**How to get a recommendation?**

Who are your POTENTIAL recommenders?

Types of recommendation:

* OT
* Professor
* Others

Asking for recommendation

The format for asking the recommendation through email

**Who are your recommenders?**

There are usually three types of recommendations that an OT school is looking for:

1. A person who knows your academic ability (Usually your professor)
2. OT
3. Or anyone that you like. (NOT your family members and friends)

However, some schools, like Eastern Washington University, required specific recommenders:

1. Instructor from either a) Mathematics, or b) Science, or c) English, or d) Psychology.
2. An OT.
3. One from a person (unrelated) who can provide a <b>character</b> reference. Examples include: a former or current employer, co-worker, mentor, religious leader, counselor, coach, and charity/volunteer organization leader.

By the way, I simplified the wording of the EWU’s requirement.

<b>Source:</b>

Authors unknown, Eastern Washington University, OTCAS

Retrieved from: <https://portal.otcas.org/otcasHelpPages/participating-programs/eastern-washington-university/index.html>

**Getting an OT to become a recommender:**

Choosing your OT recommender is no different from choosing your friend. However, the hard part about getting an OT recommender is HOW can you let your OT get to know you because they spent more time helping their patients/clients than to get to know you. Therefore, this is when you need to know your <a href= “OT volunteering tactics.html> OT volunteering tactics</a>.

**Finding a professor as your recommender:**

Kiss-up your professors from classes that required:

* Group projects
* Essays
* Speaking/Presenting in front of the whole classes

BECAUSE! All of your recommenders have to evaluate your leadership, writing and oral communications. Therefore, if you have a class that has these requirements, make sure your instructor knows you! So you can ask your instructor to write a recommendation letter for you later.

By the way, I purposely say “instructors”, instead of saying professor, because you do not need to have a professor to write your recommendation. You can ask your graduate student instructor, or teacher assistant, to write your recommendation. As long as your instructor knows your <u>academic ability</u> that instructor will be an ideal recommender.

It is OK if you do not have these kinds of classes. I have this problem too. As a result, I decided to have two academic recommenders to assess my academic ability: My graduate student instructor from an essay heavy course will assess my writing ability. Then, my public speaking professor will evaluate my oral communication skills.

However, it is always hard to know who is going to be your recommender at the beginning of the class. Therefore, if I were you, I would:

* Go to your professor’s office hour regularly
* Engaged in lecture discussions
* Ask your professor a question after each lecture

I ensured you that if you are an active engaged student, your professor will remember you.

I know that maybe you have finished all of your OT perquisites, so how are you going to find a professor to recommend for you? This is a very tough question. I don’t know. If any of you know, please tell me.

**Getting someone besides the OTs and your professors as recommenders:**

According to EWU, this person can be “a former or current employer, co-worker, mentor, religious leader, counselor, coach, and charity/volunteer organization leader.” Therefore, this recommender is going to tell your admission staff about your life outside of school. Do you seriously have to kiss-up to this recommender while you are doing your extra-curricular activity? <b>**No.</b>** Don’t do it. I rather you be accomplished in your extra-curricular, so your recommender can write your achievements to affirm them.

**Asking for recommendations:**

Do not be afraid to ask your professor and OT for recommendation. It is their <b>job</b> as a professor and as an OT to give you a great recommendation. I asked most of my volunteer manager, graduate student instructor, and my OT if they want to be my recommender because I know for sure that they are going to say yes. However, I have to email my public speaking professor to ask him because I do not know if he wants to recommend me. Although he does not know me well, he still say yes to me because I :

* Go to his office hour regularly.
* Engaged in lecture discussions.

(Trust me. These tactics work.)

Looking back, I do not think I asked my public speaking professor appropriately because my letter sounds too hasty.

Dear Professor Levine:

Hi, this is ME. I took CW10A with you last semester, and I am currently preparing to apply for occupational therapy schools. However, the applications require letters of recommendation regarding my group working skills. Would you kindly considering writing a letter of recommendation for me?

The earliest deadline is in September 2014, and most deadlines are in November 2014 or even January 2015. If you like, I can also give you a list of deadlines, as well as list of skills or resume. Let me know if you need any additional information.

Please respond me as soon as you can. If you want to talk to me in person, please tell me when you are available.

Thank you,

ME

From emailing this crappy letter, I learned that the job of an applicant is to make their recommender’s evaluation process as easy as possible. Therefore, the letter format below would be an ideal letter for me.

**Format:**

**Subject:** Recommendation for <u>Your name</u>

**Email content:**

Dear <u>Title and the name of the instructor</u>:

Hi, this is <u>Your name</u>. I took <u>the course name</u> with you <u>at this time</u>, and I am currently preparing to apply for occupational therapy schools. Would you kindly considering writing a letter of recommendation for me?

(Just say it, you do not want to waste your professor’s time.)

If yes, the deadline will be on \_\_\_\_\_.\*In order to ease the process for you:

1. We are going to use OTCAS: Through using OTCAS, you only need to write the recommendation **ONCE** and send it electronically to multiple schools.
2. I would provide you my:

* Resume
* Personal Statement
* Unofficial transcripts
* Essays(if there is any for the course)
* Recommendation Summary\*

\*A recommendation summary is a list that has two functions:

* Tells you how my qualities match the qualities asked in OTCAS
* Helps you to write the recommendation essay about me.

Please respond me as soon as you can. If you want to talk to me in person, please tell me when you are available.

Thank you,

<u>Your Name</u>

Note:

\*ONLY ONE DATE! Make sure the date is at least one month from now.