Writing Letters of Recommendation
What is a letter of recommendation?

A statement of support
Please write a narrative that expands upon the reasons behind the ratings you have assigned to this student.
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Specific, concrete examples showing why the student deserves the ratings you gave them.

What did the student do to earn the ratings?
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Expand upon the traits you believe are strongest in your student.

You won’t be able to cover everything!
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

- **Academic achievement**
- **Leadership**
- **Joy in learning**
- **Respect for teachers**
- **Honesty and integrity**
- **Self-confidence**
- **Respect from peers**
- **Sociability**
- **Cross-cultural adaptability**
- **Emotional maturity**
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

You should focus on what distinguishes this student from the others you teach...
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

What makes your student outstanding?

How is your student different from others?
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

...especially those academic and personal characteristics that may have a direct impact upon his/her success in an Ivy League pre-medical program and a career in medicine.
How do the stories and examples in your letter show that your student will succeed in a medical university program?

Specifically, why do you think your student will be an excellent physician?
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

We are particularly interested in this candidate’s intellectual promise and leadership potential.
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

How has your student demonstrated their intellectual abilities to you?

How has your student shown leadership?

Make sure to discuss these points!
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

You may wish to present evidence you have seen of his/her maturity, integrity, and independence. This may include references to his/her motivation, initiative, and enthusiasm.
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Discuss these traits if your student is outstanding in any of them.
The letter of recommendation prompt at WCMC-Q

Your student may not have done well in your class, but you feel they will succeed due to:

- Maturity
- Integrity
- Independence
- Motivation
- Initiative
- Enthusiasm
How do I get the information I need?

• Meet with the student!
• Discuss educational and career goals.
• Gather more specific information.
• Request that they bring a resume, or a paper or exam from your class.
• Look back at your records.
What do I do if...

A high-performing student with excellent marks and outstanding leadership potential requests a letter
What do I do if...

A student with excellent marks requests a letter

The student does not participate in school activities, and does not seem motivated to study medicine.
What do I do if...

A student with average marks requests a letter

The student is very active in school activities and seems very interested in studying medicine.
A student with low marks in your class requests a letter

You feel the student has the potential to do well, but there was a family emergency that affected his or her ability to focus on course material.
How do I organize my letter?

First Paragraph

• Establish your relationship to the student.
• How did you meet him or her?
• How well do you know him or her?
• Be specific!
How do I organize my letter?

**Second Paragraph**

• Describe your student’s strongest trait.

• Provide a **specific, concrete** story or example illustrating the trait.
How do I organize my letter?

Third Paragraph

• Describe your student’s next strongest trait.

• Provide a **specific, concrete** story or example illustrating the trait.
Fourth Paragraph

- Describe your student’s next strongest trait.

- Provide a specific, concrete story or example illustrating the trait.
How do I organize my letter?

Fifth Paragraph

- Summarize the traits
- Explain your expectations regarding the student’s success at Weill Cornell.
- Endorse your recommendation and ask the committee to take action.
Thanks for your attention!

We will now meet in breakout rooms.

Please follow your designated group leader.