

Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

High School Internship Program –

Letters of Recommendations

Thank you for supporting the application of a student for our internship program at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. A thoughtful and detailed recommendation letter will provide valuable insight into the applicant's potential, enthusiasm, personality, and work ethic. Below are the key areas we ask you to address in your letter to help us evaluate the candidate:

1. Potential

What to address:

Does the letter highlight the applicant's ability to grow, succeed, and thrive in the internship environment? We are looking for indicators that the student can handle the challenges and responsibilities of the program, learn new skills, and adapt to different situations.

Key examples to include:

Specific instances where the applicant demonstrated the ability to learn quickly, take on new challenges, or successfully complete tasks outside of their comfort zone.

2. Enthusiasm

What to address:

Does the recommender show a genuine enthusiasm for the applicant's capabilities, growth, and potential? Enthusiasm helps us understand the candidate's passion for their work and eagerness to contribute to the program.

Key examples to include:

A personal anecdote or example that demonstrates the applicant's excitement or commitment to their studies, activities, or other endeavors that relate to the internship program.

3. Personality

What to address:

Does the letter provide insight into the applicant's character, work ethic, and how they interact with others? We are looking for applicants who are respectful, motivated, and collaborative, with strong interpersonal skills.

Key examples to include:

Insights into the student's behavior in group settings, their ability to work well with peers, or how they approach challenges with a positive attitude. Personal qualities like reliability, communication, and integrity are highly valued.

4. Completeness & Specificity

What to address:

Does the letter address areas or skills that the applicant may not have covered in their application? Are there specific examples of the applicant's strengths or experiences that provide a fuller picture of the applicant's qualifications?

Key examples to include:

Concrete examples of accomplishments, work experiences, volunteer activities, or academic successes that show the applicant's suitability for the internship program. Specific anecdotes help us understand the applicant in a more tangible way.

5. Personalization**What to address:**

How tailored is the letter? Does the recommender provide concrete, specific examples of the applicant's achievements, behavior, or potential, instead of using generic statements? A personalized letter speaks to the applicant's unique qualities and their fit for the internship program.

Key examples to include:

References to the student's work, behavior, or experiences that directly tie to the qualities we are seeking in applicants. It's important that the letter feels specific to the individual, rather than using one-size-fits-all language.

Additional Tips:

Length and Format: Keep the letter concise, ideally no longer than one page. Use clear, easy-to-read language.

Tone: The letter should be positive, professional, and written in a sincere tone.

Structure: While you may vary the structure, it is helpful to introduce the applicant, discuss their strengths in relation to the program, and conclude with a strong recommendation.

We appreciate your time and effort in writing this recommendation. Your insight plays an important role in our decision-making process. Thank you for helping us evaluate this student for the internship opportunity!