

Recommendation Form

Applicant

Applicant	Shivani Pandey
Waiver	Once you are a student in attendance, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides you with a right of access to your education record, including letters of reference if they are retained by the school. FERPA also permits students to waive the right of access to letters of reference if you so choose. Waiving your right of access is optional; your decision to waive or decline to waive that right will have no bearing on the handling of your application. Your recommender will see your choice.
Name Displayed to Recommender	Shivani Pandey
Waiver Response	I waive my right to access this report.
Waiver Signature	Shivani Pandey

Recommender

Email	forman.ed@gmail.com
Submitted	11/27/2025
Signature	Edward A. Forman

About You

Prefix	Mr.
First Name	Ed
Last Name	Forman
Organization	Stanford University
Position/Title	Facilitator, Stanford GSB Executive Education
Phone Number	+1 650-380-0310
	Check this box to update your information above.

Evaluation Questions

Please identify the most selective group to which you are comparing the applicant.	Master's level students
How many years have you evaluated people in this group?	0
Approximately how many people are in this group, totaled over those years?	0
In overall ability (as appropriate to graduate studies) this candidate is among the:	No basis for judgment
Admission to graduate study at Stanford University is:	Strongly recommended

Letter of Recommendation

Upload your letter of recommendation below.	Uploaded 11/27/2025
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Dear Members of the Admissions Committee:

I first met Shivani Pandey in 2021 at a coffee shop near the Metropolitan Museum in New York. She had just begun her freshman year at Vassar and had only been in the U.S. a short time. What struck me that afternoon wasn't anything dramatic; it was just how naturally she handled a new city and how quickly she turned a casual conversation into a thoughtful discussion about art and perception.

From our first meeting, I saw an extraordinary streak of self-confidence and independence. It was clear she was thinking hard about the ideas that interested her. That first conversation touched on something I'd learned as an undergraduate studying art history: that training yourself to recognize patterns in one domain sharpens your perception in others. She took this idea seriously. Over the years, she has mentioned it more than once in her thinking about research.

We've kept in touch since then, mostly through occasional calls and email exchanges. When she asked if I would be willing to write on her behalf, I hesitated for a moment, only because I should say up front: I'm not an academic psychologist, nor am I a professor. My background is in business. I teach in Stanford GSB's Executive Education programs and work with founders on innovation and business model design. So my perspective on talent is very much shaped by applied problem-solving rather than scholarly frameworks. I hope that context is useful rather than distracting.

Even from my vantage point, there are things about Shivani that stood out. She has been very deliberate in how she's built her skills. Once she realized that her questions about human memory required more technical grounding, she didn't abandon psychology—she added computer science. Her master's at UNC Chapel Hill was, in my view, a strategic decision made unusually early in her career. Many people discover they need technical depth only after running into a wall. She anticipated it.

She's also been geographically and intellectually adventurous in a way I don't often see in someone her age: growing up in a smaller city in India, attending high school in Singapore, then choosing a college near New York. That pattern—seeking out new contexts rather than staying with the familiar—is consistent with how she approaches her studies.

During the period when she was designing the study that became her first-authored paper for the HCII 2025 conference, we spoke a few times about her ideas. Her hypothesis was that virtual reality might strengthen the Mind Palace technique, which she thankfully explained to me, since the Mind Palace technique is well outside my usual wheelhouse. She built the environment, ran the study, and learned that the traditional mental method worked better.

I was impressed by her reaction. She didn't express disappointment. She didn't try to rescue the hypothesis or explain away the results. Instead, she became more curious and ran follow-up interviews to figure out what was actually going on. That kind of response—treating an unexpected result as information, a step forward rather than a setback—is something I see in the strongest founders I work with.

Because I'm not an academic insider, I can't evaluate her in the same way a research mentor or professor would. Her trajectory from cognitive science to computer science to neuroimaging has been cohesive and grounded, not opportunistic, and she has the kind of disciplined curiosity I've learned to recognize in people who end up doing meaningful work. She thinks across domains, and she does so with intention.

If your program is looking for students who ask real questions, adjust quickly to evidence, and build their skills in service of long-term goals, I believe she would fit well. Her cross-disciplinary curiosity is exceptional. I think it may set her up to make breakthrough discoveries. I recommend her with confidence.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Forman

Facilitator, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Executive Education

Partner, Swanberg Associates

Stanford GSB '79

Harvard '75