



OBTAINING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

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 recommendations 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, below are some general guidelines to follow.

ASKING FOR THE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

- Ask in person
 - Ask
 - You are requesting help from your reference; make your statement in the form of a request. Be willing to take “no” for an answer.
 - In Person
 - 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.
- Ask if the person could give you a positive recommendation. If 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.



YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

- Allow ample time for the person to write the letter. **At least three weeks or more should be allowed.**
- Provide the person with all relevant forms and instructions. Make sure you fill in all the information that you are responsible for providing.
 - 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 request information
 - Make sure the person has the correct name, title, organization, and address to include in the letter
 - **Make sure the writer is aware of the deadline** for submitting the letter
- Provide the writer with your resume and statement of your goals. If 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, provide a stamped, addressed envelope for each recommendation.
- If the letter is to be sent to the Office of Career Services, provide an addressed, stamped envelope if the writer is off campus.
- 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.