

Helpful Hints for Writing a Letter of Recommendation

Include your affiliation/relationship with the person. Were you a supervisor? Advisor? Professor? It is important to indicate this because a professor may see the academic skills while a supervisor may be able to identify work habits.



Give honest and factual information.

When approached to write a recommendation, ask yourself if you honestly know the person's qualities. If you have not had much contact with the person you cannot give an accurate description. It would be better to decline to write a recommendation than write a vague, irrelevant, or negative one. However, if you do make negative comments, back them up with facts.

The following eight attributes are important when evaluating teaching candidates:

- empathy
- the ability to be a "self-starter"
- native intelligence
- a high energy level
- a divergent, abstract thinking style
- a high level of commitment
- the potential ability to lead
- the recognition the excellence is a journey, not a destination

Have the person give you a list of accomplishments and organizations that he/she belongs to, or any other relevant information. It might surprise you to see how much that person has done outside of your contact with them. This can also help you get a more accurate picture of the individual. Having the person give you a copy of his/her resume is an easy way to have this information at hand.



**BE
SPECIFIC!**

Concentrate on several different aspects of the person. Specifically, identify his/her skills, attitudes, personal attributes and growth, as well as his/her contributions to and performance within your organization. It is extremely important to include examples where possible. It is one thing to state that someone had some good ideas and another to say, "Jane integrated reading and writing into a language experience program with an emphasis on comprehension."





BE ACCURATE!

Powerful words which are important to use include:

articulate	effective	sophisticated
cooperative	expressive	creative
imaginative	assertive	efficient
mature	innovative	dependable

Don't reference characteristics that can be the basis of discrimination such as race, color, national origin, gender, citizenship, status, religion, age, appearance, any handicapping condition, marital or parental status, or political point of view.

BE HONEST!



Beware of the power of words, some words seem harmless in everyday conversation, but carry positive or negative connotations to a prospective employer.

Avoid bland words such as:

nice
reasonable
fairly
good
decent
satisfactory

The appearance of the letter is a reflection on both you and the candidate and it can also determine whether it will be read or not. Please type your recommendation neatly.

The following list of attributes is often listed by employers as tools on which to base eventual selection. These are excellent points to address:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ▪ ability to communicate | ▪ flexibility |
| ▪ intelligent | ▪ interpersonal skills |
| ▪ self confidence | ▪ self-knowledge |
| ▪ willingness to accept responsibility | ▪ ability to handle conflict |
| ▪ initiative | ▪ goal achievement |
| ▪ leadership | ▪ competitiveness |
| ▪ energy level | ▪ appropriate vocational skills |
| ▪ imagination | ▪ direction |

Career Services
Sheridan Hall 214
628-4260



Please return
recommendation
forms promptly~~the
candidate's successful
job search depends on
it!

