

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation from a Biocore Instructor

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Preface

As Biocore instructors, we write a tremendous number of letters of recommendation—not surprising since our student’s are high achievers and aspire to go to graduate school, participate in internships, apply for scholarships and many other activities that require letters of recommendation. Given that we get to know some students quite well over two years in Biocore, we are happy to write letters to help students rise to the next level of their academic career. However, there are many situations when we will decline a request to write a letter, primarily, if we feel we cannot write a strong personal letter for a variety of reasons.

Etiquette for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

- Ask for a letter at least **ONE MONTH BEFORE** it is due. **TWO MONTHS** is preferable and will make your recommender much more likely to complete your letter on time with a smile :). Do NOT request a letter with less than two weeks notice.
- Get to know your potential letter writer. Go and speak with them about your academic work. The more interactions you have with your letter writer, the more opportunities they have to observe you and to get to know how you work.
- Consider your potential letter writer- the more information you can provide them the better. In most cases, your recommender will ask to make an appointment to talk with them about the letter and to describe your materials in more depth. See list of materials below.

List of Materials to Provide your Letter Writer

- Current transcript (unofficial OK)
- List of extracurricular activities and leadership roles during college career (resume is fine)
- If you worked in a lab, please provide the PI's name as well as the name of the person (grad or postdoc) you worked with most closely. Briefly describe the nature of research you did in the lab, and the specific project you worked on.
- Personal statement (if needed for your application).
- Completed questionnaire- Answer all the following questions
 - What Biocore course(s) have you taken with recommender?
 - Who were your TAs for these classes?
 - What are you applying for? Internship, scholarship, job, graduate school, medical school? Please provide materials describing the program.
 - Who should your letter be addressed to?
 - Why do you want to go to _____ (place we will send this recommendation)? *(This doesn't have to be a formal essay, but any comments will help us know if this is somewhere we think you will be well suited. If you already have a draft of your personal statement, you can provide that here.)*
 - What was your biggest accomplishment in this Biocore class?
 - What was a struggle that you over came on a project or concept?
 - What did you bring to your group(s)?
 - Did you participate in Biocore Outreach Ambassadors, Biocore Peer Mentoring, ug TA, BOD? Please describe when you were involved, what you did and what you learned from these experiences.

Completing your Request for a Letter of Recommendation:

- Provide all documents in ONE email or deliver a hard copy of all documents to your letter writer when you meet with them.
- If you email your material, please save your documents with the following format " name and letter due date" in the email

subject heading

Example: "brad_martin_letter_due_010509.doc"

- If you are applying to graduate school or medical school, initiate an account with Interfolio through the Career Services center - <http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/careers/students/reference.html>.
- If your letters are to be sent by post (snail mail) provide the envelopes, stamps and addresses for the places you are sending the recommendations.

GOOD LUCK! And let us know what happens with your application.

We are excited to see you succeed!

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