

Checklist for Helping Your Professor Write the Best Letter of Recommendation Possible

In order for a professor to write a high quality letter of recommendation for you, you will need to do some work; the more the professor knows about your goals and activities, the better letter they will be able to write. SO... if you want a thorough, well-written recommendation please use the following guidelines:

Give your professor the information requested below, collected together in a folder or large envelope.

If it is month(s) before the application deadlines, and you are not sure to which schools you really want to apply, you have not begun work on your essay, etc., wait to turn in all materials until you have firmed these things up more. As deadlines approach, don't hesitate to confirm with the professor that your letters are getting in on time.

Written materials that a professor will need in order to write a good letter:

- ___ 1. A list of all the schools to which you want a letter sent. For each school, list that school's deadline, and what type of program (e.g., "clinical") it is.
- ___ 2. For each school to which you're applying, make sure to give the professor:
 - ___ • any checklist or waiver letter that the school requires (many schools have checklists that they want the prof to fill out). Make sure you have completed the section on the top for the student to fill out.
 - ___ • an addressed, stamped envelope for each place to which the prof will be sending the recommendation. If a given school wants the professor to give the letter to you so that you can include it with the rest of your materials, make sure to write that school's name on the envelope (otherwise you might end up with several envelopes and not know which school gets which envelope).
- ___ 3. Organized, written information about yourself (e.g., past activities, accomplishments, future goals, etc.) will be very helpful. Documents which are likely to be most useful include:
 - ___ • A copy of your transcript.
 - ___ • A copy of your resume (if you have one), or a list of activities, relevant experiences.
 - ___ • A copy of your personal statement/ essay (talking about your strengths, experiences, goals) -- even if it's in a very rough form.
 - ___ • Any relevant test scores (GRE for grad school, MCAT for med school...)
- ___ 4. Finally, remind the professor of anything specific on which you are hoping they will comment (e.g., classes you may have taken from them, a particular personal quality, the great paper you wrote in their class, the leadership you demonstrated in that group project, etc.). It will help them if you bluntly point out your strengths. (Don't be modest here!)