is recommended that you communicate with the recommenders at the beginning of the senior year.

6 Be Polite

Be kind and mind your manners. Be sure to 'THANK' them. A note reminding them that you are grateful for an advocate on your behalf and writing the important document is not only essential but extends basic courtesy.

1 Pick a teacher who likes you

A teacher can talk about your academic growth through the course. Pick a teacher who knows you well and can praise your academic work, reflecting on your personal life if required.

2 Availability of the Teacher

Ask the teacher or counsellor in person whether they would be available to compose a letter of recommendation. Do not assume that they have the time to compose a distinctive letter. You must respect their decision if they decline.

3 Additional Counselors

If you are thinking about having other individuals in your life submit letters on your behalf make sure that they are going to be able to truly speak about you from a different perspective. The additional recommender should reflect on something different than the first one yet confirms your abilities and qualities.

4 Provide all Relevant Information

Provide all the details of your activities both inside and outside the school for your recommender to reflect upon. This is a helpful aide and assists in writing the recommendation. Make sure to list your academic, extra-curricular, and personal accomplishments so that they can refer to this sheet when needed.

Universities are looking for analytical, collaborative, engaging students who can thrive in the academic environment of the campus. The letters must reflect those qualities.

Letter of Recommendation

THE LETTER MUST ESTABLISH

- Your relationship with the applicant
- The longevity of the relationship
- Strength of your endorsement

ACENTUATE THESE

- The context of your relationship with the applicant
- The student's willingness to take intellectual risks and go beyond the normal classroom experience
- Applicant's unusual competence, talent, or leadership abilities
- Evidence of what motivates and excites the applicant.
- Personality and social skills of the applicant in context with student-teacher interactions
- The most memorable thing about the student for you.
- The learnings from the applicant's experiences of failure and the approach
- Unusual circumstances, if any, and their implication on the applicant.
- How the student fits in the University/College Community
- How, according to you, will the applicant contribute to the University/College

MIND THE FOLLOWING

- Support your conclusions with facts and anecdotes whenever possible.
- Provide an overview of the student including academic, extracurricular and volunteer activities.
- Give evidence to show how that student has stood out in some way.
- Explain why you think a student is a good match for a particular college.
- Discuss the student's personal life if it is relevant to the academic record.
- Write in a way that makes you feel comfortable and does not shy away from giving your honest impressions.
- Make sure to go beyond the grades and academic performance.

HIGHLIGHT STUDENT'S CHARACTERISTICS

- Challenges faced and overcome
- Evidence of extraordinary abilities and passions
- Strong character
- Unusual interests
- Upward trajectory in grades
- Story of transformation
- Commitment to a cause
- Aptitude for the subject
- Obstacles in the journey
- Resilience despite adversity
- Hardworking & Capable
- Stories of perseverance

A LOR should be well written and be an informative assessment of the student. Both school counsellor and teacher evaluations are most helpful when they are specific and storied. They should provide information provide a complete sketch of the student and the context of their accomplishments. It is a document that gives a glimpse of the student's performance beyond the grades. It should effectively reflect upon the aspects that are not visible throughout the rest of the application.

ADVICE TO RECOMMENDERS

The purpose of your recommendation is to help the admissions staff make an accurate, fair assessment of the applicant. A strong letter of recommendation offers enthusiastic support for the student's candidacy, building off of their application package and providing a unique insight into their capabilities that only faculty can offer.

A SUCCESSFUL LETTER SHOULD

- Provide a contextual and concrete comparison of the student's performance. for example, "in the top 3% of students in my 15 years of teaching".
- Highlight personalized examples of the student's work, such as a standout final paper, semester-long research project, etc.
- Whenever possible, be anecdotal – anecdotes are much more interesting to read.
- Discuss the merits of the student's proposed plan.
- Aligns with the student's future aspirations.
- And, finally, a strong letter should provide rich and convincing detail. The selection committee needs to see the student as a person and as a candidate in action.

DO'S

- Support your points with examples and details.
- Place the student in the context of the class or the school.
- Address attitude/character as well as the academic ability of the student
- Address growth if you have known the student over a significant period.
- Explain any unusual circumstances that may have affected the student's performance (within your rights given confidentiality constraints).
- Keep your letters short and specific and not more than 2 pages.
- Proofread the letter for any grammatical mistakes.
- If your school has its form, attach that as well.

DONT'S

- Underestimate the impact of a compelling letter.
- List all the student's activities or courses.
- Assume that high grades are sufficient for selective colleges to admit a student.
- Comment on the student's appearance.
- Use one college's name in the first paragraph and a different name in the closing paragraph.
- Make the letter too long to read.
- 'Brag' about your achievements.

POINTS TO PONDER

Explain why you think a student is a good match for a particular college – and especially so for Early Decision candidates and borderline candidates.

Your recommendations will be read thoroughly by at least one person evaluating the application. It will help that person, as well as subsequent readers if your opening sentence commands attention and your closing paragraph summarizes your evaluation.

Give the admission team a reason to remember the candidate through your letter

IPC, Gulf

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Why IPC, Gulf?

International Placewell Consultants Gulf has worked in the field of Education Management since 2003. Licenced by the Ministry of Education Abu Dhabi and KHDA, we are official representatives of many top-ranked universities in the world.

Our experienced team of specialist consultants possesses a comprehensive understanding of academic institutions, current information on the latest developments and a sound understanding of the issues concerning academic, personal and financial matters. Our team provides students with expert and highly informed support in every aspect of their applications to simplify the competitive and complex application process. The process is personalised after comprehensive student profiling and thorough personalised counselling.

1

EDUCATION COUNSELLING

Education Counselling is done through in-person and offline sessions and the use of differential tools. The experienced counsellors provide personal advice and counselling to the students to promote an informed choice.

2

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Once the Skill Gap is ascertained a PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN is created for the student that allows them a glimpse into what is expected and their journey ahead.

The admissions team looks at each student as a whole package, a combination of talents, interests, passions, and skills. In this way, they look beyond grades and test scores to recruit the most dynamic group of students possible. A wide variety of backgrounds, intellectual passions, and interests make up the typical applicant. The team at IPC, Gulf identifies the activities and academic interests to pursue through the Personal Development Plan that promises to have a positive impact on the admissions team.

3

APPLICATION PROCESS

Our experienced team of specialist consultants possesses a comprehensive understanding of academic institutions, current information on the latest developments and a sound understanding of the issues concerning academic, personal and financial matters. Our team provides students with expert and highly informed support in every aspect of their applications to simplify the competitive and complex application process.



College Essays



Documentation



Statement of Purpose



Visa Counselling



Letter of
Recommendation



Accommodation

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