

State University of New York at Buffalo
Request for Letter of Reference

Applicant's Name _____ UB Person# _____
(please print)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974/Buckley Amendment provides rights and protections regarding the disclosure of records held by the University, including files, documents and materials in whatever medium, which contain information directly related to a student and from which a student can be individually identified. By signing the waiver statement below, I waive my right to inspect under FERPA the reference letter solicited herewith. This waiver applies to all future holders of the solicited letter. The UB Prehealth Committee only keeps your recommendation letters on file for five (5) years.

I do not waive my right of access to this letter. (If waiver statement is unsigned, the law specifically reserves to the student the right of access to this letter.) _____ / _____
(signature) (date)

OR

I waive my right of access to this letter. _____ / _____
(signature) (date)

Referee Instructions: Please read and complete this reference request form, supplying the information requested below. If you would like to use your own stationery, please attach this completed form to your letter of reference.

Referee's Signature _____ Referee's Printed Name _____

Affiliation _____ Title _____ Address _____

Phone () _____

I provide permission to have this letter forwarded to post-baccalaureate programs, if applicable. [Y] [N]

I provide permission to have this letter forwarded to health professions scholarship programs, if applicable, [Y] [N]

Please send completed form, together with reference letter to:

**Coordinator of Preprofessional Advising, Student Advising Services, State University of New York at Buffalo,
109 Norton Hall, Buffalo, NY 14260.**

To Individuals Writing Letters for Preprofessional Health Students

The Division of Undergraduate Education, through its Preprofessional Health Committee, collects letters of recommendation and establishes files for students desiring careers in the graduate health professions (allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, veterinary or chiropractic medicine). Students are explicitly informed that the Preprofessional Health Committee packet inclusive of all individual letters may be used only for the purpose of applying to the professional health schools as listed above. With your permission (see front of form), and if applicable, we will also forward to post-baccalaureate programs and specific health professions scholarship programs. Letters will not be forwarded to support research opportunities, other scholarship options, honors/awards or internship opportunities or potential employers.

Letters of recommendation written by individual faculty members are of particular importance to this file. A detailed, highly individualized letter can be of enormous assistance to a student, especially if his or her grades are good but not in the excellent range. The point of this letter is to assess the student intellectually and personally as a potential contributor in the health professions. If the faculty member does not know the student well, he or she should either talk with him or her briefly, co-sign a teaching assistant's recommendation or decline to write the letter. Letters from faculty who know the students are the most helpful.

The letter of evaluation/recommendation is an important component of the application for the professional health schools. Letters of recommendation are traditionally written by individuals who have taught or who have worked with applicants in an instructional, laboratory, research or service setting. In selecting authors of letters of recommendation, applicants should seek out individuals who know them well, can speak to their abilities and have a good sense of their suitability for a doctoral level health career. The letter of recommendation, along with the professional school interview and personal essay, is generally regarded as a crucial source of information about an applicant's personal characteristics. On behalf of the applicants, **thank you** for taking the time to prepare a thoughtful evaluation for our students.

Most helpful content:

- explanation of the relationship between the applicant and the letter writer
- personal characteristics of the applicant such as *integrity, reliability, determination, motivation, professionalism*
- applicant's leadership qualities
- contrasted strengths and weaknesses
- descriptions of the applicant's social and interpersonal skills
- any academic performance of the applicant not included in the application
- knowledge of scholarship activities that go beyond the classroom
- interest in humanity
- commitment to service
- comparison to other applicants

Least helpful content:

- indicators of a lack of a strong relationship between the applicant and letter writer
- repetition of information from the application
- unsubstantiated superlatives, vague generalities or lack of specific examples
- comments regarding grades in one particular class
- inclusion of information irrelevant to the professional health school application

The Preprofessional Health Committee will then write a composite letter of evaluation for each student. Excerpts may be taken from individual recommendations as they depict characteristics that are useful to professional school admission. Letters of recommendation and the committee letter will be photocopied in their entirety and sent to the designated professional schools at an applicant's request. The Prehealth Committee prepares letters for students applying to the Early Assurance Program or for regular admission. Your letter for an Early Assurance candidacy is required by December 1; a letter for a student applying to the committee in the spring is required by APRIL 15 (NEW FOR 2007), and in the fall by SEPTEMBER 1. These dates are important because the Prehealth Committee must review a candidate's application before preparing the committee letter.

Since your letter is photocopied in full and sent to each school to which the student applies, it is imperative that the letter be neatly typed and signed in full by the recommender. Please be sure to include your title. If any information is missing we will return the letter directly to you for correction. No letter is altered in any way by this office. The student must indicate whether or not the letter is to be confidential. If the student so indicates or does not sign the waiver on the form, then he or she has retained the right to review the letter at a later date. Should you choose to use your own stationery instead of this form, please return both the letter and the waiver form to this office so we are aware of the student's confidentiality intent.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the application process or our program, please direct them to the Coordinator of Pre-professional Advising, 645-6020. Or, for procedural questions, call Student Advising Services at (716) 645-6012. To fax a recommendation, please send to 645-3042 and follow-up with a hard copy.