

## Tips on Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Writing letters of recommendation is an important activity for professors. As a student seeking a strong letter of recommendation (for grad school applications, medical school, a job, etc.), it is in your best interest to make your letter writer's job as easy as possible by providing sufficient and timely information. This document will clarify what is required for most professors to write the best possible letter of recommendation (LOR) for you.

**TIMING:** You should request a letter of recommendation (LOR) ***at least one month in advance*** of your earliest deadline. For the VT SoN, this is a requirement – requests for LORs not received in advance and following this timeline may not be honored. If a professor agrees to write a letter on your behalf, you should provide the following information and materials along with the request. ***It is recommended that you send your professor(s) a SINGLE email with the following information:***

1. What is your name?
2. [UNDERGRADUATES] What is your major and year?
3. What is your GPA?
4. How long has the professor known you? (Years and/or months)
5. What semester did you begin working in the lab?\*
6. What would you like the professor to address in your LOR?
7. How would you describe yourself?
8. Do you have any important accomplishments? If so, describe them.
9. What do you think are your greatest strengths with respect to coursework and/or research? (e.g., written/verbal communication skills, motivation, creativity, leadership, analytical ability, etc.). Provide example(s) that demonstrate the strength(s) you have listed.
10. What do you think is your greatest weakness and what have you done to improve upon it?
11. What are your long-term goals and how do you think this position/award will help you attain those goals?
12. What area(s) of research/medicine/professional program specialty would you like to focus on in medical/graduate/professional school and why?
13. Who else is writing letters for you? (This helps the professor identify information that may not be covered by other letter writers and compose a well-rounded letter for you)
14. What is your contingency plan if you are not accepted to this program/position or if you do not receive this award?

15. [OPTIONAL] If you are applying to D.O. schools, outline specific experiences that illustrate your familiarity with D.O. philosophy and practices.
16. Include any other information not listed here that you think may help your professor(s) compose a well-rounded LOR for you.

Use the chart below to perform a self-evaluation which you will include with your LOR request:

	Exceptional (Top 2%)	Outstanding (Top 5%)	Excellent (Top 10%)	Good (Top 25%)	Average (Top 50%)
Intellectual ability					
Motivation/initiative					
Creativity					
Analytical ability					
Maturity					
Leadership capability					
Personal integrity					
Ability to work with others					
Ability to work independently					
Written communication skills					
Verbal communication skills					
Self-confidence					
Dependability					
Organizational skills					

Provide the following information for your professor(s) to use to compose your LOR. Even if the professor(s) will receive a digital request for their LOR, please provide the address information:

Program Name	Program Address	CHOOSE ONE: 1) mail official letter 2) email letter 3) process digitally	Deadline for recommendation to arrive

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:** In the *same email request for the LOR*, please forward the following information to your professor(s). If you need to provide links in lieu of large documents, please do so and indicate that you have done so in the body of the email.

- CV/Resume
- If applicable, all necessary forms for letter writers

- Preprints or reprints of manuscripts to which you have contributed
- All materials you will submit with your application (e.g., personal essay; statement of interest; research summary/proposal; applicable trainings completed, etc.)

***It is also recommended that you send a reminder email to each professor that has agreed to submit your letter a few days prior to the deadline to see if the submission has been completed and ask if they need any other information to process your LOR.***