

If you plan to request letters of recommendation from your instructors, consider the following student behaviors. Have you positioned yourself, through your behavior, actions and attitude, to receive a quality letter of recommendation?

Recommendation Checklist

1. Arrived on time to class and stayed until the end of class.
2. Completed all assigned reading and submitted assignments on time.
3. Reviewed the syllabus and referred to it before asking the instructor about class/assignment expectations/requirements.
4. Developed rapport with the instructor - Provided ample opportunity for instructor to form an opinion beyond doing well in class.
 - a. Communicated personal background, interests, thoughts, experiences, etc. to instructor, thereby enabling him/her to better understand your personality, work ethic and personal qualities (necessary content for a letter of recommendation)
 - b. Sought feedback (overall class performance, class participation, assignments, behavior/professional conduct, etc.) and solicited suggestions for improvement
 - c. Participated in co-curricular experiences involving faculty
 - i. Student organizations advised by faculty: [Sigma Delta Pi](#) (Spanish), [French Club](#), [Nihao Debao](#), Japanese Table, [Deutsch Club](#)
 - ii. Research/writing: [research grants](#), [Creating Knowledge](#) and [Mille-Feuille Littéraire](#)
 - iii. Department and program-level events
 - iv. Faculty-led study abroad programs
5. Demonstrated curiosity, willingness to learn and engaged in opportunities for self-improvement.
6. Was courteous, respectful and engaged in class and in interactions with instructor and classmates.
7. Demonstrated professionalism, maturity, reliability, integrity and competence through verbal, non-verbal and written communication with instructor and classmates.

Things to Consider

1. The quality of a recommendation letter may depend on many things, such as the above mentioned checklist items.
2. You may be turned down for a variety of reasons, such as an instructor having already recommended someone else, the degree to which the checklist items above were met, or the instructor doesn't feel you are a good fit/candidate for the position or scholarship.
 - a. If you are turned down for a letter of recommendation, in a courteous and professional manner, ask if the person would be willing to provide you with feedback and suggestions for improvement.
3. Instructors may have their own preferences in choosing to write letters of recommendation. Speak with them about this before you need the letter. Ask them how you could earn a quality letter of recommendation from them. For example, if they will only write a letter of recommendation for students who earned an A grade, or met with them during office hours, it may be helpful for you to know this a year or two before you need to make the request. This way, you can make sure to meet their expectations/criteria for letters of recommendation before you need them.
4. Instructors may put as much time and thought into a letter for you as you put into making the request. How well you request a letter of recommendation (verbally or via email) may make a difference.
5. People tend to write stronger letters of recommendation for those they know well enough to feel confident recommending. To recommend someone is to put a reputation on the line.
 - a. For example, if you were to make a decision based on my recommendation and you later regretted that decision, you may seriously reconsider the quality and value of my future recommendations. The same can be said for letters of recommendation. Please bear this in mind when you ask anyone for a letter of recommendation.