

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

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A letter of recommendation highlights your qualities and capabilities. The letter can be crucial to a graduate school or job application, because it is a personal statement from a recommender that can speak about you as a student and/or employee. Throughout this process, you should be supplying your recommender with clear instructions regarding how the letters should be submitted. Below are the steps to successfully obtain a letter of recommendation.

Getting Started:

- Find out if the employer or graduate school you are applying to requires recommendations from professors or supervisors.
- Determine when the recommendation letters are due. You should ask your recommenders at least 5-6 weeks before the due date, so they have plenty of time to complete it.
- Establish the type of recommendation required, confidential or non-confidential. If it is confidential, you must waive your right to view the letter.
- Determine how the letter of recommendation needs to be submitted. If submitting by mail, you provide a pre-addressed, stamped envelope to your recommender. If submitting electronically, you provide the link to the online form to your recommender.
- Select professors or supervisors who know you well and can speak to your capabilities. They should be able to provide the evaluators with an accurate assessment of your intellectual and interpersonal skills and your achievements as an employee or student.

Meeting with Recommenders:

- Schedule a time to ask if they are willing to write a positive letter of recommendation. Be prepared to fully explain why you are applying and your future goals in order to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of what you want to achieve.
- Provide a resume, transcript, personal statement, position description, and any qualities or experiences that you want highlighted.
- Indicate a specific timeline for recommenders to ensure that the letter is submitted on time.

Next Steps:

- Check in with the recommenders on the status of the letter once or twice, and if the letter is not complete within two weeks of the due date, remind them of the deadline.
- Check the application system (if applicable) or follow up with the school/organization to ensure that the letter was submitted accurately and on time.
- Send your recommender a note thanking them for taking the time to write your letter.
- Inform the recommender of the outcome of the decision when you hear, they will want to know!