REQUEST FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:

Dear student,

I would like to thank you for entrusting one of your letters of recommendation to my hands. I wish you all the best in your application process, and in your path to professional development.

Very Important Note:

When you get letters of recommendation, try to get them from different kinds of people. In other words, if you are required to submit three letters, then try to avoid getting three letters from science instructors (unless you are specifically asked to do so). Consider getting one from a science instructor, one from an instructor outside of the sciences, and one from an employer.

Also, do the best you can to get letters from people who know you well. A letter from a teacher of a class where you got a B might be better than a letter from a teacher of a class where you got an A, if the first teacher knows you better and can write a more detailed letter. A letter that simply says, "Sara is a very bright student, and she got an A in my class," is not a very strong letter.
Please read carefully!

1. You must contact me in private!

2. A letter of recommendation will not be written for students below a letter “A” grade. I will not write a letter of recommendation if you drop my class and then earn an “A” at a later time.

3. A letter of recommendation will only be written for students who have successfully finished **more than one** of my classes (lectures or labs) **with a grade of A**. If you are currently in any of my classes, I would need to strongly suggest waiting until the end of the semester. Only upon that time, would I be able to evaluate you, on grade, participation, and attendance to write an appropriate evaluation. You must fill an information packet that I will send you.

4. If you qualify for a letter of recommendation, you must first contact me via e-mail (LLabiste@mdc.edu). If I agree to write a letter for you, I shall advise you via e-mail and sent you a information packet.

5. I will set up an appointment for you to see me in my office.

6. **WARNING**... There is a **3 weeks minimum** wait for the letter. If you need a letter within the same week of request, you will not get one.

Having said that, I would like to write a letter of recommendation that is a fair representation of your academic, personal, and professional potential. As such, I would like to include relevant information, other than your GPA and grades that you might have in any of my courses. Keep in mind that I have hundreds of students per academic year, and that I might not necessarily know of all the extracurricular activities and challenges that you might have had or have been involved with while completing your coursework. Furthermore, I do receive requests for letters of recommendation from students who have already graduated, are at a 4 year institution, and have taken the course(s) with me a few years ago while doing their AA degree at MDC. It might be difficult for me to put a name and a face together, at first hand…. I need your help!

Please read the following information carefully, and e-mail me the requested information as soon as possible. Please understand that I **WILL NOT** be able to develop a letter of recommendation unless you provide me with this information. I will incorporate this information in the letter of recommendation. The information that you will provide me will
not only determine the tone, but the depth [level of detail] of your letter of recommendation. Time-permitting, I will upload the recommendation through the appropriate pre-screening agency (e.g. PharmCAS, AADAS). I will also print hard copies of the letter on MDC letterhead, if requested/needed by the institution you are applying.

**PROVIDE ME WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

1. **Please include a recent photograph of you:**
   I have hundreds of students per term, and while I might not necessarily remember your name, I am better at remembering faces. A photo similar to those used for passport (showing a face close up, image above) will work best; or those that you might use for your Facebook profile. This is especially important for those of you who have taken courses with me a few years ago, and are now requesting letters of recommendation. I am sure that I will hear from some of you years from now as you request letters of recommendation for professional programs (medical schools, pharmacy schools, dental schools, graduate programs, work, etc.), and a photograph is a great help when remembering your performance in my courses after a few years. Please rest assure that I do keep all these documents confidentially on file.

   Please attach/incorporate your photo to the body of the WP document where you will provide me with your bullets!

2. **Your name and MDC- Student ID Number:** This is for my personal records since I keep track of all the letters of recommendations that I have done (my records go back to 1982!).

3. **Contact Information:** Where can I reach you in case I need more information or clarification of items in your list?
   a. Phone number(s)
   b. E-mail address

4. **Coursework information:**
   a. **Academic Year or term** in which you took the courses with me: for example, “Spring Term 2007-02” or – if you do not remember the specific term- “Academic year 2007-2008”
b. **What courses did you take with me and grade**: For example,
   i. BSC-2010-Lab with a grade of grade A in the Spring Term 2007-02

5. **To whom is this letter being addressed**: is it to a person, committee, or department/committee chairperson. Are you requesting a “to whom it may concern” (generic) letter of reference that you could keep on file and use in the future?

