REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

To support your graduate school application, letters of recommendation are often required. In the case of Northeastern University, a faculty member is preferable. Find their email in your student portal and directly ask for a letter of recommendation. If you communicate with them regularly, they’re more likely to comply with your request.

Through your recommenders, the admission committee should have a broad academic understanding, aptitude, and potential value to the program with whom you plan to study.

KNOW WHAT TO ASK

Ensure you understand the program's requirements so you know whom you should ask for a LOR.

TLDR

- Make your request, be professional and courteous
- Understand that in most cases, you choose whom to ask
- Be time-conscious, give 6 weeks notice
- Guide your recommender, provide adequate information
- Be gracious, thank them

MAKE YOUR REQUEST

Approach asking in a similar way with professionalism and courtesy. It's best to ask your recommender in person or by phone, or if that is not an option, send an email.

Your email should include:

- "Would you please consider writing a letter of recommendation for me?" - This is a simple question that allows your recommender to understand your request.
- "Your input would greatly assist me in the graduate application process."
- "I would like to share a copy of your letter with you."
- "Please submit the letter directly to the program."

Your email should be a matter of fact that allows for the option to decline. Remember to thank them after the request and write back if you receive a rejection.

When preparing your request:

- Be aware that many professors may have multiple recommendations to write. Because of this, they may decline your request, so you should know whom you should ask for a LOR.

GUIDE YOUR RECOMMENDER

The more information you provide your recommender, the more likely they are to craft a persuasive letter.

SEND A RESPECTFUL REMINDER

Bring our guidelines to life by sending a polite reminder to your recommender.

BE GRACIOUS

Remember to thank the recommender again for their support and interest in you, even if they decline your request.

You can ask

- An academic advisor
- A mentor
- A past professor
- A professor who supervised you
- A past professor who recently supervised you
- A supervisor for the position that you did research at
- An employer who knew you in a professional capacity

If the recommender is too busy to write a LOR, decline to write a recommendation. Less than a month’s notice is viewed as unprofessional.

Should your recommender decline to write a LOR, be gracious and thank those who declined. Phrase your ask in a manner that allows for the option to decline. Not everyone has the time or desire to submit a LOR. Remain gracious and thank those who declined.

When the recommender agrees to write a letter, you can ask:

- "Yes, can you please consider submitting a letter of recommendation for me?"
- "Your contribution will greatly assist me in the graduate application process."
- "If you’re willing to write a letter, I would like to share a copy of your letter with you."
- "Thank you for your support and interest in me."
- "I greatly appreciate your time and involvement."

REPAY THE FAVOR!

One day you may be approached to write a letter for a student or colleague. Consider the benefits of returning the favor: you’re also broadening your professional network.

The more you can do for others, the more they are likely to do for you. Many programs will not penalize you for a missing recommendation letter; however, it doesn’t hurt to ask more than the required number of recommenders.

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Before you contact prospective recommenders, familiarize yourself with the program's requirements and where to submit.

When choosing the recommenders, ensure that you request at least two; however, if you can provide three or more, it's even better.

Before applying to GSU, you can opt to waive your rights to view your letters. If you choose not to waive your rights, ask the recommender to share a copy of their letter with you.

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READ DISCLOSURES ON THE APPLICATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION REGARDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

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Questions?

Contact the Office of Graduate Services.