

Letter of Recommendation Guidelines for Students

Are you applying to a credential program and need letters of recommendation? Please read and follow the guidelines below to ensure your letter writer is set up for success!

1. Asking Timeline

- Ideal time: 1 month+ prior to your deadline.
- Absolute minimum time: 2 weeks in advance of the deadline.
 - Asking less than 2 weeks to your deadline: be prepared that you may get a 'No' response.
- If possible, tell the recommender *how* they will be asked to complete the letter for each program/college (sometimes it's an actual letter, sometimes a recommendation form, etc. – you can often find this out by looking at the program's application guidelines online)

***The more time you can give your recommender in advance, the better! The more information you can give your recommender about the recommendation, the better!**

2. How to Ask

Ask the recommender **IN PERSON** if possible, although a clearly labeled email (Subject: reference letter for Calvin Teacher's teaching credential applications) may be needed if you don't see the recommender regularly. If you are not confident of the recommender's positive support for the letter, ask, "Do you think you can write me a strong (or positive) letter of recommendation for?"

DO NOT enter the name of a recommender into an online application system until after they have agreed to provide a reference for you.

DO offer to provide the recommender with information about the process (how and when is the recommendation needed, what format is expected) and documents (your resume, transcript, draft essays, information about the programs to which you are applying) to make the job easier. If they will be receiving an email to a link for your recommendation from the program to which you are applying...make sure you give your recommender a heads up it is coming.

DO make it clear you recognize the recommender will be going out of his or her way to help you, and express gratitude for the time and support.

3. What to Provide

Written information you provide to the recommender should include:

- A cover sheet that will go with your resume/activity list that gives information such as:
 - Programs to which you are applying
 - If it is a program...what is the program? What is it about? Why are you interested in applying for this program?
 - Deadline for the letter of recommendation! (Super Important!)
- An up-to-date resume or a list of activities and accomplishments.
- Any specific hopes you have about what the recommender will address in the letter they write ("I thought you might be able to include your observations about").

4. Send the recommender a **friendly** reminder 1-2 weeks before the recommendation is due.

...continue to next page for more important guidelines →

After the Letter has been Written

***This part is super important! DO NOT SKIP!**

5. Within ONE WEEK of the recommendation deadline: Write a **THANK YOU note** to your recommender!
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Cal Teach Suggestions for Letters of Recommendation:

When choosing recommenders for credential programs, select them so that among the group, the following topics will be addressed:

1. Your **content knowledge** (professor in your major is top choice for this! A TA is not a good choice.)
2. Your **work with students, especially in a classroom setting** (Cal Teach Host Teachers are great options!)
3. Your **writing and general academic performance** (Cal Teach instructors, Education Department faculty may be good choices.)