

Letters of Recommendation

In a Letter of Recommendation, a faculty/advisor/supervisor/mentor typically writes a letter to an organization outlining your strengths/abilities/qualifications for a certain job or program. A letter of recommendation is generally requested by the candidate for a particular career goal, academic application, or job opportunity.

Why do I need them?

Letters of Recommendation are often times required by the school/company that is looking to bring you on board. This letter provides insight into how you act as a professional from the perspective of someone who has worked closely with you during your college career.

Who do I ask?

- Previous/current managers and/or supervisors
- Academic advisors and/or mentors
- College Professors and/or TAs
- High school teachers/counselors are acceptable if you've only completed 2 semesters at UIC

TIP: Finding the right person depends on the program you are applying to. It is important that you have built a positive relationship with the person you are requesting a letter from (make sure is someone who knows you beyond 1 interaction).

Ask yourself:

Who can speak specifically to how I've demonstrated these strengths?

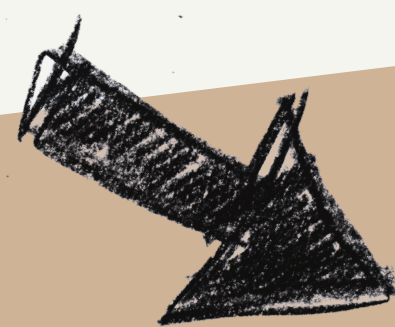
Consider your skills and strengths (leadership, communication, advocacy, clinical work, relator, professionalism, discipline, achiever, analytical) that will make you a good candidate for the position.

Not sure you have anyone to ask? It's time to start developing relationships! Go to office hours early in the semester, participate in discussions, turn your video on, attend events, join clubs, and be sure to stay connected by sending updates to previous faculty/supervisors/advisors who you may eventually want to ask!



When do I ask?

- Give enough time in advance. Typically, a month before the deadline is what is recommended.
- Be mindful that towards the end of the semester, professors may be burdened by grading papers and exams as well as writing recommendations for many other students.
- Even if you are thinking about asking someone for a letter, let them know early on in the semester about your plans.



TIP: Ask the company, college, or program who is requiring the letter how to get the letter to them. Some companies have moved to online systems where letters have to be uploaded or written directly in their portal. More is not always better. Typically, 2-3 letters are plenty.

Need help drafting an email?

Use the email templates below!

TIP: Don't take it personally if they say no. Be appreciative no matter what as to not burn bridges!

How do I ask?

- Try to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the potential recommender. Virtual meetings are always an option. If that's not possible, an email exchange or phone call works well too.
- Explain clearly and succinctly what you are asking them to do such as to write a letter of recommendation for a specific job, graduate program, internship, etc.
- If you don't know the professor or advisor well, make your connection clear in the email. For instance, you can say, "I enjoyed your class on XYZ, which I attended in fall 2019." (Remind your professors of your grade and how you've previously interacted with them. Consider sending an assignment from the class that they can reference in the letter.)
- Explain why you are choosing them in particular to write the letter.

What's next?

Remember to say **"Thank You"** (either handwritten or via email) to express gratitude for writing the letter

Follow-up asking for a time to speak about the request

Be sure to provide additional information about the process to the recommender, such as if they will need to submit the letter on a secure portal, or perhaps answer a series of questions instead of a formal letter and certainly don't forget to include a deadline and follow-up about 1 week before the deadline to ensure submission.

Let your recommender/reference know the outcome. If accepted, send another thank you and continue to keep them updated. If not accepted, you may want to schedule another conversation to discuss next steps. Keep in mind, you may want to ask them for a future letter.

EMAIL TEMPLATE #1

- Subject Line: Joe Smith: Recommendation Request
- Consider attaching your resume, cover letter, personal statement, or a list of your notable accomplishments. For help with this, start with the Career Readiness Assessment found [HERE](#).

Dear Professor Sparky,

I hope you're well. I am reaching out to you today because I am applying to the College of Nursing at UIC and I wanted to request a letter of recommendation from you. I am hoping you would be willing to write a letter for me because I found your Chemistry class from last semester to be extremely valuable for me and my studies towards Nursing. I have greatly benefited from the course and can truly see the connection of how I can apply what I learned in your class to the Nursing profession. I am hoping that you feel as though you know me well enough to consider my request.