6. **Institution to which letter is being sent**: Do you have a mailing address to which the letter is being addressed?

7. **Deadline by which you need the letter**: Please make sure that I might not be able to honor requests that are due in less than 48 hrs. I have had situations of students interrupting my lectures to request “I need a letter of recommendation, and it is due tomorrow morning”….. Not the best case scenario.

8. **Additional Forms Needed**: Do you need for me to fill any additional forms, e.g. rating tables or institutional admission surveys? Are these going to be on-line or hard copies?

9. **Timeframe**: Please make sure to provide me with ample time to work on your letter. Please keep in mind that there are times that many of you converge in the application process (e.g. for 4-year institutions/scholarships), and that I might be working on 9-10 letters of recommendation at once.

10. **Personal Statement (a must)**: The personal statement is an important part of your application package. Through a personal statement, you introduce yourself; it reflects your personality and intellect. Depending on the topic you choose, the essay you write provides additional evidence of your intellectual and creative achievement.

---

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION NEEDED**

You will need to provide me with a **“bullet list”** of relevant information that will allow me to develop the BEST letter of recommendation on your behalf, for example:

- Professional goals; i.e. what would you want to be “when you grow up”?
· Strengths you might have, or particular shortcomings/challenges and how you overcame them: for example, “overcame cultural and language barriers when migrating to the USA from native homeland”

· **Particular challenges that you might have overcome/faced while attending school**, (e.g. migrated from Haiti, did not speak English but enrolled in ESL courses learning the language in one academic term while working part time at department store).

· **Job experience, in particular if it is relevant to your career interest**; e.g. you worked as a pharmacy technician or as a veterinary technician for the past 4 years –while going to school- and are now applying to PharmCAS for admission to a school of pharmacy or veterinary program – this is a VERY GOOD thing to highlight!

· Involvement in extracurricular activities, community service.

· Volunteering, name of the organization(s) and for how long; what did you do there?

· Student organizations how were you involved? Did you held any posts e.g. President, treasurer.

· Professional organizations that you might be a member of,

· Honors and awards (if any) that you might have received – please make sure to provide me with information about the year, date, country, institution, and/or organization who provided the award.

**PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING:**

**When using ACRONYMS**, Please make sure to provide full name, for example: “Received a MARC Scholarship from the University of Puerto Rico in 2006”. Do you know what MARC stands for? … The reviewers reading the letter of recommendation might not know either.

Please keep in mind that others might not know the particular meaning of the acronym; or worst that the acronym used might represent different things (in different states/countries). You should write as follows “Received a Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Scholarship from the University of Puerto Rico in 2006”. When possible, please provide some additional information that will give the reviewer a better idea of what the award or the organization is all about; for example:

**Least Informative**: No good

“Received a MARC Scholarship from the University of Puerto Rico in 2006”

**Somewhat Informative**: Better

Received a MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) Scholarship from the University of Puerto Rico in 2006”
Very Informative: BEST!
Received a MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) Scholarship from the University of Puerto Rico in 2006. The MARC Program is a federally sponsored program that prepares students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups for professional research careers in the biomedical sciences. The MARC Program involves third and fourth year honors students in an integrated academic and research environment that includes: (1) participation in an eight-week Summer Research Training Institute offered by science faculty; (2) enrollment in MARC Honors Courses; (3) participation in a Seminar Series; (4) an the opportunity to conduct independent research. The MARC program is a highly competitive program, with high standard of admission. Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA to be considered to the program.

This last example provides me with the most information possible, and I will make sure to highlight/include it in the letter of recommendation!

SAMPLE BULLET LISTS FROM REAL STUDENTS: PLEASE READ !!!!

