

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION- AN OVERVIEW

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Why are they important?

- A crucial component of your graduate school application
- Most graduate, research, and funding applications require them
- Can often be the deciding factor in an application
- Help provide a reviewer with an assessment of your potential to succeed as a graduate student or a researcher

So, it's important to choose carefully!

- Recommenders are most often a faculty member. But not always
- May be other professions who know you well and have supervised your academic or research work

Who should you ask for a recommendation?

- Select someone who knows you well
- Choose a professor at your degree granting institution
 - may want to choose a professor who has a degree similar to what you are seeking
- Has an advanced degree
- Has supervised you in an internship aligned with the graduate program you are interested in
- A professor from an upper-division course who knows you and can attest to your ability to succeed in graduate school

Who shouldn't you ask for a recommendation?

- Family members or friends
- Political figures
- Professors who may not remember you or, even worse, who do remember you in an unfavorable light



How to ask for a letter of recommendation

- Can influence on the type of response you receive and the quality of the recommendation
- Prepare and reach out well in advance of any application deadline
 - Make a list of individuals who you feel will be your best advocates
 - Request an appointment to discuss your request in person
 - Be prepared to articulate your reasons applying to the program
 - Ask if they are willing to write a strong letter of recommendation
 - If they seem reluctant or say no, that's ok

What else is important?

- A recommender is usually quite honest in their assessment of your abilities and likelihood to succeed.
- Be mindful of your recommender's time
 - Be sure to give plenty of time for your recommender to provide the letter
 - Reaching out at least two months ahead of time is ideal



Tips and FAQs



- How many letters of recommendation are usually required?
- Should I send more than the number requests?
- What if I'm graduating and don't plan to attend graduate school for a few years?
- I think my current research supervisor will write a letter of recommendation, but they haven't known me long. What do I do?
- I don't really know any of my professors. What can I do?

Even more Tips and FAQs

- My instructor seems reluctant but hasn't *actually* said no. Now it's just kind of awkward.
- How can I help my recommenders write a great letter?
- Should the letter be confidential?
 - It depends.
 - A confidential letter indicates a great level of confidence for the applicant.



Questions?

Scan the QR Code to access a workshop satisfaction survey or
access the survey at: bit.ly/3EJX5WP

