

Letter of Recommendation

Choosing your letter writers

- Read the application, determine what skills/qualifications the application are looking for.
- If the skills/qualification are not clear ask those in the field what skills are required, what skills help you stand out.
- Sometimes the letter of recommendation have a list of skills they want their letter writers to respond to, this is a good start.
- Write drafts of your resume, cover letters and/or personal/professional statements.
- Determine what qualities/skills you are claiming to have
- Determine which mentor, boss can/will speak to specific qualities/skills
- You should have ~5 letter writers that have agreed to write letters for you. You want each letter writer to be able to give evidence for different qualities and skills (including general and job/program specific).
 - Advisor
 - 2 faculty
 - 2 professional
- You won't use all recommenders on any one application, but can choose the most appropriate ones.

Advice for asking for a letter of recommendation:

- Ask in person if possible.
- Ask if the letter writer feels they know you enough and if they can write a **highly favorable letter** for you. (You want your letter writers to reinforce what they are saying or are providing complimentary information). Even ask if they can write a favorable recommendation on ____ qualities/ skills.
- Ask with lots of advance notice. If this is the first time the letter writer has written a letter for you a months' notice during the school year is expected and longer during winter or summer break.
 - For me, please ask me before you leave for the summer, preferable in the middle of a semester.

Once your letter writer has agreed to write a highly favorable letter:

- Provide them with information about you. I.e. resume and a personal statement if your program requires one. Don't forget to include personal activities that you may want highlighted that the person may not know about. For example: volunteer work at a hospital or anything that makes you stand out.
- Ask if they would like to meet or talk about the letter.
 - I require students to meet with me or talk on the phone about their letter. When I feel I can write a positive favorable letter and I have time I will. I will really want you to be successful in your program, internship or job. I see your letter is evidence that you would be good for that program. When possible I will try to write about qualities you write about in your personal statement. I will want to know what qualities are you feel make you qualify for that position.
- Provide information about where to send the letter, who to write the letter to and what program or job your are applying for.
- If there is a sheet etc. to fill out or mail, make it as easy as possible for the letter writer, fill out their name, address, phone number etc. Address and stamp the envelope for them.
- Don't be surprised if the letter writer wants you to write a first draft of the letter for them. If so, start the formal letter for them, write that they are excited to write the letter, how they know you, and then go into your qualities with a story as evidence.
- Once your letter writer has submitted the letters for you write them a thank you note.

Once you hear back:

- Please let your letter writers know good or bad about the outcome of your application.
- In my mind, you let your family know, then you let your letter writers know next. Mom and then me 😊.