

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Faculty members are asked to write many letters each year, and it can be hard to keep track of different deadlines, formats, and other information. To facilitate this process, please follow the guidelines below when emailing to ask for a letter.

Can Prof. X write for you?

If you've taken a seminar (small, discussion-based course) with Prof. X, or if he/she advised/is advising your thesis or dissertation, he/she can write for you. If you've only taken a large lecture course, and Prof. X did not get to know you well he/she will probably be unable to write (though your TF for that course may be able to do so).

Timeline

Please give Prof. X as much advance notice as possible when requesting recommendation letters. If you are approaching Prof. X for a letter for the first time, it is helpful to give him or her a minimum of one month's notice so that he/she has time to prepare an effective letter.

If you are only requesting 1-3 letters, you do not need to fully utilize the guidelines below. Once Prof. X agrees to write a letter for you, please respond to Prof. X and his/her Faculty Assistant, with due dates and any additional information.

Guidelines for Requesting Multiple Letters

1. Email Prof. X to see if he/she is willing to write a letter for you. It is best to include any pertinent application materials (Writing Sample, Research or Teaching Statement, articles or chapters, etc.) he/she may want to reference as he/she writes your letter(s). In addition, please Prof. X's assistant, Prof. X's Faculty Assistant.
2. If Prof. X agrees to write your letter, Prof. X's Faculty Assistant will share with you a standard application list template via Google Sheets**. The greatest benefit of sharing this information via Google is that you, Prof. X, and Prof. X's Faculty Assistant are able to share ownership of materials, resulting in the most up to date information being available to all parties.
3. Fill out the application list template, noting all positions or programs to which you are applying. You should continue to update this list as new positions and/or programs are posted, or as you decide *not* to apply for certain positions and/or programs for which you had originally intended to apply.
4. As letters are sent/submitted Prof. X's Faculty Assistant will mark them as sent on the application spreadsheet, providing you with up to date information regarding the status of letters.

**If you do not already have a Google account, you will need to create one. If you would like a Harvard affiliated google account, you can sign up at g.harvard.edu.