

## GUIDELINE FOR RECOMMENDATION LETTERS FOR UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

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### GENERAL FORMATTING

**Length:** 1 to 1.5 pages

**Text:** single-spaced, standard font like Times New Roman or Arial, 11 or 12 pt)

**File format:** PDF (preferred by most universities)

**Header (Top Left Corner):**

- Recommender's Full Name
  - Title/Position
  - Institution/Organization
  - Address
  - Email
  - Phone (optional)
  - Date
- 

### STRUCTURE OF THE LETTER

**Salutation:** "To Whom It May Concern." - Do not address the university directly if you are applying to more than one institution

#### Paragraph 1: Introduction and Context

- Clearly state your relationship to the student: how long you've known them, in what capacity (e.g., teacher, supervisor, coach).
- State your overall endorsement (e.g., "It is my pleasure to recommend..." or "I strongly support...")
- Mention the program or field they are applying to, if known.

**Example:** "I have had the pleasure of teaching Maria Gomez in my AP Biology course over the past academic year. As her teacher, I have observed not only her intellectual curiosity but also her commitment to excellence in all her pursuits. It is with confidence that I recommend her for undergraduate studies in the biological sciences."

#### Paragraph 2–3: Academic and/or Personal Qualities

- Describe specific strengths as academic performance, intellectual curiosity, leadership, creativity, communication skills, perseverance, or collaboration.
- Emphasize character traits such as resilience, teamwork, time management, and emotional intelligence.
- Use anecdotes or examples to demonstrate the student's qualities in action.

- Discuss how the student compares to peers, if relevant (e.g., "top 5% of students I have taught in my 10-year career").
- Describe their growth over time, especially in the face of challenges.

#### **Paragraph 4: Fit for Higher Education**

- Comment on the student's readiness for academic and personal independence.
- Highlight traits such as open-mindedness, adaptability, and cross-cultural awareness (especially important for international students).
- Briefly express confidence in their success and contribution to the university community.

#### **Closing Paragraph**

- Reaffirm your recommendation.
- Offer to provide further information if needed.

**Example:** "I am confident that [Student Name] will thrive in a challenging academic environment and make meaningful contributions to campus life. Please feel free to contact me at [email] should you require any further details."

#### **Signature:**

- Full name
  - Title
  - Contact information
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#### **TIPS FROM AN ADMISSIONS EXPERT**

- Be honest but supportive—glowing but generic letters are less effective than personalized, specific ones.
- Avoid vague phrases like "hard-working" without examples.
- Provide context, personality, and insight. Universities want stories, and examples, not just a list of activities
- Tailor the letter if the student is applying to a specific program (e.g., engineering, liberal arts).
- Use letterhead if possible—this adds authenticity.



## **SAMPLE LETTER FOR UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION**

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Daniel Mwangi

Mr. Jonathan Carter  
Physics Teacher  
Lincoln International High School  
123 Academic Lane  
Nairobi, Kenya  
jcarter@lincolnhhs.ke  
+254 712 345678

October 2, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my great pleasure to write this letter in support of Daniel Mwangi's application to your undergraduate engineering program. I have had the privilege of teaching Daniel in both Honors Physics and Advanced Calculus over the past two academic years at Lincoln International High School, and I can confidently say that he is one of the most gifted and driven students I have encountered in my 14 years as an educator.

From the beginning, Daniel distinguished himself with his intellectual curiosity and natural aptitude for problem-solving. In my Honors Physics class, he consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of the core principles of mechanics and electromagnetism. His ability to not only absorb complex concepts but also apply them creatively during lab experiments set him apart from his peers. For his capstone physics project, Daniel designed and built a functional prototype of a wireless energy transfer system using inductive coupling. The level of research, precision, and originality he brought to this project was outstanding, rivaling that of first-year university students.

Beyond his academic strengths, Daniel exhibits an exceptional work ethic and a genuine love of learning. He regularly stays after class to ask advanced questions and frequently mentors younger students in our school's science club. His approach to learning is both humble and inquisitive—a rare and valuable combination in any aspiring engineer.

Daniel is also a well-rounded and deeply principled individual. As the captain of our robotics team, he led his peers through both local and regional competitions, not only contributing strong technical skills but also demonstrating remarkable leadership and resilience. He is patient, inclusive, and able to bring out the best in others—qualities that I believe will serve him well in any collaborative university environment.

Given his talent, discipline, and character, I have no doubt that Daniel will thrive in a rigorous and intellectually stimulating engineering program such as yours. He is



exceptionally well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of higher education in the United States, and I am confident he will contribute meaningfully both inside and outside the classroom.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [jcarter@lincolnhs.ke](mailto:jcarter@lincolnhs.ke) should you require any additional information. I give Daniel my highest recommendation without reservation.

Sincerely,

*Johnathan Carter*

**Mr. Jonathan Carter**

Physics Teacher

Lincoln International High School

[jcarter@lincolnhs.ke](mailto:jcarter@lincolnhs.ke)

+254 712 34567

## **SAMPLE LETTER FOR GRADUATE APPLICATION**

Subject: Letter of Recommendation for Priya Sharma – MBA Program

Ms. Ananya Rao  
Senior Marketing Manager  
Innovatech Solutions Pvt. Ltd.  
Delhi, India  
ananya.rao@innovatech.in  
+91 98101 23456

November 15, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation for Ms. Priya Sharma in support of her application to your MBA program. I have known Priya for the past four years in my capacity as her direct supervisor at Innovatech Solutions, where she serves as an Assistant Marketing Manager. In this time, I have seen her evolve into a dynamic professional with an impressive blend of strategic thinking, creativity, and leadership potential.

Priya joined our firm as a Marketing Associate and was quickly recognized for her analytical skills and proactive approach to solving problems. One of her most notable achievements was leading the launch of our digital product line into new regional markets. Her strategic campaign planning resulted in a 35% increase in engagement and a 22% boost in quarterly revenue. She is someone who takes initiative, communicates effectively with cross-functional teams, and always seeks ways to innovate and optimize results.

Beyond her technical marketing expertise, what truly sets Priya apart is her emotional intelligence and ability to lead with empathy. She was instrumental in mentoring three junior associates, all of whom have shown significant performance growth under her guidance. She has also been a key contributor to our internal diversity and inclusion initiatives, demonstrating her commitment to fostering a collaborative and inclusive workplace culture.

Priya has expressed her desire to pursue an MBA in order to strengthen her managerial acumen and transition into strategic leadership roles. I wholeheartedly support this next step. I am confident that she possesses the maturity, global mindset, and drive to thrive in a rigorous MBA environment. Her international outlook, shaped by cross-market projects and her adaptable nature, make her particularly well-suited for a global program such as yours.

In conclusion, Priya is one of the most promising young professionals I have had the pleasure to work with. She is disciplined, insightful, and truly passionate about

growing as a leader. I have no doubt that she will be a valuable asset to your MBA cohort and beyond.

Please feel free to reach out to me at [ananya.rao@innovatech.in](mailto:ananya.rao@innovatech.in) should you require any further information. I give Priya my strongest recommendation.

Sincerely,

*Ananya Rao*

Ms. Ananya Rao  
Senior Marketing Manager  
Innovatech Solutions Pvt. Ltd.  
Delhi, India