

*So You'd like a Letter of Recommendation?**

A letter of recommendation is needed when a university or employer requests it, or if you are establishing a placement file. Some organizations will require a letter, some require the professor fill out a form, some require both.

Your professors are asked to write many such letters during the year, especially during spring semester. Your thoughtfulness and careful preparation will help your professor to write the best letter possible. Remember, that **you must take responsibility and initiative** in the letter writing process. Although professors will vary in their preferences, here are some general guidelines to follow.

Asking the professor to write a letter of recommendation

1. Ask the professor in person. The relevant words are:
 - "ask" - no professor owes you a letter. You are requesting help from that person; make your statement in the form of a request; be willing to take "no" for an answer.
 - "in person" - do not shove the request under an office door or leave in a mailbox or grab the professor in the hallway after class. Ask the professor to write a letter when s/he will have time to discuss this with you, preferably during office hours.
2. Ask the professor if s/he would be able to write you a favorable letter of recommendation. If s/he cannot honestly write a favorable letter, you might want to find another professor who will.
3. Ask the professor if s/he would be able to write you a specific letter of recommendation. If the professor does not know you well enough to be specific with comments, the letter will not do you much good anyway. Ask someone else.

Your responsibility: What you should do for your professor

1. Allow ample time for the professor to write the letter. At least two weeks should be allowed.
2. Provide the professor with all the relevant forms and instructions.
 - If the organization provides a form for the letter, give the form to your professor.
 - If the organization provides general instructions for preparing letters, make a copy of the instructions for the professor. Highlight the instructions.
 - Make sure the professor has the correct address, person/organization to whom the letter should be addressed, and the deadline for submitting the letter.
3. Provide the professor with your resume and statement of your goals.
 - In writing, remind the professor of your major(s) and minor(s), the classes you have

