

Letter of Recommendation guidelines

I am happy to write letters of recommendation for students who have excelled in my class and/or with whom I have worked (on a thesis or other project). Since most institutions ask professors to rank students against all others they have taught, a student with a grade of B+ or lower in my class will usually be better served by looking elsewhere for a recommendation. Remember: the more information you give me the stronger, more specific, and more tailored your letter.

Please note: I usually cannot write a letter of recommendation with less than 3 weeks notice. I only write letters for students who have waived their right of access. This is because admissions committees generally disregard non-confidential letters.

Here is what I need:

- 1. A list of the letter(s) I need to write, along with their deadlines.** Please provide instructions for how I should submit the letters. If they are to be uploaded or emailed, provide the links and contact information. If they are to be mailed, give me stamped, addressed envelopes. In all cases, be sure you have filled out the student portion of the form entirely, and completed all necessary forms. If you are applying to many schools, it would help if you gave me a cover letter listing deadlines and detailing any special instructions for how individual schools want to receive their letters.
- 2. Tell me anything special or distinctive about each application you are completing.** Let me know your reasons for your choice of programs, or what about each program interests you or is unusually well suited to your plans. This information will make the letter more specific and hence more effective. Provide as much information as possible, including links to program web pages. What are your short / long term goals, and how does this program fit into that plan?
 - 1. For study abroad:** explain why you have chosen this particular program, what you seek to learn from it, and how it connects to your plan of study, intellectual (or other) goals, and/or future plans.
 - 2. For graduate school:** include a description of the program and school and the specific degree you seek. Why have you chosen these programs? Who are the faculty at each school with whom you hope to work? What do you hope to accomplish? What are your research goals? Please also include at least a draft of your research statement.
 - 3. For a job:** give details about the position and responsibility. What is exciting about this career opportunity? How does it connect to your (short and/or long-term) goals or future plans? What do you hope to accomplish? Why are you a good fit for the job? What specific skills, training, or background would you bring to the table?
- 3. A current CV or resume.** Let me know your full name as it will appear on the application, as well as your preferred pronoun.
- 4. How do we know each other?** Please be specific: what courses did you take with me (include title and semester)? What was your grade in the class? Describe the projects you worked on for me and what you took away from them. Please provide copies of your papers with my markings on them. It is virtually impossible to write a good letter of recommendation without copies of your graded papers.
- 5. What is your general course / major program at Wesleyan?** How does whatever you are applying for connect to your major or other work at Wesleyan?
- 6. If it is not already clear, please explain how your coursework or major program connects to the program to which you are applying, and/or to your short / long term plans.** Make sure I know why you have chosen this particular program, what you seek to learn from it, and how it connects to your plan of study, intellectual (or other) goals, or future plans.
- 7. Please feel free to provide any** other supporting material you feel would be helpful to me.