My passion for the healthcare field started when I was in high school when I took Anatomy and Physiology and learned about how amazing the human body is. Soon after that, I decided to enroll in the Certified Nurse Assistant summer program at my local community college to learn how to help patients with direct health care needs. Ever since then, I knew I had to continue my education in the field of Nursing. Upon the start of my college career at UIC, I started to take the pre-requisites for College of Nursing, one of which was your chemistry class. I can definitely say I learned of the importance of chemistry in the Nursing field from what I learned in your class. I now understand how your course has built a strong foundation for pharmacology in the future.

I've attached my resume and a little more information about what I've been doing in the last three years. Please let me know if you feel that you could give a positive recommendation. And if so, what other information would be helpful in writing your letter. If you are willing to write one, you will receive an email directly from the College of Nursing with a link that will direct you to the page where to submit the letter of recommendation. I would also be happy to discuss this further in person. The letter of recommendation is due January 14th. Thank you so much for the valuable time you've spent with me in your classroom and for your consideration on this request.

**Best,
Student**

EMAIL TEMPLATE #2

Dear Professor Sparky,

I wanted to say thank you for taking the time to write a recommendation letter to support my application to the College of Nursing. Soon I will be informed whether or not I get an interview, which is very exciting! I appreciate the time and effort you have spent and will keep you updated regarding the admission process.

**Sincerely,
Student**

References

A list of References is a document that a candidate creates which provides the contact information and title of the recommender. Those serving as a reference should be made aware that they are likely to be contacted by an organization to discuss your qualifications for a particular position.

Why do I need them?

Employers will often ask for references during the interview process to confirm their hiring decisions, especially when trying to decide between two qualified candidates. They will want to confirm previous employment and learn about your strengths/challenges in previous roles. It is important to carefully select relevant professionals (job supervisors, professors, academic advisors, student group advisors) who can attest to your performance and work ethic.

You should aim to have 3 professional references.

After confirming your 3 references, include their contact information on a formatted document similar to the sample below. This document should be taken with you during an interview or have a PDF handy to send to an employer upon request.

TIP: Always contact your reference first to ask permission to use them as your reference. This gives you the opportunity to tell them what you are pursuing and why. Be sure to provide an updated copy of your resume and express gratitude.

Example of how to ask:

As my undergraduate advisor and mentor, I believe that a reference from you would provide (name of employer) with the information needed to recommend me as a (insert title of position). You've truly helped me over the last three years identify my interests and strengths and have worked closely with me as I've held several internship/research/leaderships positions and can speak to my academic excellence.

More Sample Emails Below!

EMAIL TEMPLATE #1

- Subject Line: Joe Smith: Reference Request
- Consider attaching your resume, cover letter, personal statement, or a list of your notable accomplishments. For help with this, start with the Career Readiness Assessment found [HERE](#).

Dear Sparky,

I hope you're doing well. I am reaching out to you today because I am applying to the _____ position at _____ and, I wanted to ask if you'd be willing to serve as a reference for me? During our time together at _____, I learned a lot about teamwork and _____, and hope you can attest to my skills, strengths, and qualifications for this role.

In this role, I will be _____, and plan to utilize the _____ experience I gained with you working on the _____ project to advance _____.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if there is any information I can offer regarding my experience to assist you in giving me a reference. I have attached an updated resume. Don't hesitate to ask for any other materials you think would be helpful. I can be reached at _____.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

**Best,
Student**

EMAIL TEMPLATE #2

Dear Professor Sparky,

I wanted to say thank you for taking the time to serve as a reference for the _____ position. While I was not chosen for this specific opportunity, I am continuing to apply for similar roles and hope you will be open to continuing to serve as a reference for future positions. I appreciate the time and effort you have spent and will keep you updated regarding my job search.

**Sincerely,
Student**

Jane Doe

601 S. Morgan St. Chicago, IL 60607 · 312-413-2530 · lasinternship@uic.edu

Professional References

Lauren Gallagher, MEd, LCPC

Supervisor

Assistant Director of Career Development and Internships

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601 S. Morgan St.

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(312) 413-2530

laureng4@uic.edu

Name

Relationship

Title/Position

Company

Company Address

Phone Number

E-mail

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