



Letters of Recommendation — Instructions for Using the Online Application & Frequently Asked Questions

Letters of recommendation from persons who know your academic qualifications are required. Recommenders should be chosen from people most familiar with your former studies, research interests, or work, including at least one instructor in the institution you last attended. The Graduate School prefers recommendations from instructors familiar with your work in the field in which you expect to study. If you have been out of school for some time, a letter from an employer or supervisor should be provided.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the Graduate School receives all of your credentials by the application deadline date. We encourage you to periodically check with those writing letters for you and remind them of the application deadline.

There are four simple steps for handling your letters of recommendation when using our online application.¹

A)—Name your recommenders on page 3 of the online application (**Step 2: Application Form**). This information will print on your application, providing important information for your department or program.

B)—Register your recommenders. *We strongly prefer that all recommenders use the online system. We ask that you register all of your recommenders, even if one has told you that he or she will submit their letter by mail.* To register a recommender, click the “*Register Recommender*” button in **Step 5: Recommendations** and complete the contact information for each recommender. If you have completed your application but are still waiting for letters of recommendation, go ahead and submit your application now. The letters of recommendation will be added to your application when they are submitted.

C)—Inform your recommenders that the Graduate School asks them to submit the recommendations online. There are advantages to you if they do so—the primary one is that your application and letters of recommendation can be joined together and transmitted to the Graduate School as one package, greatly facilitating the processing of your application and review by your program’s Admissions Committee. In addition, you can easily track the status of your recommendations, knowing when each letter is submitted or if some are still outstanding as described in Point D below.

If a recommender opts to submit his or her letter by mail, you should still register them in the online application. Then you must provide them with our official recommendation form. You should download a copy and email it to them, or print a copy and mail it to them. The Letter of Recommendation form is available in the online application in **Step 4: Supplemental Forms**. This form is personalized and pre-printed with important information from your application. Ask the recommender to complete the recommendation form and send it along with their letter to the Graduate School in a sealed envelope with her/his signature written across the flap. The recommendation form should be stapled to the front of the letter.

D)—Check the status of your recommendations frequently. You may view the status of the letters from registered recommenders at any time by logging onto the online application and going to **Step 5: Recommendations**. You will be informed by email when a registered recommender submits an online recommendation on your behalf.

¹ These steps describe the process for all applicants to the Graduate School of Arts and Science **except for** applicants to the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (certificate program). Postdoctoral applicants should mail in their letters of recommendation, following the specific instructions in the application.

Letters of Recommendation Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many letters of recommendation are required and who should write them?
2. Must all of my recommenders submit their letters online?
3. Can some of my recommenders submit the letters online, and others mail their letters?
4. My recommender does not have an email address and cannot be registered in the online system. What do I do?
5. I have more than three recommenders. Will they be accepted?
6. Should I wait to submit my application until all letters of recommendation are complete?
7. Do I have to submit my online application before my recommenders can access the system?
8. If my letters of recommendation are sent before I submit my online application, will there be a problem?
9. Can I add or change my recommenders after I have submitted my online application?
10. How can I get a copy of the letter of recommendation form to send to my recommender?
11. My recommender mailed the letter without including the Letter of Recommendation form. Is that a problem?
12. Can my recommenders fax or email their recommendation letters?
13. If my recommenders are mailing in their letters, does it matter if they come to me first or must they be mailed directly to GSAS?
14. How do I know if my recommender has received my request for them to write a recommendation?
15. My recommender hasn't completed their recommendation. What should I do?
16. My recommender says they never received the notification email asking them to write a recommendation, or they accidentally lost the email. What should I do?
17. My recommender is having trouble accessing the online system. What should they do?
18. Do you accept recommendations or other documents from a credentials service or a career services office (e.g., Interfolio or my undergraduate institution)?
19. How do I know if you received my recommendation from a specific recommender?

1. How many letters of recommendation are required and who should write them?

Three letters of recommendation from persons who know your academic qualifications are required. Recommenders should be chosen from people most familiar with your former studies, research interests, or work, including at least one instructor in the institution you last attended. The Graduate School prefers recommendations from instructors familiar with your work in the field in which you expect to study. If you have been out of school for some time, a letter from an employer or supervisor should be provided.

Exceptions to the policy of three letters of recommendation are as follows: (1) the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis requires four letters of recommendation; (2) the advanced certificate program in Ergonomics requires two references, but they are not asked to write letters of recommendation.

2. Must all of my recommenders submit their letters online?

The Graduate School asks that you register your recommenders in the online application and strongly prefers that your recommenders use the online system. It is easy for the recommender, greatly facilitates the processing of your application, and insures the department receives all materials together at the same time. If one of your recommenders opts to mail his or her letter, please provide them with our official recommendation form. See the answer to question 10 (below) for how to obtain a copy of the form, if you do not have one.

3. Can some of my recommenders submit the letters online, and others mail their letters?

Yes. Again, we ask that you register all recommenders in the online system even if some opt to submit by mail.

4. My recommender does not have an email address and cannot be registered in the online system. What do I do?

If your recommender does not have an email address, then you cannot register them in the online system. Since you cannot register them, you should ask them to submit their recommendation by mail. Please provide them with our official recommendation form. See the answer to question 10 (below) for how to obtain a copy of the form, if you do not have one.

5. I have more than three recommenders. Will they be accepted?

The Graduate School requires three letters of recommendation (except for the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis which requires four). Most applicants find this number is sufficient and you should not submit additional letters unless there are strong reasons for doing so.

