**To students from my class: What reference letters to expect from me?**

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# Eligibility

## I have taken your courses before. Can you write me a reference letter?

In general, I am willing to write letters for students who took my classes in support of their job hunting and graduate application.

# Letter contents

## Q: What letter can I get, if I just finished the course without doing something extra?

The letter will be standard:

* It will describe the scope and significance of the course
* It will describe your performance at a high level, which is reflected by your course grade

In my opinion, such a letter will neither hurt your case nor help your case significantly. So, please carefully weigh my potential letter in comparison to other letters you may obtain.

## Q: What letter can I get, if I have done extra things with the course, e.g. big data challenge, honor grade, small research tasks?

The letter will highlight these things in addition to the standard content described above.

# Deadlines

## Q: Can you upload my letters the deadline?

I cannot guarantee to meet a specific deadline.

The application deadline (e.g. Dec 15) is for applicants NOT the letter writers.

In general, faculty are very busy in Dec. I personally do not know any schools will start reviewing graduate applications in Dec. Unless you have extraordinary reason, I will finish your letters during the winter break and upload before the New Year.

I want to help as many students as possible. I need to provide many letters every year.

## Q: can I remind you?

That is welcome. Do so near Dec 15. Then during the winter break if needed.

# Protocol

## Q: I need a letter! How should I request one?

* Drop me an email and get a confirmation.
* State which of the above is your situation.
* State your objective: MS or PhD. This is important.
* State how many schools you plan to apply to.
* Remind me when the deadlines are close. Note there are application deadlines (e.g. Dec 5) which are for applicants but not the letter writers. However, I will do my best effort to send in letters in time.
* Often, we do NOT need to meet in person.

## Q: Whom can you give the letters to?

Your prospective employers/schools must explicitly solicit the letter from me. I cannot send them a letter without solicitation.

I cannot give you the letter.

I expect you to waive the right to view the letter.

## Q: Anything else can I do to expediate the letter writing process?

When you enter my information on the online application system, please be as thorough as possible – providing my address, office phone, etc. which you can get from my website <http://felixlin.org>.

This saves my time!