Letter of recommendation prompts

Ph.D. in developmental psychology

In addition to completing the quantitative rankings, please write a narrative evaluation of this applicant's qualifications for a research-oriented graduate program in developmental psychology.

The strongest letters provide specific examples of a student's skills or aptitudes, rather than simply advocating for the student or describing lab research projects. Consider including unique contributions that an applicant would bring to an incoming class, such as obstacles that the applicant had to overcome and/or contributions that the applicant would bring to the department's diversity, broadly defined (e.g., background, attributes, experiences, outreach activities). Ask the applicant for permission if you plan to include any information that could be considered potentially private or sensitive.

Please consider addressing one or more of the following core competencies that our program seeks in top applicants:

- *Critical Thinking:* Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

- *Written Communication:* Effectively conveys information to others in both professional and colloquial writing.

- *Growth Mindset:* Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills. Engages in reflective practice for improvement. Solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

- *Resilience, Persistence, and Adaptability:* Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations, and adapts effectively to them. Is persistent, even under difficult situations. Recovers from setbacks.

- *Cultural Humility and Competence:* Demonstrates awareness of social and cultural factors that affect attitudes, behaviors, and interactions. Shows interest, appreciation, and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity, and is committed to a continual process of cultural learning and growth. Engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work. Recognizes and appropriately addresses biases in themselves and others. Interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

- *Independent Thinking/Creativity:* Engages deeply to integrate concepts and generate novel ideas or approaches. Thinks outside the box to develop unique solutions or new approaches to a problem.

- *Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others:* Behaves in an honest and ethical manner. Cultivates personal and academic integrity. Adheres to ethical principles and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways. Develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.

(These prompts adapted from AAMC Guidelines for Letter Writers, 2019)