For those applicants who choose to use more than three recommenders, we allow you to register as many as five recommenders in **Step 5: Recommendations**.

6. Should I wait to submit my application until all letters of recommendation are complete?

No. Submit your application as soon as you have completed it. We will match your letters of recommendation to your application when they arrive.

7. Do I have to submit my online application before my recommenders can access the system?

No. We encourage you to register your recommenders early, even before you submit your application. Once your recommender is registered, he or she will receive an email with information on how they can access the system to submit a recommendation on your behalf. Then, after you submit your online application, it will be matched with all letters submitted on your behalf.

8. If my letters of recommendation are sent before I submit my online application, will there be a problem?

No, there will not be a problem. The letters will be matched with your application once you submit it.

9. Can I add or change my recommenders after I have submitted my online application?

You can register additional or replacement recommenders after you have submitted your online application. You do this in **Step 5: Recommendations**. You cannot revoke a recommendation letter once it has been submitted by the recommender.

10. How can I get a copy of the letter of recommendation form to send to my recommender?

You should download and print the Letter of Recommendation form from your online application. It is available online in **Step 4: Supplemental Forms**. This form is personalized and pre-printed with important information from your application.

11. My recommender mailed the letter without including the Letter of Recommendation form. Is that a problem?

No, it is not a problem. While we prefer that the Letter of Recommendation form is included, we will receive the letter and successfully match it to your application without the official form.

12. Can my recommenders fax or email their recommendation letters to the Graduate School?

No.

13. If my recommenders are mailing in their letters, does it matter if they are sent to me first or must they be mailed directly to GSAS?

Either option is okay. If recommenders are mailing their letters to us, they should be instructed to place their completed Letter of Recommendation form and letter in a sealed envelope, with their signature across the flap. Then, you may send it to us by mail or the recommender can mail it to us directly.

14. How do I know if my recommender has received my request for them to write a recommendation?

If you are applying online, you can check the status of your recommendations for each registered recommender by going to **Step 5: Recommendations** in your online application. Review the box labeled "Status." If it says "Registration Unconfirmed," then your recommender has not begun the recommendation process. However, this doesn't mean there is a problem. They may have received the notification email, but just not signed-in to the online system yet. Once they sign-in and begin the process, the status box will say "In Progress." Once they submit your recommendation, the status box will say "Submitted." You will also receive an email notification when the recommendation is submitted.

15. My recommender hasn't completed their recommendation. What should I do?

You can resend the registration email to your recommender by going to **Step 5: Recommendations** in your online application, checking the box next to the recommender's name, and then clicking on "Resend Registration Email." You can email or telephone them personally. If you are unsuccessful in reaching your recommender, or are concerned they will not submit a letter on your behalf, you may want to ask someone else to submit a letter for you.

16. My recommender says they never received the registration email asking them to write a recommendation, or they accidentally lost the email. What should I do?

The most common reason why the registration email is not received by a recommender is because the notification email is blocked by a “spam” filter as part of their email software. The registration emails are sent from <mailto:notification@review.com>. Please ask your recommender to double-check their email messages and their spam folder, looking for a message from “Embark Online Recommendations” with a subject line that says, “*Your Name* Online Recommendation,” where *Your Name* is the name on your online application.

If they cannot find the email message, or they accidentally lost it, you can resend the registration email message to your recommender. Go to **Step 5: Recommendations** in your online application, check the box next to the recommender’s name, then click “Resend Registration Email.” You can still do this if you have already submitted the online application.

If they still do not receive the email message after the second attempt, then you will need to ask them to send the recommendation by mail. Please see the answer to question 10 (above).

17. My recommender is having trouble accessing the online system. What should they do?

Please ask your recommender to contact Embark, the online application provider. The email for technical assistance is support@embark.com. Their office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time.

18. Do you accept recommendations or other documents from a credentials service or a career services office (e.g., Interfolio or my undergraduate institution)?

Although we accept letters of recommendation via Interfolio and other credentials services, it is not our preferred method. We strongly urge you to ask your recommenders to use the online application system to submit their letters. It is easy for the recommender, greatly facilitates the processing of your application, and insures the department receives all materials together at the same time. If Interfolio or another service sends the letters of recommendation, we know that they may not include the official Letter of Recommendation form along with the letters. That is fine.

We do not accept any other documents through Interfolio and other services. The personal statement should be included in your online application and not sent through them. Transcripts and translations should be uploaded to your online application, as well.

19. How do I know if you received my recommendation from a specific recommender?

You can check the status of your recommendations for each registered recommender by going to **Step 5: Recommendations** in your online application. Review the box labeled “Status.” Once a recommender submits your recommendation, the status box will say “Submitted.” You will also receive an email notification when the recommendation is submitted. If it is submitted, this means that the recommendation has been sent to the Graduate School on your behalf.

You may also check which application materials the Graduate School has received on your behalf by visiting the GSAS Supporting Materials Tracking System (SMTS) on our web site at www.nyu.edu/gsas/request/smts.html. In order to use SMTS, you need to have your NYU ID number (UID). You will receive your UID in an acknowledgment that the Graduate School sends you after it processes your application. SMTS will show if we received any recommendations by mail. However, please be aware that we cannot tell you the names associated with the recommendations we have received by mail; we can only tell you the number of letters we have received. Thus, we encourage you to use the online application system for recommendations so you can track the status.