

Information to Share with your Recommender/Reference

When requesting letters of recommendation from faculty, advisors, supervisors, or other professional sources it is best to be prepared. The more prepared and organized you are in providing your recommender with information about what you have been doing and hope to do, the more detailed and convincing will be their letter. Please use the following list as a guideline of what to prepare to share with your recommender. Also, when possible it is courteous to give your recommender no less than two or three weeks notice of your request.

(Note: when applying for jobs you will typically be asked to provide a list of references. It would be in your best interest to ask your references for permission to list their names and contact information in your job application ahead of time AND to provide them with the suggested information that follows. The more informed your references or recommenders are with what you are doing and hope to do the more articulate and persuasive they can be in supporting you.)

1. Information about the funding agency/graduate program/job position
 - a. Name of agency, graduate program (History, Political Science, American Studies, etc.) & University, or supervisor
 - b. Address where letter should be mailed (please include stamped and addressed envelope or website where it should be posted)
 - c. Information about selection criteria
2. Information about your application for funding, graduate study, or job position
 - a. Funding: provide synopsis and/or proposal for study & personal statement
 - b. Graduate study:
 - identify area of study and your particular interests/goals
 - identify names of faculty with whom you plan to study (those with expertise in the area of study you've identified)
 - future plans (teaching, research, etc.)
 - a copy of your statement of purpose, if available, and personal statement
 - a copy of your writing sample
 - c. Job position: job title, work you plan to do
3. Curriculum vitae (for funding and graduate study) or resume (for job)
4. "Unofficial" copy of transcripts
5. For funding or graduate study applications compile a list of courses you've completed that are related to your application. Be sure to identify courses you've taken with your recommender in your list and include all pertinent information. Don't forget to include semester and year and ALL the information below; this information allows your recommender to write more specifically about the scholarly work you have completed.
 - a. title of course;
 - b. date (semester and year);
 - c. instructor's name;
 - d. grade;
 - e. title of paper or project completed for course
6. Language facility
7. Travel abroad (for any reason)
8. Community service

9. Leadership positions/roles; including student government, greek life, other

11. Any other information that would help your recommender write a strong letter in your behalf

12. If applying for graduate study, be sure to include a paragraph about your plan of study & WHY you are interested in this area of study: Look at webpages for graduate programs to get an idea of the kinds of programs offered. It is also VERY helpful if you have identified several faculty you would want to work with in a graduate program (look on the webpages for graduate programs and then look up faculty to review their specialties; take the time read an article—or a book—by these faculty). Graduate students are usually paired with a particular faculty advisor, so it helps to know who you want to work with and that depends on the area of study you have chosen.