

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

Timing: Two weeks is the minimum lead-time you should give me. I prefer a month. If you need the letter in less than two weeks, you need to clearly state why in an email. I usually only write letters with less than two weeks lead-time if you have conducted research with me or if I have written a letter for you in the past.

Materials I need to write your letter

Once you have all the material together, put everything in an envelope. Include a note about the material you provide. It should include your name, what the letter is for, how will I submit it (e.g., will someone be sending a link to an online letter, does the letter get mailed), and other important information.

- **Application materials:** These may include forms that I complete and envelopes for returning the forms to you or mailing them directly to the institution to which you are applying. Fill out everything on the form that you can complete. Where it asks for the name and address of the professor, you should write that in. If there is a place for you to sign the form, sign and date it. This is also true for online letters of recommendation. Fill in all the information that you can. If I will be mailing the letters, you should provide envelopes, address them, and attach the proper postage. Then, paper clip each envelope to the corresponding form.
- **Supporting materials:** Some supporting material should be included with every request for a letter:
 - A resume, even if it is not very long. If you are in your first year of college, you might include some high-school activities on this resume. Be sure to check the spelling and layout of the resume.
 - A transcript. This does not have to be an official transcript. If you are a freshman and do not have any grades yet, you might want to print the courses you are taking now and will be taking next semester.
 - Specifics on any course you have taken with me
 - Include other specialized supporting materials.
 - If you are a senior and applying to graduate school, you might include a draft of your personal statement and the abstract from your honors scholarly project.
 - Any relevant test scores (GRE for grad school, MCAT for med school...)
 - If you are applying for an internship and have written a paper in a course that is relevant to the internship, include a copy of the paper.
 - If you are applying for a scholarship or entrance to some program and that scholarship or program has a website, include the URL.
- **A Reminder**
Send me a reminder a week before the letter is due (or the first letter is due if I am sending the letter to multiple locations).