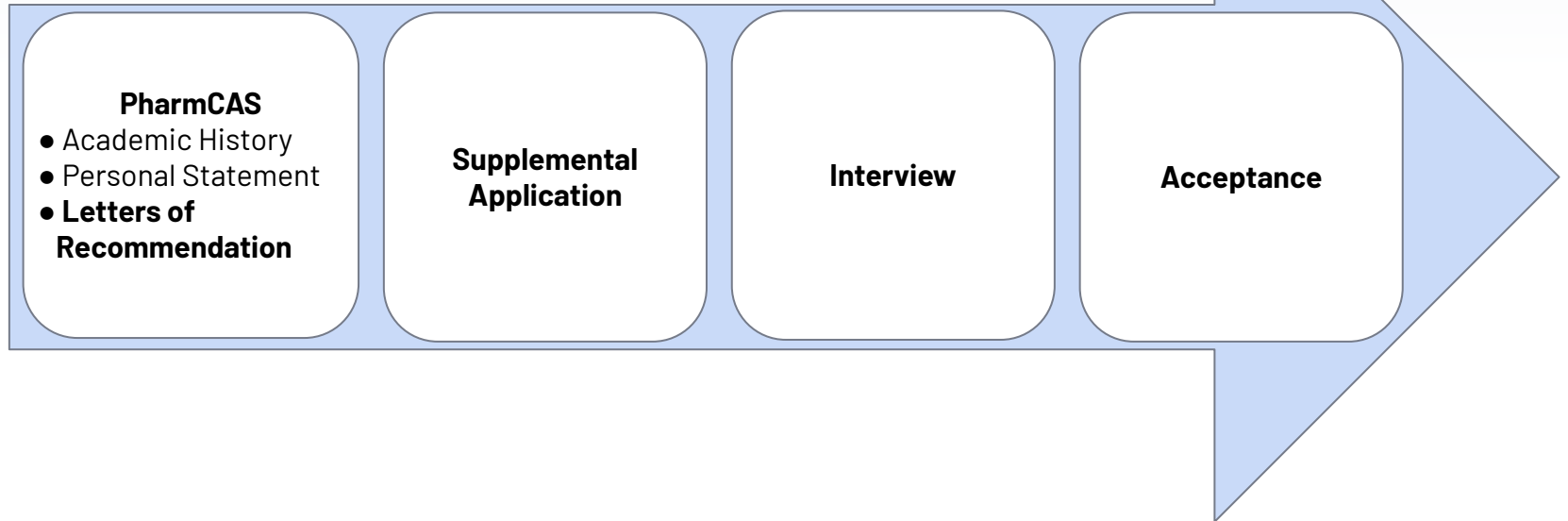


Letters of Recommendation

Presented by Kenneth Ta



Pharmacy School Application Process



3 Letters of Recommendation Are Required For Each Pharmacy School

Recommended:

1. Science Professor
2. Pharmacist / Healthcare Professional
3. Someone who knows you professionally

* Not all schools require 3 letters or these specific ones, but these should cover your bases for most pharmacy schools

* Most schools do not allow letters from clergy, family, or friends

* PharmCAS allow a maximum of 4 letters to be submitted

Why do schools require letters of recommendation?

Your Goal: to show schools that you have the **intelligence**, **stamina**, and **drive** to succeed in their rigorous program

LOR's Purpose: show aspects of your **personality**, **ethics**, and **integrity** that aren't seen anywhere else on the application



What do admission committees expect to see?

1. The **validity of your claims** of academic excellence, professional success, and impeccable personal values
2. Your **specific qualifications**, including the depth of your academic and professional experiences
3. Your **unique traits that aren't covered anywhere else** in the application
4. Whether you **can accurately evaluate others and their perceptions of you**
5. Your demonstrated **commitment** to pursuing a medical/dental/pharmacy/etc. career

A Substantive Letter of Recommendation Has 3 Important Features

1. The author knows the applicant's **intellectual ability** (intelligence, skills in learning and expressing ideas, interest in the subject)
2. The author knows the applicant well enough to comment on **personality traits** (dependability, integrity, temperament, initiative, strengths and weaknesses)
3. The author not only provides their overall assessment of the applicant, but also includes enough **supporting detail** to support their assessment

Who should you ask for a letter of recommendation?

- Someone who can write you a **STRONG** letter of recommendation
 - Someone you have a **personal relationship** with and have known for an extended period of time
 - Can talk about your character, performance, and how these translate into being a pharmacist

When should you ask for a letter of recommendation?

- **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**
- At least 3 months before PharmCAS opens in July
- Create a personal deadline for when you want them to finish their letter of recommendation
 - Ideally, 2-3 weeks before PharmCAS opens

How should you ask for a letter of recommendation?