Below, please find a few (real life) examples of bullets provided by some of my students for their letters of recommendation. Please make sure to read, and e-mail me your own – ASAP- when done….thanks!
Student # 1 (Bullet Sample): This student provides evidence of personal challenges; these are balanced with plenty of student life activities and academic accolades:

Letter of Recommendation Request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name:</th>
<th>Date: 01/01/07</th>
<th>Student ID:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*****************</td>
<td></td>
<td>************</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s current GPA:</th>
<th>Intended major:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>Biology/Premed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated graduation date:</th>
<th>Intended AA major:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer or Fall of 2007</td>
<td>Premed/Dentistry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer College Name:</th>
<th>Application Deadline:</th>
<th>Address/attention to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIU</td>
<td>01/20/07</td>
<td>Scholarship Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship Name:</th>
<th>Deadline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer student scholarship</td>
<td>01/17/07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Briefly Describe your involvement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry : Peer Tutoring (volunteer)</td>
<td>Mondays and Wednesdays Number of hours: 45+</td>
<td>I provided one-on-one chemistry tutorship; helped students overcome their “chemistry phobias” and to better prepare for their tests and assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- My name is *********. Originally, I am from Russia. I was born in the city of ***** that is very close to Moscow, the capital of Russia. This is where I spent my childhood and attended school.
As long as I can remember, I have always been fascinated with nature and science. In the fifth grade, I was accepted to a school that specialized in science. By the seventh grade, I was accepted as a member of the school’s natural science society and by the ninth grade, I became a president of it.

I was one out of ten students in a school of 1,500 students who were enrolled in a math program for gifted kids. I have never left the gifted program and always maintained the grade of an “A.” My achievements in high school were helping other students and leaving behind this legacy for others to follow.

In school, I was a coordinator of the first free peer-tutoring program in chemistry and mathematics for students with low family incomes, to improve their chances of meeting with success academically.

I graduated from high school in 2002 with honors. Moreover, I was recognized by a mayor of the city with a silver medal and a chance to get into a Technical University in the western part of Russia. I completed only the first year of university majoring in biotechnology before I moved to the US.

After coming to the United States, I was faced with many obstacles; the first was the English language. In the winter of 2004, I became a student at Miami Dade College enrolled into ESL course. It took me about a year to complete the levels of English I needed to become a successful student seeking an Associate in Arts degree from Miami-Dade College.

While taking ESL classes I was working full time as a lab assistant in a forensic lab of Miami. That is where I finally realized that I want to dedicate my life to science.

Right now, I am taking science classes that are required for my major, which is pre-medical science.

I have always dreamed about becoming a medical doctor. I believe this career path is perfect for me because I would be able to combine both science knowledge and a desire to help others. I am willing to dedicate myself to this career and become a professional able to give back to society.

In December of 2006 I have become a member of international honors society of two year college-Phi Theta Kappa.
Student # 2 (Bullet Sample): Adult student returning to school, personal challenges, not a lot of time to participate in student organizations or securing many academic accolades; but empowering personal story:

This is an example of a student who started with a less than desirable GPA (2.1) but got her act together and was able to finish an AA degree with a good GPA (3.7). This student was a single mother who was working and taking care of her daughter, while attending school at the same time. Take Home Message: Turn a “negative” into a “positive”…. Be honest about your failures and shortcomings, and show how you turned things around for the better. Everyone loves a success story!

- My name is **** and I am 32yrs old
- I have worked full time while attending Miami Dade
- When I first got out of high school I attended Broward Community College I was not focused and not concerned about the profession I am now pursuing. My GPA there was a 2.1 I left BBC and joined the United States Army full time for four years where I matured and realized that there was hope for my life.
- I am the first in my family to graduate from any college. The circumstances were mounted against me in everything in me told me I should be a failure.
- I started back to MDC taking only one class because I was afraid of the failure, then I eventually gained confidence and found a career path I wanted to pursue.
- My GPA at MDC is 3.7 and I accomplished this while working a full time demanding job and being married with a 2year old daughter.
- I always wanted to be a pharmacist I just never thought it was possible from my background and family history.
- I have worked hard and I have sacrificed a lot, I really push my self when other people may count me out or the odds are against me.
- I did receive an A in your BSC-2010-Lab; I took you class in the spring of 2004.
I did receive my Associates of Art degree in April 2004.

I really love science and this is a dream of mine since I was 13 years old.

My phone number where I can be reached at is 305****.

My email address is **********.

**Student # 3 (Bullet Sample):** Adult student returning to school, lots of personal and economic challenges, and no time to participate in student organizations or securing any academic accolades. Dropped from college and had a “flat” GPA; picked the pieces and never gave up. This is an empowering personal story of endurance, will power and determination.

