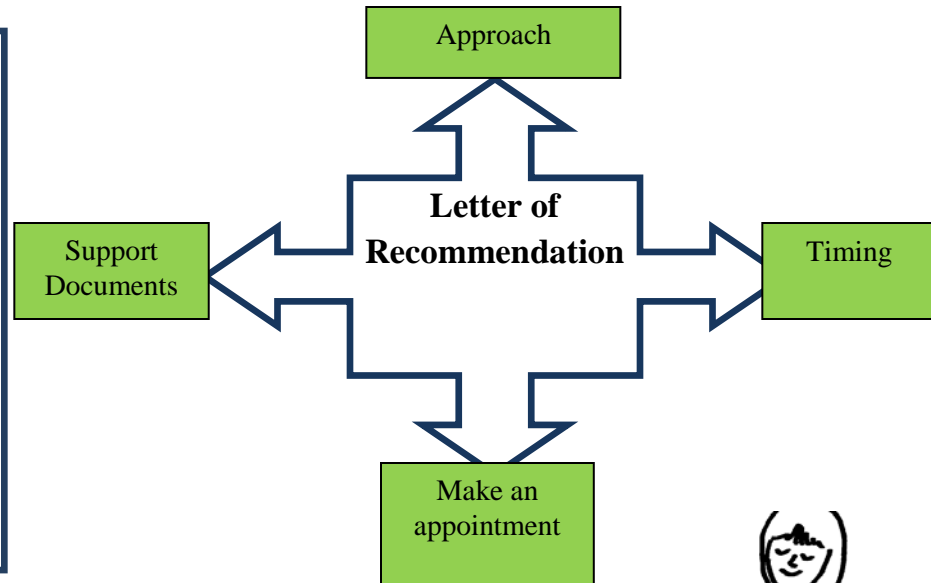


HOW TO ASK FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

The letter of recommendation by your professor will be a major component in your admission to a university, scholarship, job, or internship. The approach you use to get this letter will impact the way the professor writes your letter. Follow these guidelines for the best possible outcome.

Asking a professor to write you a letter of recommendation may feel intimidating. Approach the letter writer with care and be prepared ahead of time! Do not approach a professor who does not know or remember you. Do not email the professor to ask for the letter and do not wait until the last minute. Plan ahead for the anticipated time to ask for letters of recommendation by getting to know your professors, take as many classes with the same professors as possible, and always do your absolute best in class.



Approach

Before asking a professor to write you a letter of recommendation, ask yourself the following:

- Does this professor remember who I am?
- Have I ever spoken to this professor outside of class?
- Did this professor give me a grade of 'B' or higher in the course?
- Have I taken more than one course with this professor?

You want to choose a professor who can address specifics about your personal characteristics or accomplishments rather than generalities. The more you can answer "yes" to the questions above, the greater the likelihood you're making a wise choice.

Once you decide on a professor, ask in the following manner, "Do you feel that you are able to write a letter supporting my application to the university I am applying to?" Ask whether the faculty member feels that he or she can write a "helpful letter." You don't need any old letter – you need a good letter.



Timing & Appointment Setting

Don't ask before or after class, in the hall, or at any other random time, instead:

- Prepare to ask your professor for the letter at least 5-6 weeks before the date by which the recommendation must be received.
- Arrange an appointment, explaining that you wish to discuss your plans to apply to a university, job, or internship.
- Remember to tell the professor the application due date.
- To avoid appearing pushy, send a thank you note to the professors a week or two before the due date, that mentions the date in passing, as a reminder.

Be Prepared

Prepare. Be prepared to discuss the type of degree you seek, programs to which you are applying, how you arrived at your choices, academic goals, future aspirations, and why you believe the faculty member is a good candidate to write a letter on your behalf.

- Give the professor the following documents:
 - recommendation forms
 - transcripts
 - essays
 - samples of your work from other class
 - resume
- Print out information for each program so that faculty has the information they need to tailor your letter to the program.
- Be neat. Place all of your documentation in a folder and neatly label each item. Clip each recommendation form to supporting documentation, relevant admissions essays, and a stamped envelope. Use a sticky note to mark the deadline on each. Neatness counts because it gives faculty the impression that you are organized and it makes their job easier.
- Pre-fill information that you can on all forms so that the professor does not need to.
- Give the professor a pre-posted envelope to send your letter of recommendation directly to the university, internship or scholarship. Thank them whether or not they write the letter.
- Proofread the documents you will be submitting for spelling or grammatical errors and have someone else proofread it if you're not a strong writer.
- Ask for input on your choices and overall advice. If the faculty member offers to review your admissions essay, take him or her up on it – and use their advice to improve your essay.

