# The Candidate Introduction

## Main aspects

* Address letter to specific person, if possible
* 1-3 sentences
* Gives the reason for/purpose of the letter (e.g. a recommendation for an academic course of study or a recommendation for a job )
* Introduces you & the candidate
* Identifies your relationship
* Demonstrates the context
* Expresses the basic opinion about the skills, work and personal characteristics of the person

## Examples

This letter is in reference to (very low)

This serves as a letter of reference for (fairly low)

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for (average)

I am pleased to recommend (fairly high)

It is a genuine pleasure and honor for me to recommend (very high)

I am writing this letter to give my highest possible recommendation for Mr. Smith. I know Mr. Smith through his work in my laboratory.

I am writing to enthusiastically support the application of Betty Triton as a lecturer. Betty is currently a senior graduate student in my laboratory. She joined my group five years ago, and will defend her thesis in about a month, March 2014.

# Body (Scientific)

## Main aspects

* Demonstrates your relationship

How do you know the candidate?

How long have you known the candidate?

In what context do you know the candidate?

* Talks about applicants work (role in manuscripts, unpublished work)
* Indicates the applicant’s strengths
* Lists accomplishments

significant intellectual contributions (awards)

research skills (with specific examples)

passion for the field, the subject, the topic

* Add details that are not obvious from the rest of the application

role in manuscripts, unpublished work etc.

## Examples

I have known John Doe since ... in my role as his PhD thesis advisor at..

I first met Janet Smith when she came to interview for the position of PhD Student working on a joint project between myself and the QM Lab. Both the QM Lab colleagues and I had an instantly positive impression of her and both, strangely, had to keep reminding ourselves that she was interviewing for a PhD position and not a postdoc.

During her Ph.D. thesis, Betty was also teaching assistant for three graduate courses and participated in mentoring programs for high school students. She was outstanding in these activities. She engaged the students, directed work and/or class, and had great insights into what worked well in teaching. While doing this teaching or mentoring, which was her own calling and not required by our institute, she never let such activities keep her away from the bench, a testament to her ability to work had and multitask.

Andreas is a dedicated, capable and dependable student. From day one, he has come across as a very hardworking and intelligent student, who did not hesitate to put in that bit of extra effort to stand out among his fellow students. In all his course activities, his grades have been above average and he stands in the top 5% of his class. He is very quick at grasping the concepts and ideas and has the terrific ability to draw on his own experience and observations to develop thoughtful opinions on a variety of issues. Andreas’s regular contributions to full-class discussions provided insight for all the participants.

# Body (Personal)

## Main aspects

* Interpersonal skills, personal attributes and special interests that make the candidate unique
* Personality/Character
* Community/teaching involvement (above & beyond what’s required)

## Examples

Moreover, at a personal level, Betty is a delight to work with. She is mature, independent, and resourceful, knowing when and where to seek advice and help. She expresses her opinions in an engaging way and enjoys being challenged. She strives for originality, works hard and undeterred and has a charisma for drawing others to comment and participate in her work. She is full of enthusiasm, has the right drive, and genuine interest in teaching and in science, an analytical and keen mind, creativity and perseverance. She multitasks with ease and does not lose her focus on the goals she sets.

# Conclusion

## Main aspects

* Wrap up your thoughts
* Final comments on the student’s impact
* Consider ranking the student (he is in the top 5% of students I have mentored….)
* Include your contact information

## Examples

In summary, I have no doubt that Betty will be an outstanding teacher. Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any further questions.

In summary, Mr. Smith is clearly the best student I have worked with in the last 10 years. I would very much like him match to our residency program. Even though I hope he stays here, I think he would be an outstanding asset to your program. I give him my highest recommendation.

It is for these reasons that I offer high recommendations for Andreas without reservation. If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I predict she will go very far in her academic career and she has the potential to develop into one of the best in her field.

He has the academic quality to become a professor but seems to be more drawn to industry. I believe that any company would be lucky to get him, and I wish him very well in his career.

I continue to be very impressed by Janet’s creativity and vast knowledge and am convinced that she will have a stellar research career.

Paul’s research experience has prepared him well for the work that is proposed at the Mayfield Clinic.

Finally, Jill has many desirable personal qualities that will undoubtedly serve her well in any career path.

I enthusiastically recommend James for post-doctoral fellowship.

Sincerely/ Yours sincerely / Best regards,