

Tips to Prepare for and Apply to Graduate School

Obtaining Good Letters of Recommendation

How many?

- Graduate schools will usually request 3.
- If you can obtain 4 very good letters, do it.

Who do you ask?

- Professionals who know you best.
- Professionals who will be able to say good things about you.
- Professors are best.
- Employers are good if the work is related to your field.
- Supervisors of volunteer work are good if the work is related to your field.

When do you ask?

- At least 2 weeks before the first graduate school deadline.
- Not more than 6 weeks before the first graduate school deadline.
- Never after the graduate school deadline!
- Plan to spend a few minutes with each recommender to share (with enthusiasm) your career goals.

What do you give the recommender?

- Your name.
- Your major and minor.
- Class(es) you took with the professor, along with the grade(s) received.
- Description of any projects completed for the course(s).
- Cum GPA, Major GPA, GRE scores.
- Description of work/volunteer experience related to your field.
- Description of research experience, including presentations and publications.
- List of organizations (e.g., Alpha Chi, Gamma Beta Phi, SOS, etc.) and leadership positions.
- List of conferences attended.
- Brief description of each graduate program to which you are applying.
- Any forms provided by each graduate school (with the waiver signed).
- A stamped and addressed envelope for each graduate school.

Am I done?

- No.
- One week before the deadline, check with each graduate school to verify that your application is complete.
- If letters of recommendation are missing, check with each recommender to verify that they have sent the letter.