



Requesting Letters of Reference

Select your Recommenders Carefully

Your recommenders should be able to write convincingly and supportively of you. They should know you and your work well, and be able to write specifically about your strengths. Professors are busy people; it is wise to request a letter of reference far in advance of any applications deadlines you may have. It is your responsibility to follow up with your recommenders.

Meet with Your Recommenders

- Contact recommenders early in the semester when they are not as busy.
- Make an appointment to discuss your coursework, interests and experiences, and to ensure that the letter they write has the correct focus.
- Give your recommender a copy of your resume, and tell them how you plan on using their reference.
- Determine a reasonable deadline for completing the reference, taking into account your recommender's schedule and your application deadlines.
- Give your recommender all of the required forms when making your request for a letter.

Off-Campus Recommenders

You may want to request letters of reference from off-campus faculty, work supervisors, colleagues, or other sources. Provide the recommender with the same information as explained above. You may have to e-mail or phone them if they are not local.

Format of Letters

Remind your recommender to print their reference on letterhead, and to include their signature, title, contact information and credentials.

Include All Accompanying Materials

When requesting a letter from a recommender, be sure to give them any Interfolio forms, waivers, evaluation forms or cover sheets that need to accompany their letter. Prevent unnecessary delays: be sure to completely fill out and sign (if necessary) your forms before you give them to your recommender.

Applying to Multiple Schools or Positions

Provide your recommenders with an organized list of schools, due dates and submission instructions. If you need the letter mailed to you in a sealed envelope signed across the seal, be sure to provide your recommender with self-addressed stamped envelopes.