



Faculty & Community Members: Letter Writing Guidelines for Law Schools

First of all, thank you in advance for your important role in supporting OSU students and alumni who aspire to become future legal professionals. Often it can be difficult to write a quality letter of recommendation for students when given little guidance about how your evaluation is utilized by professional schools in the law school application process.

Please note that this information is not intended to prescribe your writing methods. This guide is designed to help facilitate the writing process and provide you helpful information and tips specific to the law school admissions process on how to:

- ✓ Format the letter
- ✓ Highlight your knowledge of an OSU student applicant
- ✓ Submit the letter

It is also important to note, law schools do not expect any *one* letter writer to provide information pertaining to *every* characteristic or speak to all qualities of an applicant.

Letter of Recommendation Format Tips:

1. While not required, letterhead is preferred
2. Include your contact information: telephone number, email address, physical location
3. Sign the letter
4. Save signed letter as a PDF (for optimal uploading/viewing if submitting electronically)

Letter of Recommendation Writing Tips:

1. **Address your initial greeting with a general audience in mind** (not a specific, individually named law school or admissions committee). *Why?*
 - Many recommendation letters are read by multiple, separate law school admissions committees if the student is applying to more than one law school. Overall, it is best to address your letter in a more general manner (e.g., Dear Admissions Committee, etc.).
 - It is permissible to write your letter to a specific audience/program; please discuss this with the student so they may direct it to the correct program in their application portal.
2. Provide an **accurate assessment of the student's suitability for law school** rather than simply advocating for the applicant or focus the letter on your personal credentials.
3. Briefly **explain your relationship** to the applicant and consider:
 - How long have you known the student?
 - Capacity you have interacted with them (faculty, supervisor, mentor, etc.).
 - Are you are writing based on direct or indirect observations?
4. **Quality is more important** than the length of the letter.
5. Only include information on grades, GPA or LSAT score if you are providing context to help interpret them. Remember this information is already available within the application for the admissions committee to review.

6. **Focus on behaviors that you have observed directly** when describing the student's suitability for law school. Please review the "Core Skills, Values, Knowledge and Experience" below for some ways to brainstorm your specific, evaluative letter content.
7. Admissions committees find comparison information helpful. **If you make comparisons, please be sure to provide context** and include information about:
 - The comparison group. (e.g., students in a class you taught, students in your department, coworkers, etc.)
 - Your rationale for the final comparison

Core Skills, Values, Knowledge and Experience:

- Problem Solving
- Critical Reading
- Writing and Editing
- Oral Communication & Listening
- Research
- Organization & Management
- Public Service & Promotion of Justice
- Relationship-building & Collaboration
- Background Knowledge
- Exposure to the Law

For full context, visit the [American Bar Association's website](#).

Details pertaining to Core Skills, Values, Knowledge and Experience begin about halfway down the page.

Letter of Recommendation Submission Tips:

1. The majority of accredited law schools utilize the Law School Admissions Council's (LSAC) Credential Assembly Service, a centralized, online application system for application submission. LSAC offers recommends the option of submitting their letter either electronically via their secure website or by traditional mail. Please have a conversation about your preference and the student will be able to provide information on how to submit your letter through your preferred submission method.
 - a. Electronic submissions: if you select this option please make sure to provide your student with the email address you would like to receive the formal information request from LSAC.
 - b. Paper submission through the mail: the student will provide you with a Letter of Recommendation form that must be included with your letter when sent via mail.
2. Confirm whether all the law schools the student is applying to utilize the LSAC's application system. If there is an outlier, please have the student provide all that information in addition to what you may need to submit to the LSAC.
3. Ensure you are both on the same page: ask for a timeline/expectation of a deadline the letter needs to be completed to submit online (or via mail). It may be helpful to inquire if the student plans to follow up with you as the deadline approaches.

Additional Tips:

- ✓ Please be sure to monitor **your e-mail and check your junk mail**. If you have agreed to submit your letter of recommendation online, you will receive an email directly from the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) application portal with instructions on how to proceed with an online submission. This request comes almost instantaneously after the student inputs your information into the LSAC system. If it has been a few days and you have not received the email, please check your filter/junk mail and/or contact the student to make sure they have submitted your information correctly.
- ✓ You may opt to send your letter via traditional mail. If this is your preference, the student must provide you with a form to include with your letter which will allow LSAC to upload it to the student's application materials once received. Reminder, your letter must be signed or else LSAC cannot process it.
- ✓ Please **do not ask the student to upload the letter or send the letter on your behalf** as the students have been told specifically that this is not permissible by LSAC.
- ✓ As a courtesy, **please consider a follow-up communication with the student once your submission has been completed**. Often students may professionally follow-up when appropriate. Taking this courtesy step is often greatly appreciated to ensure a smooth submission in a timely manner.
- ✓ Note: Once you have uploaded (or mailed) the letter via the provided instructions, the student should be able to log-in and check their application portal to ensure the letter has been received.

Thank you again for your time and dedication to furthering the professional aspirations of OSU students.



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