

# FVS Handbook: Letter of Recommendation Policy

## Overview

Each academic year, faculty in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) collectively write tens of thousands of recommendation letters for students and alumni. Faculty invest considerable time and effort crafting detailed and thoughtful letters that present each candidate in their best possible light. To ensure this process runs efficiently and respectfully, the following guidelines govern all requests for letters of recommendation.

## Guidelines for Requesting Letters of Recommendation

### Step 1: Planning for Letters of Recommendation

#### 1. Advance Notice

Submit all requests for recommendation letters at least three weeks in advance of the due date—preferably four. Even if a letter already exists on file, faculty should not be expected to simply “tweak” or reuse it for a new purpose, as each letter typically requires significant revision.

#### 2. Purpose of the Request

Provide a written description of the purpose of the letter, as well as any institutional instructions or guidelines provided to recommenders. If multiple letters are needed (for example, fellowship applications, summer grants, or academic job applications), include a detailed list describing each one and its associated due date when you submit your initial letter request.

#### 3. Discussion with Advisor/Recommender

Offer to meet with your advisor/recommender to discuss your application to ensure that it is the right fit and that you have the necessary qualifications. Many of our faculty have served on internal and external nominating committees and understand the qualifications necessary to be considered a competitive applicant for specific fellowships and grants. In certain circumstances (including, but not limited to, not having approved dissertation chapters, being on academic probation, or progress to degree issues, etc.), faculty may decline writing a letter of recommendation if qualifications are not met or if the student fails to follow the guidelines for recommendation letter requests.

### Step 2: Submitting Your Supporting Materials

#### 1. General Supporting Materials

The following documents have to be submitted *only once* per application season (some of these materials might not be applicable, depending on your letter requests):

- A current Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Copies of class papers (with instructor comments, if available)
- A writing sample (if applicable)
- An unofficial transcript
- Forms and waivers (if applicable)

## 2. Materials for Individual Letter Requests

When requesting a recommendation letter, please compile a single, clearly formatted list in a Word document (not in the body of an email) that includes the following information:

- **Position description:** Submit a one-paragraph description of the grant, job, or other opportunity *in your own words*. Since faculty do not have time to browse through several websites for each letter of recommendation, please do not just submit links. Please keep the description concise when summarizing (one paragraph).
- **Position profile/keywords:** Submit a one-paragraph description why you are suited for this particular position and why you fit the profile *in your own words*. If applicable, please also include a list of keywords that best describe the position profile (e.g. a specific field, an intersection of fields, set of expertise, specific academic background, etc.).
- **Addressee:** Indicate the addressee to whom the letter should be addressed (e.g. name of committee chair, or of a specific committee).
- **Submission Date:** Clearly state the submission date for the letter of recommendation; if the letter is due by a specific time (e.g. 12pm, 5pm, midnight), please include this as well.
- **Submission Method:** Indicate the mode of delivery and address (e.g., upload, email, or mailed submission); if submitted by email, please make sure to include the email address and, if applicable, the name of the addressee.
- **Format:** Include your name at the top of the document and in the header of each page.
- **Forms:** Complete any required forms in full— please do not leave sections for the recommender to fill (if this information is available to you).
- **Waiver:** Indicate your choice regarding the confidentiality waiver on the application form. Please note that confidential letters generally carry significantly greater weight.

# Letter of Recommendation Request Form

Directions: Please read the written policy in the FVS Handbook and this form completely. Follow all instructions on this form and in the written policy. Complete the form and send your request for a letter of recommendation to your faculty recommender and copy Emily Amendola. Without this form completely filled out, faculty are unable to write letters of recommendation.

Please note, this form needs to be submitted only once per application season.

## Applicant Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Planning for Letters of Recommendation

### 1. Advance Notice

Requested Submission Date (for first letter): \_\_\_\_\_

Was this request submitted at least 3–4 weeks in advance?

Yes  No

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### 2. Purpose of Request

Type of Opportunity (check all that apply):

Fellowship

Grant

Job

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Purpose (attach additional page, website links, if needed):

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### 3. Discussion with Recommender

Have you offered to meet with your recommender?  Yes  No

Meeting Date (if applicable):

Additional Notes (optional):

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## Supporting Materials

Please check all materials included:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Class Papers (with instructor comments, if available)
- Writing Sample (if applicable)
- Unofficial Transcript
- Forms and Waivers (if applicable)

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## Applicant Certification

I confirm that all information provided is accurate and complete.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Individual Letter Request Form

Directions: Following the submission of your initial Letter of Recommendation Request Form (due once per application season), please submit this form for each individual letter request.

## Applicant Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Position Description (1 paragraph)

*Submit a one-paragraph description of the grant, job, or other opportunity in your own words. Since faculty do not have time to browse through several websites for each letter of recommendation, please do not just submit links. Please keep the description concise when summarizing (one paragraph).*

### 2. Position Profile / Keywords (1 paragraph + keywords)

*Submit a one-paragraph description why you are suited for this particular position and why you fit the profile in your own words. If applicable, please also include a list of keywords that best describe the position profile (e.g. a specific field, an intersection of fields, set of expertise, specific academic background, etc.).*

### 3. Addressee

*Indicate the addressee to whom the letter should be addressed (e.g. name of committee chair, or of a specific selection committee).*

**Name/Committee/Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 4. Submission Details

**Submission Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission Time (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission Method:**

- Link/Upload
- Email
- Mail

**Submission Address/Email (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 5. Forms

**All required forms completed (if applicable):**

- Yes  No
- 

### 6. Supporting Materials

[If relevant for this application and/or changes to initial submission]

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
  - Class Papers (with instructor comments, if available)
  - Writing Sample (if applicable)
  - Unofficial Transcript
  - Forms and Waivers (if applicable)
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## 7. Waiver of Confidentiality

### Waiver Selection:

- I waive my right to view this letter (confidential)
  - I do not waive my right
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## 8. Applicant Certification

I confirm that all information provided is accurate and complete.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_