The student included a copy of her personal statement that she wrote for PharmCAS. Her personal statement provided me with plenty of information to develop her letter of recommendation. I had no knowledge of this student personal history and challenges while she was enrolled in my course! – I am glad that she included a copy her personal statement.

Having little or no involvement in student life, academic accolades, and starting with a low GPA; I capitalized on her hard work ethics, endurance, passion for her field of interest, and long-term work experience in field!

**Informational Bullets**

- My name is XXXX and I am 31yrs old
- My MDC-student ID: XXXXXXX
- My contact information:
  - Phone: XXXXXX
  - E-mail: XXXXXX
- Classes taken with you:
  - **BSC 2010** (Fall 2007-8): grade A
  - **BSC 2010L** (Fall 2007-8): grade A
- I have worked full time while attending Miami Dade
When I first got out of high school in 1995 I attended Miami Dade Community College I was not focused and not concerned about the profession I am now pursuing. Moreover, I was confronted with a very bad financial situation, which made meeting end needs my main and only focus at that time. As a consequence, of all of these, I dropped the only three classes I had register for that first semester and left without looking back at the mess I left behind. Finally, Seven years later I understood I had to do something with my life at any cost. Here was when I decided to come back to MDC and finished what I should have finished long time ago. My GPA was at first non-existent. I was in put in what the school termed academic warning, but from there I lifted my self-up, little by little, and went from a – GPA to a 3.6 GPA. My race is not over yet, for I still have a long way ahead of me, but I will continue to move forward knowing in faith that there will be a rewarded at the end.

I am the second in my family to graduate from any college. The circumstances were mounted against me in everything in me told me I should be a failure.

I started back to MDC taking only one class because I was afraid of the failure, then I eventually gained confidence and found a career path I wanted to pursue.

My GPA at MDC is 3.6 and I accomplished this while working a full time demanding job

I always wanted to be a Dentist I just never thought it was possible from my background and all the obstacles and fears of failure that always surrounded me.

I have worked hard and I have sacrificed a lot, I have really pushed my self when other people have counted me out or the odds have been against me.

I did receive an A in your BSC-2011-Lab ; I took you class in the fall of 2007

I did receive my Associates of Art degree in December 2006

I really love science and this is a dream of mine since I was 16 years old

My personal statement:

My experiences have taught me to be patient, humble, hardworking, and resilient, thereby preparing me for the challenges I will face as I enter the next chapter of my life as a dental student. In 1991, when I was fifteen years old, my family moved from Cuba to the United States. Full of dreams but empty handed, we received asylum from a Catholic organization in Albuquerque that recognized my father as a political refugee. After I completed my freshman year of high school in New Mexico, my family and I moved to Miami, where I worked at night and attended high school in the morning. After
graduating, I saw my parents struggling to make ends meet, and I resolved to help them more economically.

At nineteen, I attempted to work full time while maintaining a full college course load. Unfortunately, for lack of counseling and failure to see the bigger picture, I soon grew discouraged and dropped out of school. Immediately after leaving college, I decided to seek the training I needed to become a dental technician. What motivated me to pursue this idea were my memories of the many dental procedures I had undergone in the United States and Cuba, which ranged from the removal of impacted canines and wisdom teeth to orthodontic work. I enrolled at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Educational Center, taking classes in the morning while continuing to work at night. In the program, I learned to carve teeth, pour perfect models, and create false teeth for removable prosthetics. I loved what I was doing, but I missed having direct contact with people; thus, at the end of my second semester, I switched to the dental assisting program at the same school. About two weeks after completing the program, I took a dental assisting job with Dr. XXXX, a pedodontist.

In the years that followed, I worked in various specialty practices, all of which enriched my experience in the field. In the spring of 2003, I decided to recommit myself to academic pursuits. For the first two semesters, I took only remedial classes; though this was humbling, I was determined to succeed, and I refused to let myself become dispirited. I kept my mind focused on what needed to be done, even when I felt old and unintelligent. Drawing strength from the encouragement of my friends and my faith in God, I finished all of the course requirements pertinent to the dental program.

