Applicant Name: ____________________________________ Letter deadline: ____________________________________

Princeton 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 your comments typed **in letter form, on letterhead stationery, bearing the date, your name, title and signature.**
- If the student is applying to professional school this year, they will send you an email link from veCollect, an online letter collection service. Simply reply to the email with your letter attached.
- If the student is applying in a later year, or if you are unable to utilize veCollect:
  - On-campus evaluators may submit a copy of their letter in hard copy or as an email attachment sent from a Princeton email address to hpa@princeton.edu.
  - Off-campus evaluators must send a paper copy of their letter to the Health Professions Advising office (address in footer below).

Your letter will be included in its original form, without excerpt or change (save for spelling/typographical errors) to the admissions committees of health professional school programs.

**Suggestions for letters of evaluation**

- Think carefully about how well you know the individual asking for a reference. If for any reason you do not feel that you can write positively on an applicant’s behalf, be honest with them and decline to write the letter. A negative or vague letter can be detrimental to an applicant’s candidacy.
- 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.
- Please indicate how you have come to know this individual. And, when possible and if you believe it to be in the best interest of the student, please rank the applicant among other students you have known.
- Comment on academic performance, attitude, character, motivation, leadership ability or special accomplishments of the above-named student. Comments regarding suitability for their chosen health profession career are helpful.
- In addition to academic abilities, medical schools are particularly interested in evidence that the applicant demonstrates the following competencies:
  - Scientific knowledge and scientific inquiry
  - Critical thinking and reasoning
  - Oral and written communication
  - Ethical responsibility to self and others
  - Reliability and dependability
  - Resilience and adaptability
  - Capacity for improvement
  - Service orientation
  - Social and interpersonal skills
  - Cultural competence
  - Teamwork

The competences are described in more detail on the AAMC website: students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/
• 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 preceptor 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.

• Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the veCollect service allows applicants to indicate whether or not they waive their right of access to read your letter. Schools prefer letters to be confidential.

• A copy of the letter may also be used in support of the applicant's candidacy for prizes or awards for which they may be nominated, or for fellowships, grants or scholarships for which they may apply, at HPA’s discretion. 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).

• Additional guidance may be found at hpa.princeton.edu/application-process/info-for-recommenders

A note about deadlines. HPA begins to prepare composite letters of recommendation in mid-May and it is helpful to receive letters in May. For faculty working with the student on a spring semester endeavor, it may be in the best interest of the student for the letter to be received at the end of the term. Students are at their discretion to negotiate deadlines with recommenders. Applicants whose letters are not received in a timely fashion are disadvantaged in the application process, so please make every effort to adhere to deadlines provided by the student.

Thank you in advance for your support of this applicant and our program. Please do not hesitate to contact Health Professions Advising at 609.258.3144 or hpa@princeton.edu with questions or concerns.