

Reference Letter Requests

Many current and former students may wish to ask for a letter of reference for a job. In this challenging job market, please understand that I cannot accommodate every request for a reference letter -- approximately 20 students graduate every quarter, and the job market can be tight...you do the math...

I have developed some guidelines for requesting a letter from me. Please refer to these before submitting your request to me:

- If you were not a student in my clinical group (i.e., I did not supervise you), please ask your clinical instructor instead. There is only so much I can write about your classroom behavior. Exceptions to this may include if you've worked with me on other projects, served as a TA for me, or otherwise helped me out.
- Please submit your request in writing (e-mail is acceptable) a MINIMUM of 2 weeks before the needed date. Please remember I may need more time at certain busy times of the quarter. Also -- a personal conversation (as in "Would you be willing to write a letter of reference for me?") should always precede a written request. It feels presumptive otherwise. Asking the question ("Would you be willing to write a reference letter for me?") is always received in a more favorable light than a statement ("I need a reference letter from you."). A group email to several instructors also is a bad idea. If we are being asked to write a letter, which takes time, doesn't it make sense for you to take the time to approach us individually?
- Please remember and respect the time an instructor takes to write a letter, especially when your request is made at busy times of the quarter or during a break. You might want to offer to help the teacher with a class or lab to help compensate the instructor for his or her time.
- If a reference request requires something to be downloaded, printed, etc., YOU need to do the downloading and printing, and completing all sections of it that you are able to. For example, a hospital reference form may require a student release signature on the first page -- please complete this and submit it to me along with the other required pages. After doing this, please deliver the form to my office. We will then arrange a time for it to be picked up.
- I do not write "to whom it may concern" letters. Each letter I write must be addressed to an individual (name, credentials, title) with hospital name and full address, including zip code. Some hospitals do not ask for reference letters -- they prefer to have applicants complete the hospital form. Until asked for a letter, please do not request one from me.
- When you request a reference from me, please make it easier on me by reminding me of the following information (so I don't have to look it up): Quarter/year you completed Quarter 6, unit where you precepted, preceptor's name, start and ending dates of your preceptorship, NCP topic, and clinical leadership project.

Thanks for following these guidelines. I appreciate your attention to detail in answering each and every question PRIOR to your reference letter request. I truly wish you all the best.