



Requesting a Recommendation Letter

Overview

Requesting a recommendation letter from a college professor requires planning, professionalism, and enough lead time for the professor to write a strong letter. Key steps include understanding the letter requirements, preparing supporting materials, making a respectful request, and following up appropriately before the deadline. A well-organized request makes it easier for a professor to write a detailed and persuasive letter on your behalf.

1 Preparation and Understanding

Begin by thoroughly understanding the requirements and context of the recommendation letter.

- (1) Identify the purpose and requirements of the recommendation letter, including specifics regarding what the letter should address, who will receive it, and deadlines.
- (2) Research and list potential professors who are familiar with your work and can provide a strong reference, considering their expertise and relationship with you.
- (3) Ask at least three to four weeks before the deadline whenever possible. Strong letters usually require time.
- (4) Is there a specific format required for the recommendation letter, such as an online form?
- (5) Are you required to waive your right to view the letter? Be aware that admission officers typically value letters more highly when the applicant has waived their right to view them, as letters without a waiver tend to be uniformly positive.

2 Statement and Outline

Draft a personal statement and outline key points to be emphasized in the recommendation letter.

- (6) Prepare a concise personal statement highlighting your achievements, goals, and why you are applying for the opportunity, providing context for your request.
- (7) List key attributes, experiences, or achievements that you would like the letter to emphasize, ensuring relevance to the opportunity for which you are applying.
- (8) Ensure this outline aligns with your personal statement and share it with your chosen professor to guide them in writing the letter.
- (9) Include your resume, unofficial transcript, and a short list of courses you took with that professor if those materials are relevant.

3 Email Request

Compose and send a formal email requesting the recommendation letter.

- (10) Start with a clear subject line, e.g., "Request for a Recommendation Letter".
- (11) Clearly state the request, including the program name, submission method, and exact deadline for the letter submission.
- (12) Attach your personal statement or an outline of your accomplishments/strengths to your e-mail.

Below is an example of an e-mail requesting a recommendation letter. Adjust the language to align with your letter requirements.



Sample e-mail

Subject: Request for a Recommendation Letter

Dear Professor [Last Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to write a recommendation letter for me. I have thoroughly enjoyed your course [Course Name] and believe you could provide valuable insights into my capabilities and dedication to the field.

I am applying to [Program/University Name], and I believe your perspective on my work in [Course Name] would help the committee understand my preparation and goals. I have attached my resume, personal statement, and a brief summary of my academic interests for your reference. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

The deadline for submission is [Date]. Thank you very much for considering my request. I greatly appreciate your support.

Best regards,

4 Follow-up and Coordination

Monitor the progress and maintain communication.






- (13) Send a polite follow-up email about one week before the deadline to check whether the professor needs any additional information or reminders about the submission process.
- (14) Coordinate through reminders or updates, offering help for online submission portals, if relevant.
- (15) Confirm receipt with the receiving office to ensure the professor's efforts reach the intended destination.

5 Thank You Note

Conclude with a thank you note to express appreciation.

- (16) Once the letter has been submitted, promptly send a heartfelt thank you email to express your gratitude for their support and effort.
- (17) Briefly update the professor on your application progress and any future outcomes to reiterate your appreciation.
- (18) Consider a handwritten note or a small token of appreciation for their continuous guidance and recommendation.

Links

- Japanese Option webpage: <https://t-nagano.com/projects/JapaneseProgram/> 
- Japanese Option Blog: <https://chrysanthemum.commonscs.cuny.edu> 
- Japanese Option Discord: Contact tnagano@lagcc.cuny.edu for the invitation link 
- Tomonori Nagano, Faculty Advisor of the Japanese Option at LaGuardia
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