**Information to Provide When Requesting a Letter of Reference**

Please note: Each professor has a different method for letters of reference. Below is one summary of information letter writers might benefit from having, along with reasoning for each area. In the event your letter writer has specific requests for information, you should default to their process.

Adapted from:

Norris, M. E. & Baker, T. W. (2019). An introduction to careers in the psychological sciences. In M. E. Norris (Ed.), The Canadian Handbook for Careers in Psychological Science. Kingston, ON: eCampus Ontario. Licensed under CC BY NC 4.0. Retrieved from <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/psychologycareers/chapter/introduction/>

**General information to help set the context:**

1. The nature of the programs you are applying to

*A letter of reference for a specific job might be very different than application to graduate school in psychology, which might be different from an application to another type of program. Please give a brief overview of the program so that the letter can be framed appropriately.*

2. An overview of the submission process

*Graduate school letters of reference are often submitted confidentially through an online portal. Not all letters go through this process, however, and job letters can vary significantly in their submission process. Please give a brief overview of how the process will work, and whether letters should be directly addressed to a specific recipient (e.g., Dear Graduate Committee, vs “Dear Ms. CEO”).  Because reference letters have to be submitted in very specific ways, it’s easiest to give these details to your letter writer right away either in an attached file or link to a webpage.  Be sure to include the deadline in your request, and give your referee at least two weeks before the deadline.*

**Specific information to help write a strong letter along with a copy of your transcript:**

1. Full name on record, preferred name and pronouns, and student number

*Sometimes students have different preferred names from those on record, and I want to make sure that those receiving the letter know who I am referring to. Having access to all names, preferred pronouns, and the student number also helps letter writers to search records more effectively so that they can write a comprehensive letter.*

1. All courses taken with the letter writer as instructor (including the year taken), the components of those courses, and your overall grades

*Sometimes courses change slightly across years, and the components of the course can also change. Specifying the components in a course may help the letter writer to write a stronger letter—for example, if there was a teamwork component, they can speak to this. Remember that there are dozens of students in multiple courses asking for letters: by providing this information in your request, you are making it much easier for your letter writer, and you are demonstrating conscientious professional behaviours. Thus, this also helps your letter writer when they comment on your professional skills!*

1. Academic Achievements (e.g., Honours List, any other academic awards, conference presentations, any publications if relevant)

*Instructors often don’t get notice of your individual achievements, and are excited to hear about them. Being notified of these achievements allows for them to be highlighted in your letter. Even if your letter writer was notified of the achievement before, a reminder is helpful.*

1. Volunteer and work experience (both academic and non-academic)

*In this section, include any volunteer or work experience that might be relevant for the letter. Even if you volunteer in the lab of your letter writer, please include this. It helps to know that you’ve provided a comprehensive record.*

1. Non-academic Achievements

*Have you done something great that isn’t related to your academics? This is important and matters! Please be sure to tell your letter writer a bit about it.*