**Recommendation summary**

A recommendation summary tells your recommender how your qualities matches the qualities presented in OTCAS, and help your recommenders to write an essay about you. This is a crucial part of the recommendation because you can make your recommendation look GREAT, even if your recommender BARELY knows you.

**Content:**

Suggestions

Examples

**Suggestions:**

In order to write the best recommendation summary, we need to know what questions will OTCAS asks your recommenders:

1. **How long have you known the applicant?**
2. **In what capacity?**
3. **How would you rate the applicant for each of the following characteristics?**Please select the rating that best describes the applicant in the category (5=Superior, 1=Below Average)
   * Critical Thinking Skills
   * Written Communication Skills
   * Oral Communication Skills
   * Initiative
   * Adaptability
   * Team Skills
   * Dependability
   * Conflict Resolution
   * Interpersonal Skills
   * Awareness of Limitations
   * Overall Evaluation
4. **Summary Evaluation:**
   * Do Not Recommend
   * Recommend with Reservation
   * Recommend
   * Recommend without Reservation
5. **Comments Section:** Please comment on any of the ratings or provide any additional information that will help the admissions office in the application review process.

Question 1, 2 and 4 can be a no brainer for your recommenders. However, question 3 and 5 can be very difficult for your recommenders, even if they know you very well. Therefore, to format your recommendation summary in the most understandable way, **you need to tell your recommender how you satisfy these qualities**. For example, one of the qualities is dependability. Therefore, in my recommendation summary, I write how I demonstrate this quality:

**Dependable:**

* Demonstrated punctuality through arriving earlier than my contract time, which is 9:30AM, so I can clean and get the rehabilitation gym ready before most Elmwood therapists come to work.
* Manifested credibility through volunteering past my contract time, which is 12:30PM: For instance, last year, I helped Heidi, an occupational therapist who came to sub for Gaylene, to conduct her IADL based therapy through helping her patient to shop in Berkeley Bowls until 1PM.

You do the same things for other quality. However, some qualities have multiple mini qualities. Therefore, you also have to demonstrate how you satisfy these mini qualities. For example, interpersonal skills consist of:

* Verbal and non-verbal communication
* Listening
* Negotiating
* Problem solving
* Decision making
* Asserting skills

Therefore, in the recommendation summary, I write:

**Interpersonal Skills:**

One of the overarching criteria for occupational therapist is whether I have interpersonal skills. This means whether I have verbal and non-verbal communication, listening, negotiating, problem solving, decision making and asserting skills. Below are the aspects of interpersonal skills I displayed:

**Verbal/Oral Communication:**

* **Lectured the Elmwood Therapists twice about PNF directions and rhythmic initiations.**
  + **Arranged each lecture 7 days in advance.**
  + **Maintained strong eye contact with the therapists during each lectured.**
  + **Answered the therapists’ questions about PNF.**
  + **Demonstrated both upper and lower extremities rhythmic initiation**

**Nonverbal Communication:**

* High-fived and clapped for the patients, such as Mr. Stern, who has rheumatoid arthritis, to complement him for completing a difficult task.
* Embraced patients when asked to, so I can show my care for them.
* Acknowledge cultural differences on gestures: For instance, a nod means “Yes” in English, and “Yes, I am listening to you” in Japanese/Asian Culture

**Example of Negotiating, Problem Solving, Decision Making, and Asserting Skills:**

Facilitate Mr. Onu’s exercise routine on Fridays, even though Mr. O is no longer under the therapy program.

**Problem:** Because I have difficulty understanding Mr. O's request, I have no time to help other therapists in need.

**Problem Analysis:** I did not know Mr. O’s exercise routine well, and Mr. O did not know that I need to help other therapist as well.

**Decision Making:** I decide to rememberMr. O’s exercise routineandtalk to Mr. Onu in simple language, such as “Should I push your bike near you or near me?” Through this question, he would only have to say “Me” or “You.”

**Asserting Skills: I** stressed to Mr. O the fact that I also need to help other therapists and patients.

**Negotiation:** We agreed that I will only help him exercise for 30 minutes maximum after lunch.

**Result:** I can push Mr. O to the exercising room on Fridays and still shadow and help other therapists.

Sometimes, your recommender know you in a setting in which you do not need a specific skill, so you can ask your recommender to give you N/A in that particular quality. For example, I asked my volunteer coordinator to give me a recommendation. I know that the OTCAS evaluation form will ask him to evaluate my writing communication skill. However, I never wrote an essay for him, so I simply asked him to give me an N/A in that section.

**Written Communication Skills**

I never give you an essay before, so you can grade this section as N/A.

**Side note:** If you ever write an essay for your recommender, put all the grades of the essays you wrote in this section. Also, <i>make sure to give him/her the paper s/he graded!</i>

Considering that you are demonstrating many of your good qualities through your actions in your recommendation summary, BOLD the achievements, or the acts, that you are the most proud of. For example, I am proud of my leadership and team work skill, I will bold these points to ask my recommender to emphasize it on the Comment Section in OTCAS.

**Leadership/Team skills:**

* **Directed 2 group discussions on PNF on March 14th and May 23rd, 2014 with all the Elmwood therapists.**
* **Guided new volunteer Colleen to understand the facility, including teaching her the passcodes to the laundry room and the parking lot.**
* Grasped the therapists’ needs: For instance, once Charlene and Gaylene push their dirty wheel chairs into the rehabilitation center. When I saw them pushing the wheelchairs into the center, I immediately wiped the chairs without them asking me.

**Recommendation Summary Examples:**

For OT:

PDF

Word

For Professor:

PDF

Word

For Graduate Student Instructor or TA

PDF

Word