

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are an important part of some college transfer applications, especially selective colleges and health programs. A strong, personalized letter can help admissions committees understand your academic strengths, commitment, and future goals. Professors want to support you, and providing them with helpful information makes it easier for them to write a meaningful, individualized letter.

Please remember that professors are not required to write a letter of recommendation and may decline your request. To give yourself the best chance of receiving a high-quality letter, always ask well in advance.

How Many Letters of Recommendation Should I Submit?

Always begin by checking the requirements of each college you are applying to. Colleges that require recommendations typically expect at least one letter from a professor who can speak to your academic abilities.

Some colleges may allow or encourage additional letters from other people who know you in different roles. These may include:

- Academic advisors
- Employers or supervisors
- Coaches or mentors

However, only submit extra letters if the college allows them and if each recommender can provide meaningful, distinct insight about you. The best source of accurate instructions is the college's own website or the guidance provided in the Common Application.

For more detailed information about recommendation types, submission rules, and how the process works, the Common App offers a helpful guide:

Common App Recommender Guide:

<https://www.commonapp.org/counselors-and-recommenders/recommender-guide>

Ask Early and Professionally

- Make your request in writing (email is best).
- Ask at least 30 days before the deadline. Professors may decline a request with less notice.
- Be polite, clear, and appreciative in your message.

What Makes a Strong Recommendation Letter

A helpful recommendation letter includes specific examples of your work, your academic strengths, and your goals. For example, a professor might write:

"Maria told me she wanted to be a doctor when she was in my biology class in the fall of 2013. Her A in my course and the lab work she did indicate to me that she will succeed in her plan to major in biology at your school."

To help your professor write something similarly personalized, provide detailed information they can reference.

Information You Must Give Your Professor

When asking for a recommendation, include the following in writing:

1. Basic Personal Information
 - Your full name
 - Your BHCC ID
 - Your BHCC email address

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2. Courses You Took with the Professor

Provide details for every course you took with them:

- Course name and course number
- Section and semester
- Grade you received
- Description of work you completed that demonstrates your academic ability
 - Examples: a paper you wrote, a lab you conducted, a major project, presentations, group work, or anything distinctive they may remember.

3. Additional Context About You

You may share information that helps the professor understand your circumstances or accomplishments. For example:

- If you earned an A while working
- Any other responsibilities or achievements that highlight your dedication
- Feel free to provide a copy of your resume/curriculum vitae, including any merits, awards, and other forms of involvement and accomplishments you would like to share

4. Academic Background

- Your BHCC major
- Number of college credits you have earned
- Your BHCC GPA

5. Transfer Application Details

Provide all information needed for each school:

- Names of the colleges you are applying to
- Which colleges require a recommendation
- Your intended major at each college
- What you plan to do with your undergraduate degree
- The deadline for each recommendation letter

How the Professor Should Submit the Recommendation

Once your professor agrees to write a letter of recommendation, make sure they have clear instructions for how and where to submit it. Different colleges use different systems, and professors rely on you to provide accurate information.

In most cases, the official request for a recommendation will come through the Common Application or a college's own online portal. These systems typically send the professor an email with a unique upload link. Your responsibility is to ensure the professor knows which system your application uses and what steps are required for submission.

For guidance on how to request a letter of recommendation through the Common App, visit the page for transfer students at: <https://www.commonapp.org/apply/transfer-students>