## Writing Effective Letters of Recommendation Small Group Exercise

## **Justin Soso**

What you really think about Justin Soso

- · Justin has an average fund of knowledge.
- History taking and physical exam skills are what you would expect for a 4<sup>th</sup> year medical student.
- Clinical reasoning skills are average.
- He sometimes misses the big picture when evaluating more complicated patients.
- He does read about patients and does occasionally find out important information that
  changes patient management. However, sometimes he reads in depth about a particular
  aspect of a patient and loses sight of the big picture. His focus on a particular aspect of a
  patient sometimes does not permit him to read more broadly about his patients.
- · He is responsive to feedback and tries very hard
- He has outstanding interpersonal skills and is well liked by the staff.
- Patients really like him
- He does have a winner personality and you did really like having him in your office
- · Justin did have a good trajectory of improvement during his rotation

Good qualities	Mistakes/Needs Improvement
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September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010

Re: Justin Soso MS4 Letter of Recommendation for Post Graduate Training

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Justin Soso. I have been asked to write a letter of recommendation for his impending application for residency training.

I had the extreme pleasure of supervising Justin for approximately 4 weeks during his internal medicine outpatient externship. During that time, he was directly involved in patient care in a very busy internal medicine practice. He was responsible for seeing approximately 10 to 12 patients daily and performed full physical examinations as well as urgent care visits. He was exposed to a wide variety of medical conditions including complicated patients suffering from metastatic cancer as well as seeing patients with chronic issues including diabetes and hypertensions.

He was always extraordinarily enthusiastic and eager to go the extra mile for his patients. He had an extraordinary fund of knowledge for his level of training. He was exceptionally skilled at interacting with patients on a very professional level in addition to endearing himself to both patients and staff alike.

He had a voracious thirst for getting to the bottom of any complex medical issue that came up. In fact, on more than one occasion, he did extensive literature searches to aid in coming up with a diagnosis. In my 18 years of practice, he is one of the best medical students I have ever supervised.

I wholeheartedly support and recommend Justin for your training program. He is dependable, smart, and a "go getter." He will undoubtedly become one of your top residents. In fact, I predict that he will become chief resident.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should any questions arise. I would be happy to discuss this superb young doctor further.

With warm regards,

John Morgan, M.D. Professor of Medicine

## Ima Star

What you really think

- o Ima is one of the top students you have worked with in your career
- She is dedicated to patient care, is intellectually curious, is interested in investigation (uses clinical experiences to ask research questions)
- Exceptional work ethic and self- directed learning
- o Fund of knowledge exceeds expectations; always asking insightful questions demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the material
- o Chief resident material
- Outstanding technical skills

ASSESSMENT OF LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION		
Good Qualities	Mistakes/Needs Improvement	
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September 7, 2010

Dear Program Director,

Ima Star requested that I write a letter of recommendation for her for her application for an Ophthalmology residency position. I came to know Ima during her four week rotation at Wonderview Hospital as a sub-intern in Ophthalmology. I have met with Ima to discuss her application. I have had the opportunity to observe her during the rotation in our clinic and also in the OR. Ima waived her right to review this letter under the Family Privacy and Educational Rights Act

Ima is a quiet but very poised individual. Underneath her unassuming demeanor is an individual with a lot of toughness and durability. Ima has the self discipline and motivation to compete in triathlons despite her medical school schedule. She has done this despite being very active in research throughout her undergraduate and medical school years. Her research accomplishments include three oral presentations and first authorship on a paper. She has also been involved in numerous extracurricular activities in leadership roles. This is clearly an individual who has good time management skills, is strongly self motivated, and very dedicated.

Ima performed well clinically. When asked clinical questions she typically knew the answers. She responded well to feedback. Her interactions with patients, staff, and our residence were always professional. Her surgical skills seemed appropriate or advanced for her level. She was always responsible, on time and dressed professionally.

Ima's career plans are to complete an Ophthalmology residency and then do a fellowship. She would like to continue in academics. Many applicants say they want to pursue academics but don't follow through with this path. It is my opinion that Ima is sincere in her desire to pursue an academic career. Based on her track record and accomplishments thus far I feel she will accomplish this goal.

In summary, I feel that Ima has the level of dedication, desire, intelligence, and surgical attitude to excel in Ophthalmology. She is capable of making significant contributions to advance Ophthalmology. She is a delightful individual and she will make an excellent resident.

Sincerely,

William Penname, MD