

# Requesting Letters of Recommendation

## Purpose

This document is designed to guide students through the process of selecting the right recommenders and preparing them to write strong and effective letters of recommendation.

## Steps to Obtain a Strong Letter of Recommendation

### 1. Determine Who to Ask

- Key Considerations:
  - Choose someone who knows you well and can speak positively about your abilities, achievements, and character.
  - Select a recommender familiar with the skills and experiences pertinent to the scholarship/opportunity.
  - A letter from someone respected in their field can carry additional weight, but *it's more important that they know you well.*
  - Prioritize individuals who have worked with you recently.

### 2. Prepare Your Recommender

- Key Items to Provide:
  - Details about the opportunity/scholarship, including key criteria and deadlines.
  - Your resume or CV
  - A personal statement or goals, including your motivation for applying and how the opportunity aligns with your aspirations.
  - If appropriate, suggest areas of focus for the letter (e.g., leadership skills, teamwork, research abilities, relevant academic or extracurricular work you completed under their supervision).

Example Email to Recommender:

*"Dear [Recommender's Name],*

*I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to write me a letter of recommendation for [specific scholarship/opportunity]. I greatly valued [specific interaction, e.g., your mentorship during my internship] and feel you could provide a strong perspective on my [specific skill or attribute].*

*The deadline for the letter is [date], and it should be sent to [submission details]. I've attached my resume and a brief overview of the opportunity for your reference. Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide.*

*Thank you so much for your time and support. I deeply appreciate your consideration.*

*Best regards,  
[Your Name]"*

### 3. Timing

- When to Ask: Contact recommenders at least 3-4 weeks before the deadline. If possible, ask even earlier to give your letter writer ample time.
  - Keep in mind that recommenders often write multiple letters around the same time, so giving them as much time as possible ensures they can provide a thoughtful and well-crafted letter for you.
- Follow-Up: Send a polite reminder one week before the deadline if necessary.

### 4. After the Letter is Submitted

- Thank Your Recommender: Send a note or email thanking your letter writer for their time and effort.
- Monitor Application Status: Ensure all references are submitted online before the deadline.
  - You can track the status of your application, including whether references have been uploaded, by visiting [https://aabp.org/students/grant\\_portal/](https://aabp.org/students/grant_portal/).
- Keep Your Recommender Updated: Share the outcome of your application and acknowledge their contribution to your success.

### Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Procrastination: Asking for a recommendation at the last minute may result in a rushed or less thoughtful letter.
2. Providing Insufficient Information: Recommenders need context to write a strong and personalized letter.
3. Choosing the Wrong Person: A generic or lukewarm letter can hurt your application.
4. Failing to Follow Up: Not reminding your recommender of deadlines can lead to missed opportunities.
5. Lack of Gratitude: Forgetting to thank your recommender can damage your relationship.