

Asking for a letter of recommendation

A letter of recommendation is a formal letter written by a professional who can speak to your skills, qualities and capabilities related to the position you are applying to.

Who can I ask for a letter of recommendation?

Any professional contact who knows you well and experience working with you. You should only ask individuals you have a positive relationship with. Consider asking the people below:

Current or former supervisor: A supervisor can speak to your skills, qualifications and work ethic.

Current or former professional colleague: Only ask a coworker or classmate who can provide examples and speak to your skills.

Volunteer organization: If you have volunteered at ASU or in your community and a staff member at the organization knows you, ask if they would be open to writing a letter!

How can I ask for a letter of recommendation?

Contact them via email, instant message or phone.

Explain that you are applying for a new role.

Briefly explain the new role (provide 2-3 details).

Share your resume.

Share the job posting.

Inform them of the due date and how to submit the recommendation (email, online portal, etc.)

Avoid asking friends, family or professors who do not know you

Asking a professor, teaching assistant or faculty

You should only ask a professor that you have either worked closely with or who you have taken multiple classes with. If the professor does not know you or cannot speak to your skills, consider asking someone else. If you plan to ask a professor, follow the steps below.

Share the job title and 2-3 details about the job.

Explain why you want this professor to write the letter.

Inform them of the due date and how the letter should be submitted (email, online portal, etc.)

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Letter of recommendation

Dear [faculty name],

My name is [your name] and I was enrolled in your [name of class and the semester you completed the class]. I am applying to [name of job, internship, or program] and I would like to ask if you would serve as a professional reference and write a letter of recommendation for me.

I am hoping you can write this letter because [reason you are asking this person to write the letter] and believe your letter would be a strong addition to my application. If you are able to write the letter, it is due by [date]. Once completed, the letter can be submitted to [include information explaining how to submit the document].

I have attached my resume and am happy to meet with you to further discuss. If you are unable to write this recommendation, I completely understand.

Thank you so much, looking forward to hearing from you,

[your name]
[your email address]

Remind the professor of your name and how they know you.

Attach your resume

Allow them to say no. Professors may not have the time or may not be comfortable writing a letter.

Need to talk through you options or additional support?

Meet with us