

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

General Requests: When asking for a letter of recommendation from a professor, be sure to include the following information. The more focused and detailed the letter is, the more effective it will be.

Full name that you will use in your application and name you used while enrolled as a student.

(Expected) Date of graduation.

The names and dates of the class or classes you took with the professor and the grades you received.

The exact titles of any particularly memorable papers that you produced in the class, a copy of the last page with professor's comments is particularly helpful.

A brief resume that outlines any additional relevant information including work experience, extra curricular activities, internships, travel, awards, language abilities, or specialized skills.

A copy of your letter of application, project description or grant proposal, even if it is only a draft.

If you know you will be applying to a specific type of program or employment sector (law school, graduate programs in English, graduate programs in other fields, employment in the social service field, teaching, marketing, publishing, etc.), please indicate that as well.

If it has been over four years since you have had contact with the professor, include a photo. It is a good way to put a face to a name.

Deadline. This should be at least one month before your earliest deadline.

Letter Service: Using the letter service is strongly recommended. It saves you and your recommenders time and allows you a greater flexibility in using your letter of recommendation. The Letter Service on Campus offer students a range of services. They compile and submit letters of recommendation on your behalf. This is advisable if you plan on applying to several jobs or graduate programs simultaneously. With this program, you only need to ask faculty members to write one letter that will be kept on file and sent out to various institutions. They will give you the recommendation form to submit to your professor. You also have the option of updating your file at any time by asking for new letters to be submitted.

Customized Letters: If you want a customized letter for different types of graduate programs, jobs, or fellowship opportunities you also need to include:

A list of all the programs, their addresses and their deadlines. Include both the name of the University and the specific name of the program.

A brief description of the program or opportunity.

An addressed and stamped envelope for each program.

ALL of these materials should be submitted all at once in an organized and professional manner. While initial requests by email are okay, a follow-up hardcopy of all materials is preferable.

Follow-up:

Follow up with Letter Services about 10 days before your deadline to see if all your letters have arrived.

Email the professor as the deadline approaches.

Follow up with the institution receiving your letters.