

GUIDELINES FOR LAW SCHOOL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION **(ACADEMIC)**

- Highlight skills law schools are particularly interested in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Logical analysis
 - Ability to read and understand large quantities of complex written information
 - Writing
 - Oral communication
 - Research
- Give concrete examples of how the student exhibited those skills in your class.
- Explain the content of the course(s) and its value, and explain the student's firm grasp of that content.
- Mention in detail any significant work the student did in your class. For example,

“Mary Jones wrote a 25-page term paper analyzing the interplay of form and content in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*.”
- If you can, compare the student favorably to his/her peers. For example,

“Ms. Jones' work stood out in her class of forty honor students and I consider her to be among the top 5% of all students I've encountered in my 13 years of teaching.”
- If the course is part of an honors program, mention that, and discuss the criteria for participation.
- If the student's major is impacted and only accepts a small number of applicants, or if the major (or course) has a low curve which makes the grades appear artificially low, explain those circumstances in some detail.
- If you know that the student has a particularly strong knowledge base in some of the content areas useful for a law student, mention that. Those areas include, but are not limited to, the following: U.S history, western philosophy, U.S. political systems, political theory, economics, accounting, psychology, rhetoric.
- Do not be afraid of detail. General rule: longer recommendations are better.

GUIDELINES FOR LAW SCHOOL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION **(EMPLOYER)**

- Highlight skills law schools are particularly interested in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Logical analysis
 - Ability to read and understand large quantities of complex written information
 - Writing
 - Oral communication
 - Research

- Give concrete and detailed examples of how the student exhibited relevant skills in the workplace. For example,

“I receive over one hundred pieces of correspondence per day. One of William’s primary duties is to read that correspondence each day, analyze the content of each piece, decide which pieces need my attention and which pieces can be delegated to other employees, distribute the pieces to be delegated, and prioritize the remaining pieces for my attention. Because of the nature of our work here at XYZ, Inc., this correspondence often includes very complicated, and highly confidential, subject matter. William consistently exhibits the strong organizational skills, the ethical fiber, and the mental acuity necessary for such a challenging position.”

- If you can, compare the student favorably to his/her peers. For example,

“Never before in my 15 years of practice have I had a (job title) in whom I could place so much trust and in whom I have had so much confidence.”

- If selection for the position was highly competitive, explain the circumstances in some detail.
- Don’t be afraid to talk some about your own background, the job itself, the kind of business or organization you are, and the history of the employee in the job. That will provide context for your evaluation.
- If you have reason to be competent to evaluate the employee’s suitability for law school, go ahead and do so. If you don’t, leave it out.
- Discuss how much your organization will suffer without the employee but how you’re all excited about her bright future.
- Do not be afraid of detail. General rule: longer recommendations are better.