

RECOMMENDATION LETTER ETIQUETTE: A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Choosing professors to ask for recommendations

1. ALWAYS ask to use the professor's name BEFORE listing him or her as a reference on any application, whether a letter is specifically needed or not.

Select a professor who clearly knows you, is familiar with your work, and has shown regard for your abilities—preferably someone from whom you have taken at least one class and as recently as possible. The professor is under no obligation to write such letters and may refuse to do so if he or she is uncomfortable with your request.

3. it is generally best to have letters from professors in your major or minor field, or in an area directly related to your specific application. (For example, an English major applying for a research job in an accounting firm might ask for a letter from an economics or math professor.)

Approaching the professor

1. Request the letter as far in advance as possible, preferably **at least** a month, especially if you have several applications. Forms and requirements often differ among employers and institutions, and each letter must be recast accordingly. Professors do have many responsibilities, and may be writing letters for other students too.
2. Deliver any materials in person if at all possible so that the professor can renew your acquaintance, go over your requirements and discuss your plans. The best letters need to be specifically personalized to be persuasive.
3. These materials should include:
 - A. Any specific recommendation forms the employer or institution has supplied you. These should be neatly and completely filled out, including any required signatures.

Be SURE to sign the waiver of access part. Recs without waivers are considered less credible and many professors will not write letters if the waiver portion is not signed.

- B. A properly addressed, stamped envelope for each letter. (Envelopes already provided by the recipient should be stamped too.)
- C. A resume, if you have one.