

HOW TO GET AN A+ LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Who to ask Make sure the person you are asking **knows you**. If you are planning to ask one of your instructors, go to office hours early in the semester and build a relationship. If it is one of your college major instructors, break the ice by asking the instructor their educational and career background and how they chose their major. If someone has a passion for their discipline and field, they will enjoy talking about it with you. Share your educational and career plans and ask for their advice on transfer institutions, recommended courses, internships or volunteer opportunities. If you ask for a recommendation from an instructor in a class in which you earned a “C,” you will get a “C” letter of recommendation.

How to ask If possible, you should always ask in person. If that is not possible, compose a letter or email and attach all of the necessary information (see *What to Provide* below)

When to ask You should request a letter of recommendation at least a month prior to your deadline. Always remember--you are asking someone to use their precious time to benefit you--time that could have been spent on their priorities. The more time you provided the writer, the better the letter and the better chance you will be able to ask for help from this person in the future.

What to provide Meeting in person is always preferred but don't expect that person to remember all of the details you share with them. Provide written information, including:

- A formal letter of request, including a deadline for securing the letter.
- A copy of the scholarship application—if the application is very lengthy, provide just the information pertinent to requirements for the letter of recommendation.
- If the letter of recommendation must be mailed -- **ALWAYS provide an addressed, stamped envelope**.
- A copy of your academic resume, including contact information in case the person writing your letter needs clarification or has questions.
- An uncertified copy of your college transcripts.

Showing gratitude Feeling gratitude for someone's kindness is important but expressing your gratitude is even more important:

- Send a personal note of thanks to the letter writer promising to let them know the outcome of their effort on your behalf.
- Make a follow-up phone call, an email or a written note when you know the outcome.
- Keep a copy of the letter if you plan to ask the letter writer for another letter in the future. You will follow all of the previous steps and, this time, include a copy of this letter of recommendation to make the task easier for the letter writer and to refresh their memory of you.