

Asking for Letters of Recommendation

“How important is a letter of recommendation?”

A letter of recommendation is a very important part of many scholarship applications. It should complement, confirm, and add to the information you present in your application. In very competitive programs, letters of recommendation will sometimes be used to differentiate between top applicants. While it is tempting to ask people who are well known or have high ranking positions to write a letter for you, it is nearly always better to ask someone who knows you well!

Steps to Asking for a Letter:

1 Choose Recommenders

- ~ Review “selection criteria” and “advice to recommenders” from scholarship webpage
- ~ Critically consider who you might ask, and what they might have to say about you

2 Make the Ask

- ~ Make your request at least 4 weeks before the deadline
- ~ Ensure that you fully describe the program to the recommender, and acknowledge their consideration and time

3 Follow Through

- ~ 3-4 weeks (or more) before the deadline, make sure to:
 1. Thank your recommender
 2. Provide them with all relevant material and criteria for program
 3. Offer to meet and discuss content of the letter

4 Follow Up

- ~ If needed, send a reminder 1 week - and 24 hours - before the deadline
- ~ Send a thank you to your recommender and keep them updated about your application, regardless of outcome