



Purpose of This Form

This standardized letter of recommendation (SLOR) is designed to improve the validity, reliability, and fairness of graduate admissions decisions. Rather than an open-ended narrative alone, you are asked to assess the applicant on core competencies relevant to graduate study, provide concrete evidence, and rate their contributions using structured dimensions. This format reduces bias, improves inter-rater consistency, and ensures that all applicants are evaluated against the same criteria.

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant's name _____

(Last)

(First)

(Middle)

Proposed degree program _____ Proposed admit term _____

Applicant's CollegeNET ID _____

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the applicant can waive their right to inspect this recommendation. Should the applicant decide not to waive the right, they will have access to the recommendation only if they enroll at Cornell University.

☐ I hereby waive my right of access to the information* _____
(Applicant signature) (Date)

☐ I hereby DO NOT waive my right of access to the recommendation

Section 2: Recommender Information

Recommender name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Honorific _____ Institution/Employer _____ Title/Role _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Institution/Office Address _____

Section 3: Relationship with the Applicant

Your relationship context helps reviewers interpret your evaluation. Please be specific.

Nature of Your Relationship (check all that apply)

- ☐ Academic advisor ☐ Course instructor ☐ Practicum / clinical supervisor ☐ Colleague
☐ Employer / manager ☐ Mentor ☐ Research supervisor / PI ☐ Other: _____

How well do you know this applicant? (select one)

- ☐ Extremely well — I have directly mentored, supervised, or collaborated with this person extensively
☐ Well — I have observed their abilities across multiple contexts or over a meaningful period
☐ Moderately — I have observed their abilities in at least one substantive context
☐ Slightly — my contact has been relatively brief or narrow in scope

How long have you known this applicant? (select one)

- ☐ Less than 6 months ☐ 1-2 years ☐ More than 4 years
☐ 6 months to 1 year ☐ 2-4 years

Section 4: Core Competency Ratings

Rate the applicant on each competency using this rating scale. Select N/A only if you lack the context to provide an informed rating.

Rating Scale:

5 - Outstanding: Applicant demonstrates exceptional strength in this attribute or competency and is a role model for others.

4 - Exceeds Expectations: Applicant demonstrates a high degree of proficiency in this attribute or competency.

3 - Meets Expectations: Applicant consistently demonstrates this attribute or competency at the expected level.

2 - Below Expectations: Applicant demonstrates this attribute or competency less often or less effectively than expected.

1 - Needs Significant Improvement: applicant demonstrates a serious weakness with this attribute or competency.

N/A - Unable to Evaluate: lack of appropriate context or observations to provide an informed rating of this attribute or competency.

4A. Intellectual & Applied Capacity

Competency Area	5: Outstanding	4: Exceeds Expectations	3: Meets Expectations	2: Below Expectations	1: Needs Significant Improvement	N/A: Unable to Evaluate
Motivation and potential to contribute to this professional field	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Critical thinking skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Capacity to synthesize and analyze information and data	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world problems or projects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4B. Persistence & Work Habits

[illegible]

4C. Communication & Conduct

[illegible]

4D. Collaboration & Community

Competency Area	5: Outstanding	4: Exceeds Expectations	3: Meets Expectations	2: Below Expectations	1: Needs Significant Improvement	N/A: Unable to Evaluate
Ability to establish and maintain collaborative relationships within diverse professional and organizational settings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to work productively with others toward shared goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respect and empathy for others, even in difficult situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to take on leadership roles and contribute positively to team dynamics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Optional: Please share examples of observed behaviors or context that informed your competency ratings for the applicant not already addressed in your Letter of Recommendation.

Section 5: Letter of Recommendation (required upload)

Please provide a candid evaluation of the applicant's qualifications for advanced study in the specified degree program and their potential for success. Using specific examples, please provide insights into the applicant's strengths and any areas for further development, addressing the following categories:

- academic strengths and capacity for applied learning
- motivation for advanced study and career goals
- professional maturity and readiness
- verbal and written communication skills
- responsiveness to constructive feedback
- ability to navigate challenges, setbacks, and ambiguity
- potential to manage and contribute to projects, individually and as part of a team

In your letter, please also describe how the applicant interacts and collaborates with others, including those representing different backgrounds, perspectives, abilities, and experiences. If applicable, please comment on the applicant's ability to lead, motivate, or support peers in a team or professional setting.

We value your perspective, and it will play an important role in our comprehensive review of the applicant.

Section 6: Overall Recommendation

**Overall recommendation of the applicant's potential for success in their proposed graduate program, relative to comparable candidates you have known in a similar capacity.*

☐ Recommend with Distinction; Top 1%. Exceptional candidate who stands apart from all others at this level in demonstrated ability and potential for professional graduate study and practice.
☐ Recommend with Enthusiasm; Top 5%. Among the strongest candidates I have supported, with a very high likelihood of success in this program and in a professional career in this field.
☐ Recommend with Confidence; Top 10%. Superb candidate with excellent potential for success in this program and in applying their skills in a professional setting.
☐ Recommend; Top 25%. Strong candidate with clear potential for success in this program and readiness to contribute in a professional environment.
☐ Recommend with Reservations; Top 50%. Candidate with notable strengths but areas for further development; success at this level is uncertain. (Please describe specific areas for development in your comments, noting whether these reflect limited access to preparation rather than ability.)

☐ **Do Not Recommend; Below Top 50%.** *Candidate does not yet demonstrate readiness for this level of professional graduate study or for the applied demands of the field. (Please describe specific areas for development in your comments, noting whether these reflect limited access to preparation or professional experience rather than ability.)*

☐ **Insufficient Basis to Rank.** *I have not had an adequate opportunity to assess this candidate's abilities and potential relative to peers at this level.*

Section 7: Attestation & Signature

I attest that this recommendation represents my honest, independent assessment of the applicant named above, and that my evaluation is based on direct, personal knowledge of the applicant's work and competencies.

Signature:

Printed Name

Date

**Note to admissions staff and review committee: this recommendation must be kept confidential during the admissions review and selection process, and in all decision-making regarding rotations, research group assignments, and fellowship allocations. If the student did not waive their right to access the recommendation, it may only be made accessible to the student if they enroll at Cornell, and only then by scheduling an appointment with a college or university registrar.*