

A letter of recommendation or recommendation letter, also known as a letter of reference, reference letter or simply reference, is a document in which the writer assesses the qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of the person being recommended in terms of that individual's ability to perform a particular task or function. Letters of recommendation are typically related to employment (such a letter may also be called an employment reference or job reference), admission to institutions of higher education, or scholarship eligibility. Recommendation letters are usually specifically requested to be written about someone, and are therefore addressed to a particular requester (such as a new employer, university admissions officer, etc.), although they may also be issued to the person being recommended without specifying an addressee.

References may also be required of companies seeking to win contracts, particularly in the fields of engineering, consultancy, industry and construction, and with regard to public procurement and tenders. Reference letters for organizations are used to assess its ability to deliver the required level of service.