



Forum: Educational Consulting

Topic: Letters of Recommendation For College

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Letters of Recommendation For College

The only parts of the application you can't fully control are the letters of recommendation. However, just because you do not write them doesn't mean they're out of your hands.

How to Start

The application instructions for your college explain how many letters you need to submit and who submits them. The application also usually includes the forms, as well as pre-addressed envelopes. If you are completing applications online, you need to print out the recommendation forms, as well as provide stamped envelopes addressed to the admissions office.

Why do I need to do this?

Letters of recommendation show not only that you have succeeded in high school, but also what you have done to stand out. Most forms ask your counselor to rank you from average to outstanding in a number of different categories, ranging from personal demeanor to academics. Additionally, there is a space for a teacher or counselor to tell the school something about you.

Getting Good Recommenders

Colleges tell you who should complete these forms. Normally, it is your principal, your high school counselor, and two teachers. Which teachers to ask is the hard part. Ask teachers who know you well or who have taught you recently. Pick teachers who write well and have made thoughtful comments on your work. Obviously, pick teachers who like you and who have shown appreciation for your work. These recommendations are supposed to help and not hurt your admission chances.

How To Expedite the Process

â€¢ If there's any doubt in your mind, don't hesitate to ask a teacher if he is planning on giving you a good recommendation. It is your right to know whether he will be helping your case or hurting it.

â€¢ Supply your teachers and counselor with a copy of your transcript (which you can request from your counselor's office) and a brief statement that lists your achievements, your interests and your goals.

â€¢ If preaddressed envelopes are not included with the application, provide your own stamped envelopes addressed to the college admissions offices.

â€¢ Give these materials to your teachers and counselor well before the deadline. They will be doing

this for many students, and you don't want them to be pressured.

â€¢ Check back in with your reference writers every couple of weeks to see if they have completed the letters or if they need any more info from you, and be sure to thank them every chance you get.

Should You Submit More Than the Required Recommendations?

No you do not normally need extra recommendations but if you do they need to shed some unique perspective on you. For instance, a letter from a music coach you have worked with for eight years might be valuable. However, if you're not sure, contact the admissions office.

You Can Never Be Too Careful

While you may have little to do with the writing of your letters of recommendation, it is your responsibility to make sure the college admissions office receives them.

EastCoast

Dave B