



Mount Holyoke College Committee on the Health Professions  
50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-1456, tel 413.538.3389, fax 413.538.3398

Dear Letter Writer,

Thank you for taking the time to write a letter of evaluation for this applicant. A strong and informative letter can play a key role in distinguishing one qualified applicant from another. The Committee on the Health Professions requests that you submit your letter to Interfolio no later than **May 15**. The applicant will provide instructions.

When an admission committee reviews a candidate's letters, they have seen the student's GPA, entrance exam scores, college major and courses completed, extracurricular activities, research, volunteer experiences, and a personal statement. They look to letters of recommendation to illustrate personal qualities and abilities that are not obvious from the application itself: a candidate's strengths and weaknesses, academic aptitude, scholarship, social skills, and potential for their chosen career.

If you are writing for an applicant to schools of medicine, dentistry, optometry, or podiatry, the applicant is likely also receiving a committee letter from the Committee on the Health Professions. Committee letters are comprehensive, evaluative letters of an applicant's qualifications and are widely appreciated by professional schools. Committee letter writers consider all elements of an applicant's qualifications, including information shared in individual letters. When a committee letter is complete, all individual letters of recommendation are attached, and the complete packet is sent to professional schools.

We have provided some suggestions to help expedite your letter writing process. These instructions are based on recommendations from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Key elements of a strong letter of evaluation for a health profession school:

1. **State how long you have known the applicant**, and in what context.
2. Most helpful are **reflections based on your direct experiences with the applicant**.
3. Admission committees encourage you to **assess core competencies** sought in future health care providers, including critical thought, organization, communication, scientific inquiry, intrinsic motivation, integrity, cultural competency, resilience, and passion for science and service. A complete list for medical schools can be found at <https://www.aamc.org/download/349990/data/lettersguidelinesbrochure.pdf>.
4. **Instances where applicants have stood out** or provided unique contributions are helpful, as well as **longitudinal, evidence-based examples**. Comparisons may be useful provided you offer a relative frame of reference for context.
5. Admission committees appreciate insights into **challenges the applicant has faced**, especially if you believe this has shaped their path to a career in health care.
6. **Please ensure that your letter is signed and on institutional letterhead**. If you are a Mount Holyoke College employee and need assistance with this, please contact the assistant for your department or office.
7. Admission committees have noted that mention of grades or test scores and comments that fall outside the evaluator's direct experience with the applicant are **not useful**, therefore we recommend leaving these out.

Lastly, please tell your applicant if you are unable to provide a strong recommendation. Applicants understand the importance of letters and will appreciate the opportunity to seek a stronger recommendation elsewhere if need be.

Thank you again for taking the time to help this applicant achieve their professional goals. If the Pre-Health Office can assist you, please contact our coordinator, Jackie Collette, at [jcollett@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:jcollett@mtholyoke.edu) or at 413-538-3389.

The Committee on the Health Professions at Mount Holyoke College  
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