

Here are two letters of recommendation for Alex, a biology major who is applying for a research internship. What do you notice?

Letter #1

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to recommend Alex Johnson for your summer research internship. Alex was in my microbiology class last year. He attended regularly and turned in all his assignments on time. He seemed interested in the material and got decent grades.

I think he would do fine in your program. He is polite and gets along with others, and is capable of doing good work.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Sincerely,

Dr. Green

Biology Department

Letter #2

To Whom It May Concern,

I am delighted to recommend Alex Johnson for your summer research internship. I have had the pleasure of teaching Alex in two upper-level biology courses and mentoring him in our department's undergraduate research program over the past year.

Alex consistently demonstrates intellectual curiosity, analytical rigor, and a strong commitment to scientific inquiry. In our Molecular Biology course, he not only excelled academically—earning one of the top grades in the class—but also contributed thoughtful insights during discussions on gene expression and regulation. His final project, which explored CRISPR applications in plant genetics, was exceptionally well-researched and clearly presented.

Beyond the classroom, Alex has been an integral part of my lab team, assisting with a study on microbial resistance. He quickly mastered lab protocols, maintained meticulous records, and even proposed a modification to our experimental design that improved data consistency. His initiative and collaborative spirit make him a standout among his peers.

I am confident that Alex will thrive in a research-intensive environment and contribute meaningfully to your program. He is not only academically strong but also deeply passionate about advancing scientific knowledge. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emily Smith

Associate Professor of Biology