

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are often used for graduate school applications, and very rarely for jobs. (See our References handout when focused on job applications.) Letters of recommendation should come from an academic or professional contact, not a personal contact.

Be POLITE in asking for recommendation letters. Remember, this person is doing you a favor!

- Ask for your letters WELL in advance. (If there is a deadline, let the person know!)
- Ask that the letter be written on company letterhead.

Provide each person writing a letter with:

- Your current resume (including your contact information!)
- A list of specific areas of expertise, awards, and skills you would like focused on.
- Your career ambitions (if you wish the letter to be tailored to a specific industry or job focus)
- Provide the person with detailed instructions on how to submit the letter of recommendation:
- Is it being submitted electronically? Give the email address or website where it should be directed.
- Is a hard copy required? Provide the reference with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope, but also request an electronic copy to keep for your records.
- Once you have the letter, be sure to make multiple copies or save for later use and to add to your portfolio!
- In some cases, the school or employer will request that letter be confidential, meaning you will not be permitted to read the letter before it is submitted, and you will not receive a copy.
- Follow up to ensure the letter has been sent, and as always...send a thank you note!