

Letters of Recommendation

CHEAT SHEET

Throughout your time at Vanderbilt, you should cultivate relationships with your professors, advisors, supervisors, and other mentors with whom you work. You will want a large team to draw from when it comes time to ask for letters of recommendation.



DETERMINE

What kind of recommendation do you need?
Match your recommender to each opportunity.

If the selection committee is looking for:

ACADEMIC APTITUDE
LEADERSHIP SKILLS
FUTURE PLANS
ADAPTABILITY

Ask someone who can speak to your:

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS / PROWESS
INITIATIVE & RESPONSIBILITIES
CAREER TRAJECTORY / PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
BEHAVIOR IN A CHALLENGING SITUATION

You want a tailored recommendation for each opportunity. Find the recommender who can cite specific examples of what you need to highlight for each selection committee.



WHO KNOWS YOU BEST?

Choose the recommenders who know you best. They'll write the most substantive letter, which is more important than a fancy title.

PLAN

- Choose your recommenders carefully, especially if you're applying to multiple opportunities.
- Ask well in advance; aim for 1 – 2 months before the deadline.

PREP

Make sure your recommenders have what they need to write a good letter:

Stage 1

- Brief description of the fellowship.
- Updated resume.
- Deadline.
- Submission instructions.



Stage 2

- Brief outline of your long-term plans.
- Highlight one or two ideas they can write about that the selection committee is looking for.

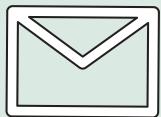


- Draft version of your pe

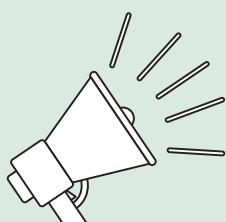
PRO TIP:
Send a new email with this draft a few weeks later. It will remind your recommender of the upcoming deadline!

POST

What to do after your letters are submitted:



Send each recommender a thank you note (handwritten or email). After all, you might want to ask them again in the future!



Send a quick note as you move through the process. Your recommenders will appreciate knowing their letters have helped you become a finalist and / or fellow!



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