

On Letters of Recommendation

By Anthony Hornof

February 14, 2012

There may be a time when you are asked to submit letters of recommendation with applications for scholarships, to graduate school, or for employment. Only sometimes will I write letters of recommendation. It is not my obligation to get you a scholarship, to get you into graduate school, or to find you a job. If, however, you thoroughly demonstrate to my satisfaction that I can write wonderful things about you and that saying these things will not compromise my own professional reputation, then I may consent to writing letters in support of your academic and professional advancement on a case-by-case and school-by-school basis. Note that I can only write letters of recommendation if I am provided with adequate time to do so, which is a least one month lead-time for each letter.

Your request to me for a letter of recommendation should be accompanied with all of the materials that you would be submitting with your application, including your statement of purpose, answers to any questions required with your application, and a copy of your transcript. I will need all these materials a month before my letter is required.

Bear this in mind: If I write a letter for you, I will be comparing your professional and academic potential, which includes your ability to organize yourself, with the comparable abilities of the most outstanding undergraduates that I have worked with and written letters for, all of whom have gone on to wild success at top graduate schools and on to very high-paying jobs.

Acknowledgement: The first paragraph of this statement is derived largely from a similar statement written by Dr. Jeffrey Stolet.