- **In-Person** > Phone Call > Email
- Ask for a **STRONG and POSITIVE** letter of recommendation
 - If “No” → Ask someone else
- If and when they yes, give them a **Letter of Recommendation Packet**



Letter of Recommendation Packet

- Picture & Personal Blurb
- Important Dates and Deadlines
- Application Cycle: A Timeline
- Evaluators
- PharmCAS Likert Criteria
- Letter of Recommendation Structure
- Personal Statement
- Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Handwritten Thank You Letter

- Mandatory
- Optional



Letter of Recommendation Packet Content Examples

Important Dates and Deadlines

- **July 18, 2019: PharmCAS opens**
 - PLEASE EXPECT AN EMAIL FROM noreply@pharmcas.org WITH THE SUBJECT "Student Reference PharmCAS" AROUND THIS TIME. I will be contacting you to ensure that PharmCAS has sent you the appropriate request email.
- **July 25, 2019: Letter of Recommendation Submission**
 - Please submit your letter of recommendation by this date! Because two of the schools that I am applying to have rolling admission (USC & Western), it is important that PharmCAS is submitted as soon as possible to ensure the highest chance of interview/entry. PharmCAS cannot be submitted until everything is completed and verified!

Application Cycle: A Timeline

- **July 18, 2019: PharmCAS opens**
 - PharmCAS is a centralized application service that is used to apply to multiple Pharm. D. programs offered by schools and colleges of pharmacy.
- **July 18, 2019: Filling out PharmCAS**
 - When PharmCAS opens, I will be asked to input the following: personal information, academic history, personal statement, and information about my evaluators (Letter of Recommendation writers). Evaluators will then complete a two-part process (see below).
 - Information about my evaluators includes: full name and email address.
- **Late July - Early August: Submission of PharmCAS**
- **October - February: Pharmacy School Interviews**
- **2-3 Weeks Post-Interview: Pharmacy School Acceptances/Rejections**

Evaluators

Evaluators (letters writers) must submit evaluations (a.k.a. letters of recommendation) to PharmCAS online through the “Letters by Liaison” Evaluator Portal. Evaluators will complete a two-part process:

- **Part 1: Complete questions and evaluation ratings through the Evaluator Portal**
 - Evaluators must complete and update a profile section with their contact information in case a program needs to communicate with them.
 - Evaluators must complete a ranking system to evaluate the applicant on multiple criteria.
- **Part 2: Upload Letter of Recommendation through the Evaluator Portal**
 - Accepted formats are .pdf, .doc (Microsoft Word), .rtf (Rich Text Format), or .txt (ASCII Text File).
 - Since all evaluations are sent to every school you designate, evaluators should avoid referring to any specific pharmacy school or individual in the letter.

PharmCAS Likert Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated using the Likert Analysis, which contains the following criteria:

- **Oral Communication:** Applicant speak clearly with precision and accuracy, and without ambiguity
- **Written Communication:** Applicant's writing is precise, accurate, grammatically correct, and unambiguous
- **Leadership:** Applicant takes initiative and motivates others
- **Ethics:** Applicant displays honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviors
- **Empathy:** Applicant is considerate, sensitive, and tactful in response to others
- **Reliability:** Applicant is dependable, responsible, prompt, and thorough
- **Judgment:** Applicant displays critical thinking skills, common sense, and decisiveness
- **Interpersonal Relations:** Applicant is able to get along well with peers and superiors
- **Adaptability:** Applicant reacts well to stress and is poised and controlled
- **Professional Appearance:** Applicant maintains good personal hygiene, wear appropriate attire, and is well-groomed

Letter of Recommendation Structure

The Letter of Recommendation structure as suggested by Brittany Betancourt-Hamer, former PharmSci Academic Counselor. While there is no specific length for a Letter of Recommendation, Brittany believes that a good letter is more than one page long.

Introduction

- Who the recommender is
- Qualifications

Body

- How does the recommender know the applicant and in what capacity
- Demonstration of skills with specific examples
 - Pharmacy Technician demonstrates:
 - Empathy
 - Communication
- How the applicant translates to being a future pharmacist
 - If the recommender believes the applicant will be good
- Areas for future growth/weaknesses

Conclusion

- If the recommender recommends the applicant
- Contact information

Helpful Tips

- Make it easy for them
 - Tell them what to expect
- Give them plenty of time
- Get to know them
 - Talk about your future goals
- Follow up with them

PharmCAS Logistics

- Send the request email as soon as PharmCAS becomes available
 - Notify your letter writers to look out for the email from PharmCAS
 - There's a resend reminder option
- PharmCAS only accepts electronic letters submitted through their portal
- You **MUST** waive your right to see the letter

What do you do after recommenders have submitted their letters?

- Give them a handwritten thank you card
- Give them a personal thank you gift
- Keep them updated
 - Where you get interviews
 - Where you get accepted
 - Where you choose to go



Questions?