# Introduction

A Letter of Reference / Letter of Recommendation testifies to an individual's skills, personal characteristics and work. Like an employer's reference, it is a formal document. Unlike a reference, a Letter of Recommendation has an addressee, like a letter. If the addressee is known, they are addressed by name. If the letter is addressed to a committee, it begins "Dear hiring committee", but if the addressee is not known, then it begins "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam".

| Section | Comments | Sample phrases |
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| **Introduction** | In the first sentence of the Letter of Recommendation, express your basic opinion about the skills, work and personal characteristics of the person you are describing. Mention in the first section the reason for/purpose of the letter, for example if it is a recommendation for an academic course of study or a recommendation for a job. | This letter is in reference to (very low) <br><br> This serves as a letter of reference for (fairly low) <br><br> I am pleased to write this letter of recomendation for (Average) <br><br> I am pleased to recommend (Fairly high) <br><br> It is a genuine pleasure and honor for me to recommend (very high) |
| **Position and context** | State your relationship with the person for whom you are writing the Letter of Recommendation: what is/was your position in relation to them, how long have you known them/did you know them for. | I have known John Doe since … in my role as his PhD thesis advisor at.. <br><br> 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. |
| **Overall assessment…** | This section consists of 2 to 6 paragraphs. The length depends on how long and how closely you worked with the employee. First give a general overview of the skills, potential, personal characteristics and behaviour of the person you are describing. | During his studies, John Doe demonstrated a high level of scientific curiosity and a strong aptitude to practical problem solving. <br><br> Janet was an excellent PhD student, able to work very well both independently and in a team. <br><br> James was hard-working, diligent, and capable of running many activities at the same time. <br><br> What I have particularly valued in Amy, in addition to the general qualities listed above, is her knack for disassembling a problem into its component parts, and tackling these parts in a rigorous, quantitative manner. |

**ETH**

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| **… Overall assessment** | In this assessment, the main focus should be on the intended job or academic course of study. In the following sections, describe in detail circumstances in which the person being recommended demonstrated the skills and the characteristics you have referred to. Highlight the skills/characteristics/behaviour which are most advantageous to the individual. This should cover both technical and social skills. In this respect, the document should be as specific as possible. | James strives to understand it, to read all the relevant literature around it, and to find an elegant solution to the problem.<br><br>He was always completely on top of the relevant literature for his research area.<br><br>But she was very good at seeking out expertise from other scientists working in the research group when she needed advice or direction. She was also good at sharing with other PhD students and postdocs the knowledge that she acquired through her careful and thorough study of the relevant scientific literature.<br><br>John developed numerous project management skills over the course of his PhD training. On the technical side, he became expert at collecting and analyzing genetic information from fungal plant pathogens. |
| **Conclusion** | Briefly summarise why you are recommending this person and exactly which skills equip this person to occupy the desired post. Express a clear recommendation such as "I highly recommend this person" or "I recommend without hesitation" or similar. | 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>I continue to be very impressed by Janet's creativity and vast knowledge, and am convinced that she will have a stellar research career.<br><br>Paul's research experience has prepared him well for the work that is proposed at the Mayfield Clinic.<br><br>Finally, Jill has many desirable personal qualities that will undoubtedly serve her well in any career path.<br><br>I enthusiastically recommend James for post-doctoral fellowship. |
| **Closing remarks** | Offer additional information if required. | I would be happy to give any further details, written or oral, upon request.<br><br>If you would like to ask me any specific question about Jill, please don't hesitate to contact me. |