Today, I am ready to take the final step on the long journey toward dental school. I am convinced that all that has happened in my life, good and bad, has led me to this defining moment. I have worked very hard to achieve this opportunity, and I believe that what sets me apart from other applicants is the genuine determination I have developed to reach my goals.
Student # 4 (Bullet Sample): Plenty of involvement in student life organizations, academic awards and honors; little or no job experience:

- My name is Ms. ***** and I am 22 years old
- My MDC-student ID: XXXXXXX

- My contact information is:
  - Phone: XXXXXX
  - E-mail: XXXXXXX

- I was in your BSC2010 lab last semester (2006-02) with a grade of “A”.
- I am an international student (F-1 student visa)
- I graduated High School in 2003 in Haiti
- I started attending Miami Dade College in Spring 2004
- I took English as a second language (ESL) classes, Levels 5 and 6
- I got accepted in the Honors College at Miami Dade College in Fall of 2005
- My GPA is currently 3.67
- I am majoring in Biology
- I was elected Phi Theta Kappa’s Vice-President of Communications since summer 2006 and I still hold that office position.
- I was the Secretary of the Haitian Ibo Club for Summer and Fall or 2006
- I was treasurer of the Anime club in summer 2006
- I was SGA senator in fall 2006
➢ I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Fall 2005

➢ I volunteered with Hands on Miami in Spring 2006

➢ I volunteered with tremendous Miami in Summer 2006

➢ I volunteered at the Miami Daily Bread Food Bank in Fall 2006

➢ I work on campus at the Chemistry Lab as a part-time lab assistant and was awarded best employee of the academic year 2005-2006

➢ Aside from the Honors College Scholarship I received a MDC Salad Endowment Scholarship for the Academic year 2006-2007

➢ I was nominated by Who’s Who among Students in American Junior Colleges

➢ I was nominated by the United States Achievement Academy Collegiate All-American Scholar Program.

➢ Though I had to attend and was preparing for the Fall 2006 Phi Theta Kappa’s Induction Ceremony, in which I was a host (being an officer), I took the final for the lab the same day and had the highest score in the lab.
Student # 5 (Bullet Sample): Plenty of involvement in student life organizations, academic awards and honors; little or no job experience. One good thing about her bullets is that she provided specific information about the organizations that she volunteered with:

- My name is XXXXX
- My MDC-student ID: XXXXXXX

- My contact information:
  - Phone: XXXXXX
  - E-mail: XXXXXX

- Classes taken with you:
  - BSC 2010 (Fall 2007-8): grade A
  - BSC 2010L (Fall 2007-8): grade A
  - BSC 2011L (Spring 2007-8): grade A

- I was born and raised in XXXXX.
- I graduated from High School in 1996 in XXXXX.
- I took English as a Second Language (ESL) classes (Levels 5 and 6).
- My GPA is 4.0
- My major is Pharmacy
- I’m a member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society since April, 2007
· I’m included in the **National Dean’s List 2006-2007, 30th edition.**

· I have been in **MDC Dean’s List** every semester.

· I received my **Associate in Arts Degree with Highest Honors** on December, 2007.

· I received recognition for **Outstanding Academic Achievement from the Department of Biology** on April, 2008. (33rd Annual Academic Convocation).

· I was recipient of the **MDC Family Campaign Scholarship** on June, 2006

· I was recipient of the **MDC FAITF Scholarship** on July, 2007

· I volunteer at **Jackson Memorial Hospital** since October 2007.

· I’m member of **Environment Florida.** Environment Florida is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization. Its goal is to combine independent research, practical ideas and tough-minded advocacy to overcome the opposition of powerful special interests and win real results for Florida’s environment.

· I’m member and make contributions to **Feed the Children** since January, 2007. Feed The Children is a Christian, international, nonprofit relief organization with headquarters in Oklahoma City, that delivers food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to individuals, children and families who lack these essentials due to famine, war, poverty, or natural disaster.

· I volunteered at **Centro Mater West Child Care Center** on Summer, 2006.

· I received the **CPR** license on July, 2006.

· I took the course of **HIV/AIDS in the Healthcare Environment** on July, 2006.
INSTRUCTIONS

- **FONT needed**: Write your bullets in Arial #12
- **Use third person tense**, as much as possible: this will facilitate for me to cut-and-paste into the body of the letter of recommendation (if needed).
- Please include your cell phone number and e-mail address – other than your MDC e-mail--- in order for me to locate you, if needed.
- **I will contact you** as soon as the first draft of the letter is done.

BEST OF LUCK TO ALL!