

Letter of Recommendation Policy – Prof. Andrew Oros, Washington College

Please read this entire document *before* contacting me about writing a letter for you.

Helping my students (and former students) secure internships, scholarships, placement in graduate schools, and post-college jobs is part of my job. I'm happy to provide general advice about how to go about these things, and to write letters of recommendation for such purposes. Please keep in mind that writing a carefully crafted letter of support is a time-consuming process for me that requires good information from you. If you are serious about what you are applying for, you need to be serious about the information you provide to me in order to receive the strongest letter possible.

1. I strongly encourage students to request *confidential* letters of recommendation – and to check the box to waive the right to view my letter when available.
 - a. Rest assured that I would not write a negative letter without first discussing my reservations with you. The purpose of agreeing to a confidential letter is to assure the reader of the letter that I am offering a frank evaluation without reservations.
2. With few exceptions, I write letters only for students who have taken a class with me (or are in a current class and have completed graded work). If you need a letter of support from someone you have not taken a class with, your best bet is your academic and/or major advisor.
3. In general, I need *at least* two weeks to craft a solid letter – from the date I receive all of the required information from you (outlined below). You can certainly ask for a “rush job” – but I can’t guarantee I can comply.
4. Please send the following information to me at the time of your request:
 - a. The deadline for the letter to be received by the organization.
 - b. The address of where the letter should be sent (or electronic link location).
 - c. Your WAC transcript (an email copy is sufficient).
 - d. A resume/CV, or at least an outline of your notable achievements and activities – but, really, at this stage of the game you should have a resume! The Career Center can help!
 - e. If applying to graduate school, relevant test scores if available (LSAT, GRE, *etc.*).
 - f. **Detailed information about the position *and* organization (or scholarship) to which you are applying, including a link to that organization/scholarship if available.**
 - i. This includes letter requests for graduate schools – tell me what specific program you are applying to (*eg.*, an MA in Security Studies at Georgetown University – not just “grad school”).
 - g. **A copy of the personal statement and/or cover letter for your application. A *draft* statement is acceptable. Also acceptable is a minimum of a one-paragraph email to me explaining your goals with this application.**
 - h. A list of any other information you would like me to stress in your letter. For example, you might want to explain to me why a grade was low in a particular class one semester, or an experience you have that you think is especially relevant to the application (if not already stressed in your personal statement).

After reviewing these materials, I will notify you if I am able to write a supportive letter of recommendation – and will also convey any concerns I might have. Please be aware that I will write the best letter possible, but I must be honest in my assessment about your suitability for the program to which you are applying. If I feel that your application will be negatively affected by my letter, I will tell you so before completing the letter.

Good luck! You can’t get what you don’t apply for!

(v., 7/23/10, ao)