

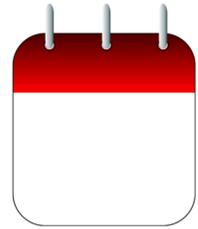
Letter of Recommendation workshop

What make for strong letters of recommendation?

1.

The referee knows the candidate for a long time in a relevant capacity

- ⇒ Having someone who can speak to your abilities in a relevant field is preferable to someone without such insight
- ⇒ Someone who has known you for longer is more capable of writing more and different kinds of (good) things about you



2.

Specific examples and anecdotes that back up impressions

- ⇒ Simply describing the candidate using positive adjectives is not as effective as backing them up with concrete examples and anecdotes as support



3.

Candidate compares very favourably against others

- ⇒ Ideally, the referee is able to compare the candidate against others (e.g. if candidate is a student, how do they compare against other students?)



Other useful things...

- ⇒ Letters shouldn't be too short—ideally can fill one page
- ⇒ Only positive comments—negative (e.g. mediocre)/neutral (e.g. satisfactory) adjectives hurt candidates' prospects
- ⇒ Be specific to the candidate—Unsupported praise or general flatteries are not recommended
- ⇒ Provide personal tone—summaries of information from application package are not helpful

Samples and resources:

- ⇒ How to write good letters of recommendation:
 - ⇒ <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/writing-a-reference-letter-with-examples/>
- ⇒ Samples of good letters of recommendation:
 - ⇒ <http://www.job-interview-wisdom.com/sample-reference-letters.html>
 - ⇒ <http://businessmajors.about.com/od/samplerrecommendations/tp/TopRecLetters.htm>