

HOW TO REQUEST REFERENCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

A Guide for Students & Other Writers

You want to make the process as easy and clear for the person giving the recommendation as possible.

1. Make your initial request in any convenient way – telephone, e-mail, etc. – and then tell the recommender that you will supply all the necessary information for the recommendation within a specific time frame.
2. Provide a self-addressed-stamped envelope for each place to receive the recommendation.
3. If there is a form involved, be sure to fill in all the spaces you can before giving it to the recommender – that means:
 - a) fill in the recommender's name, title, etc., if you know that information.
 - b) fill in all the blanks that refer to you, of course.
4. Give the recommender:
 - a) the official title of the program, job, or award being applied for;
 - b) the personal title, or committee title, and (if possible) name of person who is to receiveand read the recommendation;
 - c) a deadline for mailing the recommendation.
 - d) basic and updated background information about yourself, relevant to the application, including goals if important. Please keep this to one paragraph or one page, at most, and spend some time making these statements concise, correct, and well composed.
5. If you have not worked with the recommender for a few months or years, tell the recommender exactly when that was – for example, cite the dates and titles of courses you took with that professor.
6. Give the recommender a sample of your prose or poetry relevant to the application. Keep this sample to six to 10 pages. Do not expect most recommenders to read your new novel or three short stories before making the recommendation, although some might.
8. If more than one month has passed since you took a course from the recommender, remind him or her what course(s) you took, when, and what grade you received.

10. Keep all of this material brief, clear, and *well-organized*.