WABA Guidelines for Recommendations – 2020.05.01

Overview: A Recommendation addresses the preparation of an Applicant to enter/advance in a professional training program or perform in a professional role. For WATSU® and related aquatic bodywork, Recommendations are useful to introduce an Applicant to other aquatic bodywork professionals, and required for application to become a professional Assistant or Instructor, in particular for Assistant Training Course (ATC), Instructor Training Course (ITC), and for application to be certified as an Instructor at a particular level. Recommendations serve two primary purposes: 1) to provide assessment of aspirations, ability, and preparation; and 2) to encourage and guide a fruitful Mentor/Student relationship. Ideally, letters of recommendation are clearly written and concise, typically one page.

Suggested Recommendation Format and Content:

I. Overview
- A. Purpose of Recommendation
- B. Capacity in Which Mentor Knows Applicant
- C. Overall Recommendation or Assessment

II. First-Hand Knowledge
- A. How Long? In What Capacity?
- B. Ability to Comment (on aspirations, ability, training, experience, etc.)

III. Assessment
- A. Commitment
- B. Ability and Potential
- C. Preparation
- D. Concerns
- E. Progress

IV. Closing
- A. Summary of Strengths and Potential
- B. Summary of Benefits to Applicant and Others

Tips for Recommendation Writers:
- Remember that you serve as Mentor and inspirational role model.
- Be concise and clear, typically keeping Recommendation to one page, and at most two pages when additional details are warranted.
- Express enthusiasm and encouragement directly to the person you are writing for and in your letter. You have great power and responsibility in the Mentor role to inspire and guide professional development in a positive way.

- Decline writing Recommendation if you do not feel you have sufficient knowledge, if you feel the Applicant requires further preparation, or if you do not feel you can write a positive assessment.
- Be mindful of using professional tone, good writing style, and completeness when writing Recommendations. Set a good example.
- Request that Applicant provide specific key background – purpose of Recommendation, aspirations, courses and practicums/supervisions completed, experience practicing, feedback from recipients/clients, other related experience or background...
- Refer to guidelines and well-written examples when drafting Recommendations.
- Review draft Recommendations with Applicant, discuss the bigger picture along with any concerns, and make revisions as necessary.
- Seek input and edits from professional writers as needed.
- Provide Applicant with a final version of Recommendation.
- Typically, Recommendations are updated and revised periodically as professional development progresses.
- Keep archival records of Recommendations and associated documents.

Example Recommendations:

Dear ATC Application Committee:

I am writing to recommend Jane Doe for acceptance as a student in the June 2022 Assistant Training Certification (ATC) course at Sierra Hotsprings. I have known Jane for more than five years in my capacity as Senior Instructor and have followed her progress in my capacity as Mentor. I strongly recommend Jane for the ATC course.

I first met Jane as a student in a WATSU 2 course I taught with Harold Dull in 2016, and subsequently she attended my WATSU 3 Adaptive course in 2017, did a private supervision with me, passed her WATSU Demonstration of Mastery with me in 2018, and became certified as a WATSU Practitioner in 2019. I feel confident to address her aspirations, ability, preparation, and potential.

Jane aspires to start an aquatic healing center in the San Francisco Bay area, to continue to practice as a massage therapist and WATSU Practitioner, and to become certified as a WATSU Instructor. In addition to coursework to become a WATSU Practitioner, Jane has completed advanced therapeutic training in Craniosacral Therapy, WaterDance, and Healing Dance. She is also a certified yoga instructor and teaches a weekly Vinyasa class at the Yoga Room in Berkeley. Feedback from her WATSU clients has been positive, including comments like "I felt like I was back in the womb", "What an amazing experience! gentle and nurturing. I felt so safe.", and "I can not thank Jane enough for giving me an amazing session. She really helped my lower back pain."

Of particular note, Jane is interested in WATSU for pregnancy, and WATSU for processing trauma. A concern: Jane can be shy in groups, can become flustered when under pressure, and will benefit from experience teaching and speaking in a safe container.

In short, Jane Doe meets requirements for admission to the ATC course, is making good progress as a practitioner, and is dedicated to becoming an Assistant and eventually an Instructor. She brings a thoughtful, caring approach that will benefit other students and help set a good tone for the course.

Sincerely,
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