

Twin Cities Campus

*Family Social Science
College of Education
and Human Development*

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To: Writers of Letters of Recommendation for Prospective Students
From: The Admissions Committee
Re: Content for Letters of Recommendation Required for Prospective Students

The faculty in Family Social Science must distinguish among many excellent applicants for graduate education and informative letters can be of great value in this process. Please give us as rich a letter as you can. We know it can be a lot of work to write such a letter, but it will give us a stronger basis on which to evaluate the applicant. We do not share these letters with applicants, but Minnesota law requires that we allow access to these letters if the applicant makes such a request.

Any letter must be tailored to a specific applicant's unique characteristics and to the range of experiences you have had with that person. Ideally, we would like your evaluation and documentation in terms of specific examples about strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and areas of growth of the person. We are interested in knowing about the personal, relational, and cognitive dimensions of the person who is asking you for a letter of recommendation. Most of all, we are interested in the person's ***readiness for graduate school and potential for teaching and conducting research.***

Examples of the cognitive qualities of the person might include things such as general learning, originality and ability to think creatively, styles of thinking, intellectual abilities, quickness in catching on to things, writing skills, analytical skills, mathematical skills, grasp of the behavioral sciences, knowledge of the family field, and interest in doing family research.

Personal qualities are also important to us such as ambition for learning, integrity and ethical sensibilities, openness to new perspectives, physical and mental health, awareness of personal limitations, self-motivation, ability to take initiative, judgment, perseverance, organization, responsibility, reliability, flexibility, and oral presentation skills.

We also appreciate knowing whether applicants are effective in interpersonal relationships such as abilities to listen, abilities to relate to authority figures and to peers, abilities to relate to older and younger people, capacities for getting along with people of diverse backgrounds, abilities to meet the needs of the group in addition to personal needs, and social skills in general.

If the student is applying for our doctoral Marriage and Family Therapy Program and you have direct knowledge of the student's clinical skills, please address his or her clinical competence as directly as you can.

The application deadline for our program is December 1st of each year for applicants to the Ph.D. and master's Plan A program. Submit letters of recommendation online in ApplyYourself. If the applicant provided your contact information on the Graduate School online Application for Admission (ApplyYourself), you will be contacted via email with instructions on how to submit your letter. Please complete the online **Applicant Recommendation** form as well.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful response.