

Information for Students Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Obtaining a letter of recommendation is likely to be a necessary part of your career advancement and you should not view it as an imposition on your professors or mentors. However, you should choose the referees wisely, preferably mentors who know you well, and if a professor someone with whom you have taken at least one advanced course. Absolutely, the person should be willing to write you a good letter; you probably know whether this is the case but it may be a good idea to double-check. You should also do everything possible to ease the burden on the letter writer.

If you need reference letters for graduate school or law school or scholarships *from me*, please request them at least 2-3 weeks before the deadline. I ask that you give me the forms with your part completed, mailing labels to attach to Hunter envelopes (which I will supply), and stamps for the correct postage. Although many schools request that students gather sealed envelopes so as to include the letters of recommendation in your application, most professors refuse to follow this system. The graduate programs and fellowship organizations understand faculty concerns about giving letters to students and therefore allow them to be submitted separately. Direct mailing to the institution is the *only* method I use for regular post. If you have the option to use an electronic form this is most desirable and efficient.

To enable me to write the best possible letter for you please supply me with the following:

- A list of all courses (noting the semester dates) you took with me and grades received
- A brief description of the papers you wrote for these courses (in some cases I will ask for a copy of those papers; for major papers I keep my own notes)
- A copy (unofficial is acceptable) of your Hunter transcript and your major GPA
- A brief statement of your career objectives and why you want to go to this school or win the scholarship, etc. One or two paragraphs will suffice. I do not need to read your application statement.
- Additional pertinent information which you think I should know before I write the letter or perhaps should be communicated in the reference to the target audience.
- If you are applying for a major national scholarship (e.g. the Rhodes, Marshall, etc.), you should prepare the preliminary drafts of your application with the support of the college staff organized to help students in such endeavors. However, initial consultation about the statement and the final draft should be reviewed by a professor in your field. If you think I am an appropriate adviser, please consult me and allow a reasonable time for me to read and comment on the essay and for you to make revisions.