

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.

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.