



NOTEWORTHY CHARACTERISTICS MAKEOVER

By Trilce Ruiz

MSPE

Your Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE) -- also known as the Dean's Letter -- is the formal letter of evaluation that assesses your academic performance and professional attributes.

All medical schools are required to submit an MSPE for each student with their residency applications.

The MSPE contains a Noteworthy Characteristics section. This section is made up of three personalized statements that describe key distinctions of your application.

This is the second section of the document and one of the first things Program Directors read, therefore, it sets the tone of the rest of the document and application.

School of Medicine	
Date	
IDENTIFYING INFORMATION <Student's legal name and year in school name and location of medical school>	
NOTEWORTHY CHARACTERISTICS <Provide a maximum of three characteristics highlighting the most salient noteworthy characteristics of the student. This section should be presented as a bulleted list. Each characteristic should be described in 2 sentences or less. Information about any significant challenges or hardships encountered by the student during medical school may be included.>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <text>• <text>• <text>	
ACADEMIC HISTORY	
Date of Initial Matriculation in Medical School	
Date of Expected Graduation from Medical School	
Please explain any extensions, leave(s), gap(s), or break(s) in the student's educational program below:	
Information about the student's prior, current, or expected enrollment in, and the month and year of the student's expected graduation from dual, joint or combined degree programs.	
Was the student required to repeat or otherwise remediate any course work during their medical education? If yes, please explain.	
Was the student the recipient of any adverse action(s) by the medical school or its parent institution?	

HOW MUCH EFFORT SHOULD YOU PUT INTO WRITING YOUR NCS?

The MSPE ranked as the #3 factor in granting interviews in 2018



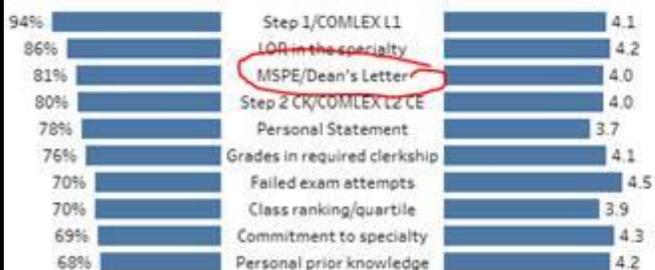
Results from the 2018 NRMP Program Director Survey

Select a specialty

(All)

1. Top 10 factors program directors use in selecting applicants to interview and in ranking

Interview



Ranking



[Link:](#)

[View 2018 Program Director Survey by Specialty](#)

Think of your NCs as the trailer to your application. They set the tone and should make Program Directors interested in reading the rest of your application.

BASED
ON A
TRUE
STORY

MAKEOVER

The goal of this presentation is to guide you in developing strong Noteworthy Characteristics by giving you examples from real students in the class of 2020 that I helped.*

And to take your NCs from...



ALWAYS focus on emphasizing your **impact** in the roles more than describing the roles. Impact within the community, the institution, your peers and yourself.

*Some names have been changed due to privacy.

STUDENT 1

APPLYING TO CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

NC#1-BEFORE

“Mr. Forbes is a member of the Global Health Honor’s track at RVU. He did three of his 3rd year rotations abroad. He participated in a medical outreach trip run by RVU in Kenya. He also set up a rotation in Ob/Gyn and surgery at Edna Aden Hospital in Somaliland for himself and two other students. He then traveled to Lebanon where he did a surgical oncology rotation at the American University of Beirut.”



AFTER

“Mr. Forbes’ dedication to being a catalyst for change through advocacy and action is highlighted by his participation in RVU’s Global Health Honors Track, where he gained an all-encompassing global perspective of medicine that improved his cultural sensitivity, communication skills, and knowledge of various international healthcare delivery systems. His involvement in the track resulted in more transformative experiences during his medical outreach trip to Kenya, the OB/GYN and Surgery rotations in Somaliland-that he organized for himself and his peers, and his surgical oncology rotation at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon.”



STUDENT 1

APPLYING TO CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

NC#2-BEFORE

“Mr. Forbes has continued to volunteer for the non-profit that he co-founded, Gratis Humanitarian Aid Network, throughout medical school. Gratis delivers medical equipment and supplies to Edna Aden Hospital in Somaliland.”



AFTER

“Mr. Forbes is committed to closing the treatment gap for access to quality care in low-resource communities as evidenced by his humanitarian global outreach through Gratis Humanitarian Aid Network, a non-profit he co-founded during his pre-clinical years. His foundation delivers medical equipment and supplies to the underserved community in Somaliland through his partnership with Edna Aden Hospital, whose mission is to end preventable child and maternal death and to eradicate the practice of Female Genital Mutilation.”



STUDENT 1

APPLYING TO CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

NC#3-BEFORE

“As a second-year student Mr. Forbes was the lead tutor for anatomy, overseeing 15 other second year tutors responsible for *torturing* 160 first-year students. He is also a member of RVU’s Sigma Sigma Phi chapter.”



