

PhD in Social work

For students: Guidelines for requesting recommendation letters from faculty

- 1) Make a formal written (email) request to the faculty member. If you have first mentioned the request in an in person, phone, or zoom meeting, follow up with a formal written request.
- 2) Include in the written communication the specifics of the request:
 - Person, institution, or organization to which the recommendation will be addressed
 - Reason for the request (grant application, faculty position, employment, etc.)
 - Deadline for submission of references
 - Process for submitting recommendations (i.e. Will the recommender receive an email and link from the institution? Are letters submitted directly to a Search Committee chair?)
 - Attach documents or a link to information about the position/grant you are applying for.
- 3) Include information about yourself:
 - Attach your CV
 - Attach drafts or final versions of documents you might be submitting for the position: cover letter for a job; statement of purpose; research proposal.
 - Include in the email to the faculty recommender any points that you would like them to highlight in their letter (specific research interests or experiences; teaching experience; experiences or traits particularly relevant to the position; strengths relevant to the position).
- 4) Notes and etiquette:
 - Provide at least 3-4 weeks lead time for the request (and earlier if possible). Faculty may have tight schedules and multiple reference requests; provide as much lead time as possible.
 - Note that faculty may not be available during semester breaks, summer months, or during sabbaticals. Build that into your request time.
 - Choose faculty who are most familiar with the aspects of your research/experience/teaching that are most relevant to the position.
 - The more background information that you provide to faculty about the position and yourself, the more specific and relevant their recommendation letter is likely to be.
 - Never assume that a faculty person will be available to write a letter of recommendation; sometimes busy work or personal schedules preclude a request.
 - Sometimes positions ask for the names of recommenders, but not a letter. It is important to ask permission of a faculty member to list them as a reference, and to provide the

same information as noted above regarding the position/grant, and yourself (CV; description of position, etc.).

- Writing letters of recommendation for students is a professional responsibility of faculty members, and the letters should be written by them (rather than drafted by students for faculty review and signature).

5) Follow up:

- It is acceptable to send a friendly reminder to a faculty member if a deadline is approaching and no letter has appeared.
- Forward a thank you note to your recommender after the letter has been submitted.
- Notify your recommender if you receive the grant/job position, etc. – they appreciate the information and your success!

6) For **advice and questions** contact the PhD program director, your faculty advisor or other mentors, and/or dissertation committee members.

PhD Executive Committee

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