

Letters of Recommendation (LOR) Request Guidelines

Step 1: Who do I ask?

- Think carefully about who can write you a positive LOR. If you are having trouble recalling someone who can write on your behalf look at your college transcript, and resume/CV to help you get started.
- Select faculty and supervisors who know you well, see you in a positive light and who have seen you overcome obstacles.
- Ask individuals who have a personal connection with the field they you are pursuing (Example: if you intend to pursue a master's degree in Biology, ask your Biology professor to write a letter for you.
- Don't ask individuals with whom you have had difficulties to write a letter for you.

Step 2: How should I ask?

- Remember that this individual is doing you a favor by writing a LOR, so be polite and organized when you ask.
- Remind the professor or employer who you are (indicate the class you took, the grade you earned, remind them of a paper you wrote, or how they inspired you in the field.
- Many students make the mistake of telling their faculty to write them a letter, instead of asking them if they can write a good LOR. If the professor cannot write a good letter because they don't know you that well, find another professor who does know you well.
- Ask them at an appropriate time. Office hours, or by appointment.

Step 3: What information do I provide?

- If they agree to write you a LOR come prepared with the information about the school. Give them all the information they will need to write a good LOR.
- The more information you can provide about the school/program and about yourself the better it will be for the writer of your letter
- Highlight your intended program. Note the program's mission or structure and career outlook.
- If the degree program has specific letter of recommendation submission guidelines, give the instructions to the writer of your letter.
- Make sure the recommender has the name, title and address for the program or person who will receive the letter.
- Give the letter writer enough time to write. One month AT LEAST!
- Ask the writer how they want to receive information from you (program information, person to whom the letter should be addressed, etc.). Email will work for most professors, but check.
- Postage for mailing

Provide Information About You

- Include a resume or CV that shows work or volunteer experience, honors, scholarships, your membership clubs or organizations, or programs.
- Give them a copy of your application *statement of purpose* so they know more about your goals and reasons for pursuing this degree program.
- Make it easy for the letter writer. They are doing you a favor.

Provide Information About Instructions & Deadlines

- Provide any instructions on how to submit the LOR to the letter writer.
- Provide any forms the degree program requires when submitting a LOR.
- Ask for confirmation when they send the LOR.

Follow-Up

- Follow up with the professor two weeks before the deadline and remind them if necessary.
- Send them a thank you note (email) afterward. They did you a big favor.