



## **Why Are Letters Of Recommendation (LOR) Important?**

Your letters of recommendation can reveal a number of things about you to the admissions office, including your success at work, leadership skills, academic strengths, areas of interest, personal qualities, emotional intelligence and community service. They offer insights that indicate who you are, your potential and whether you are a right fit for the department at the school that is reading them. They also provide an external point of view and validation for the content you have included in your application.

### **How Many Do I Need**

- In general, most Universities ask for two letters of recommendation, however there are a few that ask for either 1 or 3. Make sure that you check the college website to determine exactly how many are required.

### **Whom Should I Ask?**

- The program of study will determine whom you should ask for your letter of recommendation. For example if you are applying for a Masters degree that does not require any professional experience, then the program may stipulate your LOR's all come from academic sources. If you are applying to a program that strongly advocates some work experience prior to application, then they make ask for only professional LORs. Other programs may leave it to your discretion or ask for some combination of both.
- In general, for professional letters of recommendation they should come from your primary supervisor at your current and/or previous place of work.
- For academic references, you should ask an Undergraduate teacher whom you impressed in class with your commitment, effort, or interest in a subject. Or someone you have worked with on academic projects or thesis. If possible, it's a good idea to ask a teacher in the field of study you are pursuing at the postgraduate level.
- Be sure to select a recommender with whom you have a strong history. They should know you very well, and you should be confident that they would be able to write about you both positively and honestly.
- They should be able to comment on your relevant skill sets for example, communication skills, teamwork, analytical abilities, research abilities and contribution to the institution. Based on what is important or a priority for your degree and college.





- Do not force-fit a famous alumnus from School or the CEO of a large corporation whom you once met on a flight. The recommender needs to give the admissions board compelling insight into who you are, and how you think and work. So it makes more sense to get it from someone less senior than a CEO but who knows you well (unless you have been directly working for your CEO for a longer period of time).
- You should not ask your family or friends to complete your letter.

Remember, it is pertinent that you review the application instructions thoroughly to determine the specific requirements.

**When giving recommenders talking points, please keep the following in mind:**

- Information on how they know you and how long they have known you for in order to establish intimate familiarity.
- An evaluation of your strengths, skills and accomplishments, primarily by using strong examples to demonstrate how you displayed these qualities. The main traits that admissions committees want to see, but in the context of genuine, compelling examples include: levels of responsibility and maturity, tenacity, leadership, strength of character, tangible contributions and the ability to go above and beyond.
- Ask them to reinforce the information to legitimize the key themes you have been talking about throughout the application process.
- Make sure they provide examples and specifics to support their points. Instead of making a string of statements, and using a host of adjectives, they should ideally back up a singular statement with an example of how, through your work and/or their interactions with you, you have demonstrated the highlighted trait. By showing rather than telling, your recommendation will be far more insightful and have greater impact.
- A clear summary and compelling reasons for why you they are recommending you to the school as well the degree.

To conclude, your letter of recommendations should offer insights into who you are using specific examples for statements made and indicate whether you are the right fit for the course and college that is reading them.

