



JOHNS HOPKINS

KRIEGER SCHOOL
of ARTS & SCIENCES

SECURING RECOMMENDATIONS

REQUESTING

When it comes to requesting a recommendation it is wise to increase your probability of a yes. *Imagine you are in the grocery store and you are debating between purchasing an organic bunch of kale from a local farm or an organic bunch of kale from a farm in another state. A stranger sees you contemplating and offers assistance which leads to an extended positive conversation about regulations, farming, and healthy choices. If you had a second encounter with this person you would not propose marriage.*

Apply this thinking when asking for recommendations. The people you seek to request a recommendation from should be familiar with you in a particular way. This person should be comfortable to discuss and express your qualities, skills, and/or expertise to the person who will benefit from the additional information.

Predetermine the people in your life in which you have multiple interactions with and have seen you in a professional manner to effectively and honestly evaluate your qualities, skills, and/or expertise being requested.

SOME TIPS IN REQUESTING ARE:

1. Ask people in advance of needing the recommendation. As you are building rapport inquire if they would be interested in being a reference or providing a recommendation in the future.
2. Stay in contact with those who you have on your list of possible recommenders. Provide quarterly or semi-annual updates.
3. When requesting the recommendation be clear. Inform the person what the recommendations is for, who will receive it, the nature of your responsibilities/ how you will be evaluated. Remember to ask if the person is willing/able to provide it.
4. Provide a time frame that the recommendation is needed and the address or link of how to submit.
5. Show appreciation of the person's time, thank them in advance, and provide updated information.

WHEN SOMEONE DECLINES

In the event the person you ask declines to provide a recommendation understand there can be several reasons.

- a. The person may not have the time.
- b. The person may not feel they know you well enough in the contextual manner.
- c. The person may limit the amount of recommendations they provide.
- d. The person may not be able to provide an honest strong recommendation based on their evaluation of you and chooses to decline.

Refrain from internalizing the decline as a reflection of your worth. Instead recognize everyone you ask will not agree and there are various reasons.

NEXT STEPS TO MOVE FORWARD

Always thank the person for the response they provided (accepted/declined).

Inquire if there is anything else they require. Declined: Inquire if they can provide feedback on how you can further develop.