



Letters of Recommendation

What are they? A letter of recommendation is a document written by an individual who knows you well and can highlight your accomplishments, personal qualities, and ability to perform certain activities. Various parties such as professors, employers or colleagues can write letters of recommendation on your behalf. They can vouch for your skills, aptitude and overall work or academic performance. These letters are important to both hiring managers and college admissions offices as they review your application and decide if you are a good fit for their organization or school. A strong recommendation letter (or two) can be the difference between getting a “yes” or “no” decision from an employer or school that you have applied to.

Key Tips:

- Choose people who know you well. They should be able to confidently and honestly speak to your skills, aptitude, and accomplishments, and use specific examples to support their observations of and experiences with you.
- Find enthusiastic/energetic recommenders! A lukewarm endorsement will not help your candidacy for employment or schooling. Choose people who believe in you and can highlight your strengths.
- Select people who know you in different ways. Three people raving about your accounting skills is less effective than three individuals who can highlight three different strength areas, such as accounting, project management, and communication skills.
- Schedule a brief meeting with each desired recommender. This gives you an opportunity to gauge their commitment and excitement to support you. It is important to be cordial and respectful when asking for a recommendation. It takes time and effort on the recommenders’ part, and they have other responsibilities in addition to your “ask” of them.
- Make sure you give them ample time to write a recommendation, no less than one month before your application deadline.
- Provide your recommenders with helpful information, such as your resume, application, organizations or schools you are applying to, your contact information, and so forth. This will improve your chances of having them write a strong recommendation letter on your behalf.
- Send a thank-you email to each recommender after initially meeting with them. They took time out from their busy schedule to speak with you and agreed to endorse you for employment or educational purposes.
- Waive your right to view the recommendation(s). When you submit your application, waiving your right to view the letter someone wrote about you shows your professionalism and helps you gain the trust of application officers.