AFTER

“Based on his strong academic performance and leadership skills, Mr. Forbes was selected for the prestigious Sigma Sigma Phi National Osteopathic Medical Student Honor Society, and as the Curriculum Representative for his class, where he promoted educational innovations and scholarship while enhancing the curriculum. In his role as Lead Anatomy Tutor, he oversaw 15 of his peers- collectively responsible for tutoring 160 first year students-while studying for his licensure examinations, resulting in excellent national scores on both exams.”



DECONSTRUCTING THE MAKEOVER

X Student 1 did not adhere to the **two** sentences max limit, a guideline set by the AAMC.

✓ These sentences can be the longest you ever write as long as you abide by grammatical rules.

X The “before” examples are just listing facts.

✓ The “after” examples extract meaning from experiences and convey how those experiences were transformative and shaped the student into the person that he is today.

X The “before” examples are generalized and do not appeal to the reader.

✓ The “after” examples are tailored to the reader.

✓ He is applying to cardio thoracic surgery. Surgeons care about hands-on procedural experiences. The countries he rotated in do not have Hippa...

STUDENT 2

APPLYING TO FAMILY MEDICINE

NC#1-BEFORE

“Ms. Grey gave birth to her second child while completing the Neuroanatomy course. She completed the first year without any difficulties.”

AFTER

“Ms. Grey’s commitment to excellence in her medical education is evidenced by her academic performance during her preclinical courses while balancing the responsibilities of being a wife, mother and student. She was able to successfully complete the most challenging course of the first year curriculum, Neuroanatomy, when she gave birth to her second child.”



STUDENT 2

APPLYING TO FAMILY MEDICINE

NC#2-BEFORE

“During her fourth-year break between undergraduate and medical school, Ms. Grey worked as a CNA to support her husband throughout law school.”



AFTER

“During the four years between undergraduate and medical school, Ms. Reed worked as a CNA – while supporting her husband through law school -- where she gained an all-encompassing perspective of medicine and the ability to personally connect to patients of various backgrounds. Being a CNA further developed her understanding of cultural sensitivity, diversity, and communication skills resulting in more meaningful experiences during her medical education.”



STUDENT 2

APPLYING TO FAMILY MEDICINE

NC#3-BEFORE

“Ms. Grey served as an unofficial mentor for new moms in medical school.”

AFTER

“Based on her personal experiences, Ms. Grey provided support and outreach in a peer mentoring capacity to new and expectant mothers during medical school at RVU. Her emphatic and compassionate nature empowered her to recognize and support the mental health needs of her peers.”



DECONSTRUCTING THE MAKEOVER

X Student 2's sentences were too short.

✓ While concision is key, it is also important to highlight details that provide context to the reader.

X The “before” examples are too broad.

✓ The “after” examples speak to Family Medicine Program Directors because they cover topics they typically care about.

✓ Mental Health is an important topic for every specialty, however, primary care specialties seem to value it more.

✓ While a Family Medicine Program Director would probably be impressed by the fact that she passed her class as a new mom, a General Surgery Program Director may think: “So what, you were supposed to”.

✓ Know your audience!

STUDENT 3

APPLYING TO FM CHANGED HIS MIND FROM PM&R

Noteworthy Characteristic 1

Mr. McDreamy's passion for patient advocacy stems from his volunteer service at RotaCare Free Clinic, which furthered his compassion and empathy for the underserved population in his hometown. As a volunteer scribe serving a large Hispanic population, he witnessed healthcare barriers that minorities faced and felt a commitment and responsibility for disadvantaged patients and their care **resulting in a strong desire to become a primary care physician.**

Noteworthy Characteristic 2

Mr. McDreamy's dedication to enhancing his leadership skills while supporting his peers is highlighted in his role of Vice President of the PM&R Club, where he provided opportunities for students to explore the PM&R specialty by organizing guest lectures with influential speakers from the community. Mr. McDreamy's ability to identify deficits in his medical school's curriculum led him to fill in those gaps by organizing interactive workshops where students were able to discuss common sport injuries scenarios developed by a sports medicine physician and refine their musculoskeletal exam skills.

Noteworthy Characteristic 3

During his undergraduate career Mr. McDreamy was a Division One Baseball athlete who experienced several physical injuries, and it was the rehabilitation process of these injuries that led him to pursue his role as a physical therapy aide. In this rewarding role, he engaged with patients by instructing them on exercises and conducting electronic muscle stimulation treatments, all of which allowed Mr. McDreamy the privilege to witness his patients' physical and emotional progress.

DECONSTRUCTING THE NCS

Although we are not able to compare the before and after on this example, I wanted to use it to show you **how to address a change in specialty interest effectively**.

NC#1 Addresses his commitment for Family Medicine on his first NC.

NC#2 The leadership skills developed in this role can be applicable to any specialty.

NC#3 Being a Division One Baseball player is unique and it broadened his perspective on how to effectively relate to patients.

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please review the other documents attached to the email with more information and guidelines about NCs.

You are required to provide your three Noteworthy Characteristics to Dr. Tieman during your Career Advising Session. They will be a work in progress and will continue to evolve as you grow, so try your best.

You will receive instructions on how to submit your NCs during the Spring Semester of your 3rd year of medical school.

Reach out to your friends with English degrees and ask them to review them before you submit your NCs ;)



