Iran University of Medical Sciences
Faculty of Medicine

Graduate School Recommendation

Recommendation: Zahra Mehrasa

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To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Ms. Zahra (Elin) Mehrasa for admission to your PhD program. I have known Ms. Mehrasa since the very beginning of her M.Sc. studies in Human Genetics at Iran University of Medical Sciences, where I served as her faculty instructor and later as her thesis supervisor.

During my theoretical courses, she demonstrated outstanding intellectual ability, scientific maturity, and motivation well beyond her academic level. Her exam performances were exceptional, often setting the benchmark for her peers, and she ultimately graduated as the top-ranked student in her cohort.

During the research phase of her program, she was the first in her class to propose a thesis topic that was originated from her first-year seminar. Together, we designed the study “Investigation of Telomere Attrition and Telomerase Expression in Diabetic Retinopathy.” Despite substantial institutional obstacles, including repeated university closures and sample losses due to equipment failures, Elin’s determination never wavered. She recruited 166 patients that is an unprecedented number for an M.Sc. project in our group. Elin devoted extensive time in clinical settings to ensure standardized sample collection. Her rigorous attention to sample integrity and her insistence on same-day extractions for quality assurance reflected remarkable perseverance and scientific discipline.

What sets Elin apart is not only her diligence but also her scientific maturity and problem-solving mindset. After completing the committed analyses, she proposed extending the work into computational modeling and predictive analytics. Drawing on her growing expertise in R, Python, and statistical regression, she developed predictive models (using machine learning algorithms) integrating telomere data with clinical and demographic variables to distinguish between different stages of diabetic retinopathy. This initiative was unprecedented in our department, and she successfully executed it through independent study and collaboration with experts from other faculties.

Her thesis represented one of the most comprehensive and interdisciplinary works ever produced in our group, and she defended it with the highest possible mark.

In my professional opinion, Ms. Mehrasa is an exceptionally strong candidate for doctoral training in translational genetics, computational biology, or related interdisciplinary fields. Her analytical maturity, rapid ability to acquire new methodologies, and strong problem-solving mindset position her to make meaningful and high-impact contributions to any research environment she joins.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Kind regards,
Dr. Golnaz Khakpour