

Letter of recommendation



Obtaining a Letter of Recommendation

The Basics

Letters of recommendation are written by faculty, past or current employers, and intern supervisors in support of your abilities and accomplishments. They are used to complete the information needed by an employer to hire you, or a graduate program to admit you. It is preferable that your references use their own letterhead, but some organizations may request use of their own forms.

Your professors and past employers may be asked to write many letters during the year, especially during spring semester. Your

thoughtfulness and careful preparation will help the writer's ability to produce the best letter possible. Remember: the student must take the responsibility and initiative in the letter writing process. Although each person will vary in their preferences, there are some general guidelines to follow.

Asking for a Letter of Recommendation

Ask in person

- You are requesting help from your reference; make your statement in the form of a request. Be willing to take "no" for an answer.

- Do not slide the request under an office door, leave it in a mailbox, or stop the person in the hallway. Find time to meet with the person to discuss your request for a letter of recommendation.

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Letters show
who you are
and what
you can do!

"Letters of recommendation can be just as valid as conducting reference checks via phone," says Shannon Hatfield, a corporate college recruiter for GEICO. "As long as the letters are in a sealed and officially stamped envelope, and from a professor, dean, or previous supervisor, we will accept them as a reference for the student candidate. Many organizations have policies not to provide references, so letters of reference, in some cases, provide greater insight." ~NACEweb

Asking for a Letter of Recommendation

continued

Be Specific

- Ask if the person could give you a positive recommendation. If they can not, find someone who can.
- Ask if the person would be able to give you a specific recommendation. If the person does not know you well enough to be specific with his/her comments, the letter will not be effective. You will then want to ask someone else.

Interfolio

Manage Your References Online

Interfolio is a premier application portfolio management service, available to students and alumni of Hope College. Interfolio is the easiest and most affordable way to manage the following job search/graduate school correspondence online:

- Confidential and non-confidential letters of recommendation
- Resumes
- Statement(s) of purpose
- Writing samples
- Teaching Portfolio documents
- Supervising teacher evaluations
- Student & peer evaluations
- Unofficial transcripts

Your Responsibilities in the Recommendation Process

- Allow ample time for the person to write the letter. **At least two weeks or more should be allowed.**
- Provide the person with all relevant instructions. Make sure you fill in all the information that you are responsible for providing. **Do not handwrite!**
 - Put all materials in a large labeled (name, address, and phone) envelope so the materials will not get lost
 - If the organization provides a form for the letter or general instructions for preparing letters, include that with your information
 - Make sure the person has the correct name, title, organization, and address in the letter
 - **Make sure the writer is aware of the deadline** for submitting the letter
- Provide the writer with your name and statement of your goals. It is for a university application, including the statement of purpose is appropriate.
 - Major(s) and minor(s), which classes you may have taken from a particular professor, when you took the class(es), special projects, class participation, and how well you did.
 - Reminders of teaching assistantships, internships, or research projects
 - Statement of career goals and/or reasons for choosing the university/job for which you are applying
 - Information on some of your college activities, especially leadership positions held and awards won
- If the person is to send the letter to an employer or school via mail, provide a stamped, addressed envelope for each recommendation.
- You can manage your own letter of recommendation, or they can be electronically managed through Interfolio (www.interfolio.com) for a fee.
- Politely check with the writer a few days before the deadline to see if the letter has been completed and sent.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the writers of your letters. These letters take time, thought, and effort. Let the writer know of your appreciation. Also send a note when your plans have been finalized and your job/school search is complete.

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