

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

How To:

Letters of Recommendation for Graduate School

Whom to Ask and How:

- Ask professors who know you personally and whose classes you have done well in.
- Set up a meeting to discuss your interest in graduate work. Introduce yourself; remind them of their relationship with you (in class, on a project, volunteer work, ECT.). Talk to them about the schools you are interested in and ask them to recommend schools.
- After speaking with them and displaying your commitment to the application process, ask your professor if they would feel comfortable writing you a supportive letter of recommendation.

Checklist: Necessary Provisions

Make the process as easy as possible for your professor.

Be sure to provide:

- Enough time before the deadline (generally 8 weeks)
- Your contact information
- Unofficial transcript
- Samples of your work, projects and writing samples
- Your resume
- Any honors, activities, formal research papers written, or anything else that demonstrates your strengths
- Deadlines for school applications
- Provide the full name, title, and complete mailing address of the person to whom a letter should be written
- Self-addressed, stamped envelopes

Some Don'ts to Remember:

- Don't ask professors who don't know you, public officials, or people with whom you do not have a professional relationship (i.e. your doctor, religious leader, or friends).
- Do not read the letter. Recipients place more credence on letters which are not read by students. If you are in doubt about the kind of recommendation you are getting, ask!