



How to ask for—and get—strong letters of recommendation

1. Ask someone who knows you well and who will be able to discuss in specific detail what distinguishes you
2. Ask well in advance of the deadline--allow at least four to six weeks but it is best to consult with the recommender to see how much lead-time is needed
3. Seniors: even if your plans do not include going to graduate school immediately, if this is at all a possibility in your future, have conversations with your faculty or other potential recommenders on campus NOW, before you graduate
4. Ask: “Do you feel you know me well enough to write a strong letter of recommendation for . . . program?” You have now given the professor the opportunity to decline gracefully. If the answer is “no,” do not push.
5. Schedule an appointment with your letter writers to discuss the program to which you are applying, its selection criteria, your most relevant activities, and to review work you have done in the past for the person
6. Bring to this meeting:
 - A current resume or a list of all of your activities, honors, independent studies, projects, thesis information, etc.
 - An unofficial transcript
 - An idea or outline of your personal statement
 - The official description of the criteria the recommender’s letter should address
 - Any coversheets or official recommendation forms that should accompany the letter. For fellowships or graduate programs, make sure you waive your rights to access/read your letters (form may be found on the Connecticut College website/[Letters of Recommendation](#)) under the Family Right and Privacy Act (selection committees often fail to take unrestricted letters seriously)
7. Be sure to write your recommenders a note of thanks and follow up with them to let them know outcomes

