

Please read these guidelines before asking me for a letter of recommendation for graduate school, law school or employment, as this will ease the process for both of us.

I am willing to discuss career or graduate opportunities with students, so please make an appointment during scheduled office hours. If I think you will be better served by speaking with a faculty member or career advisor with specific expertise in your potential field, I will also direct you to other available resources on campus. It is strongly recommended that you do this well in advance of when you have to make decisions about jobs or graduate school applications.

Consider whether I am the appropriate choice for writing a letter that matches your expectations and objectives. I can write stronger letters for students who have performed well in my classes. It is especially important that you performed well on exams, written assignments and papers and participated actively and cogently in class discussions. If you took more than one class with me or subsequently conducted an independent study, internship or capstone with me, it would also allow me to make more substantive comments, although this is not a necessary requirement.

When you do ask me to prepare a letter, please provide me with all of the following materials at least two weeks before you want me to electronically submit or mail the references. This should include:

1. A cover sheet with your name, telephone number, and email address. The cover sheet should also list the schools or positions to which you want me to send the letter, the addresses to which I should send the letters and the deadlines by which you want me to have mailed the letters.
2. Copies of work from courses taken with me.
3. Updated CV or résumé.
4. Most law and graduate schools require you to submit a personal statement about your goals for graduate school, your long-term career goals and your academic and/or professional interests. It would be helpful to see a copy of this in advance of my reference to provide feedback or ensure that the letter is not disconnected from your overall application due to different information and focus in the personal statement.
5. A reminder several days before the deadline via email to ensure that the material is submitted by the due date.
6. Usually you are asked to waive your right to the letter. I encourage you to do so, as it suggests to the reviewer that you have confidence in the letter of recommendation.
7. Note that the requests for letters often come during the same time frame for law school, graduate school or post-graduation employment, so regardless of deadline, I follow a first-come, first-served approach.
8. Finally, please inform me whether you have been accepted into a particular school or position. This is a professional courtesy. Since some positions require security clearance, please put me down as a reference after you have checked with me and provided me with an updated CV and the potential position you are seeking. This ensures that the process works smoothly and in your benefit.
9. Internship letters are shorter in nature, but please do provide your name, CV, list of places applying, due dates, websites for electronic submission of letters if applicable and again a follow-up courtesy e-mail if you are successful.