

# Letters of Recommendation at UC Berkeley

## Tools for Students

### Frequently Asked Questions

**If I'm not selected to submit letters of recommendation, can I still submit them?**

No other supplemental information will be included in the application unless it is requested.

**Are these letters required?**

These letters are optional. Students without a letter will not be at a disadvantage, but we do highly encourage invited students to use this opportunity as it can provide additional academic and personal context.

**Who should write the letter(s)?**

One letter should be written by an academic teacher or instructor. The second letter can be written by anyone the student selects, ideally someone who knows them well. Examples include a second teacher, college adviser or counselor, a coach, employer, clergy, etc.

**How will I be able to submit my letters of recommendation to UC Berkeley?**

Students will be invited by email to complete an online form and provide the contact information of the individuals who are writing the letters. Once the form is submitted, recommenders will receive an email with instructions on how to submit letters electronically to UC Berkeley. Please do not submit these letters to the UC Application Center or mail a copy to the campus.

**What is the deadline?**

All letters must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (PST) on January 3. After this date, it is not guaranteed that the letter can be read as part of the application review.

**Will other UC campuses I applied to be able to see my letters of recommendation?**

No, these letters are submitted directly to UC Berkeley and are only used in the review process.

## Timeline:

Activity	Date
UC application opens	August 1
UC application submission period	October 1 – November 30
Request for letters sent to students	October through early December
Letters of recommendation due	January 3

## Two Important Steps:

1. Fill out the UC Application. This is used to apply to all UC campuses.
2. UC Berkeley will then email some students the request for letters of recommendation.

## How can I request letters of recommendation for Berkeley?

- Once the UC Application is submitted and UC Berkeley is selected as one of your choices, some students will receive an email communication with a link taking them to the Recommendation Request Form.
- Provide the information of the individual(s) you have asked to write letters on your behalf on the form.
- Up to two letters of recommendation can be submitted electronically.
- Once you submit the form, your recommenders will receive an email with instructions on how to submit letters electronically.

## Before you ask individuals to write letters on your behalf?

- **Ask yourself:** Who knows me best? Letters of recommendation can provide important information about you, so think about who knows you well, both in and outside of the classroom.
- **Remember the Berkeley values:**
  - Love of learning
  - Leadership
  - Persistence in the face of challenges
  - Cross-cultural engagement
  - Originality or creativity
  - Concern for others
- **Determine:** Who can speak to these characteristics? Identify people who know how you embody one or all of the Berkeley values.

## Who to ask and when?

- **Communicate** with your recommenders ahead of time!
  - Make sure to ask first. Do not assume they will agree to write a letter for you.
  - If they agree, provide them with information about your recent activities, accomplishments, and other information that might help them craft a strong letter.
  - Make sure they know deadlines, details, and how the process will work for them.
- **Don't wait!** Give your recommenders the courtesy of time. The more time they have, the more time they can spend writing you a strong letter. And remember to **thank** them!

## Best Practices:

- Request a letter from a teacher who teaches a class related to what you want to study.
  - This is especially important for students applying to professional schools like the Colleges of Engineering and Chemistry.
- Look at the list of Berkeley values listed above and think about who can best address one or more of these traits.
- Waive your right to read the letter (optional, but preferred by many letter writers and institutions).
- Don't automatically ask your favorite teacher. Consider if that teacher is the one who knows you best.

## Try to avoid:

- Requesting a letter from someone who does not know you well, but may have a recognizable name, position, or title.
  - e.g. legislators, administrators, famous names, etc.
- Asking for more than two letters. We will only accept the first two letters.
- Paying anyone to write a letter for you.
- Changing your email address during the application process. Keep one email for all of your college applications.