



## Letters of Recommendation



Committee – The committee letter is a letter of reference prepared by a faculty member (typically the academic advisor) with the help of the Office of Post-Graduate Studies and is signed by the author and three other faculty members. A committee letter is composed of two basic parts. The first is a cover letter describing a student's activities, research, and general academic performance. This portion of the letter also serves to introduce the second section of the letter—the quotations. From the first semester at Butler, students are encouraged to give faculty evaluation forms. (These can be found on the website, [www.butler.edu/postgraduate](http://www.butler.edu/postgraduate), or obtained from the Office of Post-Graduate Studies.) The evaluations need to be given to faculty who know the student's work well enough to say something meaningful about the student's ability and performance. The evaluation forms include a numerical ranking section and a narrative. At a **minimum**, letters need to be given to one faculty member in biology, chemistry, a nonscience area (math is considered to be a science), and a faculty member in the student's major. A committee letter cannot be written with less than four evaluations. It is a far better approach to give two evaluations in each area. The committee letter is compiled ideally during the summer after the MCAT is taken in April. The letter is sent to schools that have requested a supplemental or secondary application from a student. Many schools consider the committee letter to be a sufficient academic evaluation, covering the science and nonscience areas. It is not the case for all schools, and it is imperative to check specific requirements.

Personal – The purpose of the personal letter is to comment on the applicant's character, moral standing, and ethics. An author that knows the student is more important than an author that would be perceived as being impressive. The letter does need to say something about the student. Pastors, coaches, long time family friends, or work supervisors are excellent choices.

Good Standing – It is not uncommon for a program to request a letter from the disciplinary center of a school to show that a student has not committed serious infractions of school policies. This includes both the academic and student life aspects of campus. At Butler, the Office of Student Affairs fulfills this role. A request for a letter documenting that a student is in "good standing" at the school should be taken to Student Affairs. They will prepare a brief letter commenting on whether the student was ever subject to disciplinary action at Butler.

Additional Academic References – Some schools require one or more additional academic references to a committee letter. Any additional letters should be written by a faculty member other than the author of the committee letter or a signer of the committee letter. These letters are sent directly to the school that has requested the reference.