

How to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation

1. **Ask your instructor nicely and politely.** You do not have to ask the instructor in person, but do not ask the instructor in a quickly jotted, informal email in all lower case!
2. **Early, early, early.** It takes time and care to write a good letter of recommendation and instructors are busy. Ask for the letter well in advance of the due date. How far in advance? The earlier the better—at least a month before the due date to be safe. Never ask for a letter with fewer than two weeks until the deadline. Don't forget to tell the professor the due date of application!
3. **Give the instructor talking points.** Just because you did well in the instructor's class doesn't mean that the instructor *knows* you. This is very important: the more information you give the professor, the better the letter your professor can write! If you inform your professor that you won a college-wide academic award, then that information will likely end up in your letter. You may want to provide some or all of the following...
 - Information about your experiences with the letter-writer (e.g., courses taken, class project topics, etc.)
 - Your resume or curriculum vitae
 - Information about the program to which you're applying
 - Honor societies to which you belong
 - Anything that makes you unique
 - Awards that you have won
 - Relevant work experience or internships
 - Service activities such as volunteer work
 - Copies of admissions essays
 - Anything you want included in the letter
4. **Deadlines.** Tell the letter-writer the application deadline. If you are applying to multiple scholarships or programs, give all deadlines.
5. **Beware of spam filters.** The online application will send an automated email requesting the letter of recommendation including the link that they will need to upload the letter to your application. It is not uncommon for the email messages from AwardSpring to get banished to the "junk" mailbox by spam filters. Make sure your instructor received the email from the RCC.
6. **Follow up.** “The absent minded professor” is more than just a cliché. Your instructor may forget to write your letter. Don't be afraid to check in periodically with your instructor to see if the recommendation has been sent. Just be careful not to be a nag.
7. **Thank your instructor!** Write a thank-you note to your letter-writer (at least an email thank-you note)!
8. **Did you get it?** Let your instructor know if you get a scholarship. They want to know!