

Center for Women in Medicine and Science (CWIMS) Nominations & Letters of Support Toolkit



Summary

This toolkit includes key considerations, helpful resources, and templates to be utilized by award/recognition nominators and individuals preparing a letter of support. [See an introduction video of the toolkit here.](#)

Research shows differences between men and women as well as white and underrepresented in medicine applicants in the way they are described in letters of recommendation. Furthermore research shows that these differences tend to place women into stereotypes that can disadvantage their selection (see references below). This toolkit provides resources for those committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion, including special considerations for the advancement of women and people of various gender and sexual identities and expressions.

Help us improve the toolkit!
Complete this 1-min survey >

Key Considerations When Preparing Your Nomination

- How does your nomination align with commitments for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion? Does it serve and support someone from an underrepresented population who faces systemic barriers that impact their experiences on campus? See [a description of how the University of Minnesota employs an expanded definition of diversity.](#)
- Do you have the time and resources to prepare well-rounded materials that will contain meaningful content, be edited for stereotypes and representative of the candidate? Will your contributions be an asset to the candidate? This toolkit is meant to provide you with a resource that will afford greater capacity to attend to important details and create meaningful content.

Included in this toolkit:

- [Nomination Checklist](#) - A guide for preparing a nomination package.
 - [Nominations Cover Sheet](#) for considering the important components of an award/recognition nomination.
- [Letter of Support Checklist](#) - A guide for preparing a nomination letter or letter of support..
- [Words Matter: Descriptors Thesaurus](#) - Considerations, examples and suggestions for using inclusive, accurate, responsive and neutral language.

CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN MEDICINE & SCIENCE

MEDICAL SCHOOL OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Help us improve the toolkit by [completing this 1-min survey.](#)

Share the toolkit : z.umn.edu/nomtoolkit

Sample/Template Letters:

- General Letter of Support:
 - [General Letter of Support Template](#)
 - [General Letter of Support Sample](#)
- Medical School:
 - [Medical School Letter Template](#)
- Graduate School:
 - [Graduate School Letter Template](#)
 - [Graduate School Letter Sample](#)
- Residency Applicant:
 - [Residency Applicant Letter Template](#)
 - [Residency Applicant Letter Sample](#)
- Promotion and Tenure:
 - Arm's Length Reviewer
 - [Arm's Length Reviewer Letter Template](#)
 - [Arm's Length Reviewer Letter Sample](#)
 - Non-Arm's Length Reviewer
 - [Non-Arm's Length Reviewer Letter Template](#)
 - [Non-Arm's Length Reviewer Letter Sample 1](#)
 - [Non-Arm's Length Reviewer Letter Sample 2](#)

Additional Resources:

- **General:**
 - [The Art of Successful Nominations](#) by Jocelyn Chertoff, MD, MS (2010) through AAMC. Accessed 07/13/2021
 - Kong JH, Steele LJ, Botham CM. [Ten simple rules for writing compelling recommendation letters](#). PLoS Comput Biol. 2021;17(2):e1008656. Published 2021 Feb 25. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008656
- **Gender-Inclusive Language:**
 - [Gender-Inclusive Language](#) from The Writing Center and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Accessed 07/13/2021
 - [How to Make Your Writing More Gender-Inclusive](#) by Nicole Shepard (2019). Accessed 07/13/2021
 - [Editing Tip: Writing in Gender-Neutral Language](#) by Celina Bragagnolo, PhD. Accessed 07/13/2021
 - [Avoid Gender Bias in Writing](#) by the Western Michigan University. Accessed 07/13/2021
 - Konishi, T. [The semantics of grammatical gender: A cross-cultural study](#). J Psycholinguist Res 22, 519–534 (1993). <https://doi-org.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/10.1007/BF01068252>
 - Lindqvist, A., Renström, E.A. & Gustafsson Sendén, M. [Reducing a Male Bias in Language? Establishing the Efficiency of Three Different Gender-Fair Language Strategies](#). Sex Roles 81, 109–117 (2019). <https://doi-org.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/10.1007/s11199-018-0974-9>

Toolkit maintained by the Center for Women in Medicine and Science (CWIMS) Strategic Communications and Collaboration Action Group

Contact CWIMS: cwims@umn.edu

Last updated: 08/15/2022

Help us improve the toolkit by [completing this 1-min survey](#).

References

- Schmader T, Whitehead J, Wysocki VH. A Linguistic Comparison of Letters of Recommendation for Male and Female Chemistry and Biochemistry Job Applicants. *Sex Roles*. 2007;57(7-8):509-514. doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9291-4
- Powers A, Gerull KM, Rothman R, Klein SA, Wright RW, Dy CJ. Race- and Gender-Based Differences in Descriptions of Applicants in the Letters of Recommendation for Orthopaedic Surgery Residency. *JB JS Open Access*. 2020;5(3):e20.00023. Published 2020 Jun 26. doi:10.2106/JBJS.OA.20.00023
- Turrentine FE, Dreisbach CN, St Ivany AR, Hanks JB, Schroen AT. Influence of Gender on Surgical Residency Applicants' Recommendation Letters. *J Am Coll Surg*. 2019;228(4):356-365.e3. doi:10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2018.12.020
- Go C, Lang S, Byrne M, Brucha DL, Parviainen K, Sachdev U. Linguistic Analysis of Letters of Recommendation for Vascular Surgery and Obstetrics and Gynecology Applicants Detects Differences in Attributable Strengths Based on Gender [published online ahead of print, 2021 Mar 18]. *J Surg Educ*. 2021;S1931-7204(21)00045-3. doi:10.1016/j.jsurg.2021.02.002
- Rice ML, Leung JG, Mara KC, Leung SB. Assessment of gender differences in letters of recommendation for pharmacy residency applicants. *Am J Health Syst Pharm*. 2021;78(12):1118-1125. doi:10.1093/ajhp/zxab150
- Khan S, Kirubarajan A, Shamsheri T, Clayton A, Mehta G. Gender bias in reference letters for residency and academic medicine: a systematic review [published online ahead of print, 2021 Jun 2]. *Postgrad Med J*. 2021;postgradmedj-2021-140045. doi:10.1136/postgradmedj-2021-140045
- Khan S, Kirubarajan A, Shamsheri T, Clayton A, Mehta G. Gender bias in reference letters for residency and academic medicine: a systematic review [published online ahead of print, 2021 Jun 2]. *Postgrad Med J*. 2021;postgradmedj-2021-140045. doi:10.1136/postgradmedj-2021-140045

Special thanks to the CWIMS Leadership and Strategic Communications and Collaborations Action Group who helped make the initial development of this toolkit possible:

Nissrine Nakib, MD
Sara L. Zimmer, PhD
Chen Guo, PhD
Ronda S. Farah, MD
Kristen Mark, PhD, MPH, CSE
Katie Lingras, PhD, LP
Germaine Cornelissen-Guillaume, PhD
Jerica Berge, PhD, MPH, LMFT, CFLE
Sophie Watson
Kait Macheledt, MPH

Toolkit maintained by the Center for Women in Medicine and Science (CWIMS) Strategic Communications and Collaboration Action Group

Contact CWIMS: cwims@umn.edu

Last updated: 08/15/2022

Help us improve the toolkit by [completing this 1-min survey](#).