

Reference Letter Policy for Students

Professor Gallagher (megan.gallagher@ua.edu)

I am happy to write letters of reference for students who have excelled in my classes, provided that the following conditions are met.

1. I know you well enough to write a substantive and positive letter. Ideally you have taken at least two classes with me but at minimum you have completed one and earned an A or B. If you performed poorly in my class and/or had irregular attendance, you should find a different letter writer.

2. There is sufficient time for submission. Barring exceptional circumstances, I do not write new reference letters with less than three weeks notice. Please ensure that submission requests are provided well in advance of the due date.

3. There is sufficient information upon which to base a letter. To make it easy for me to write a positive letter on your behalf, please provide me via email with:

- a one page overview that lists:
 - all of the classes you have taken with me, and which semester the classes were taken
 - your final grades in the classes
 - information on your written assignments for the classes (paper topics and grades); if you have the papers themselves, that is even better
 - any other information that you feel may be relevant.
- a list of all of the schools or scholarship programs to which you are applying, the type of program (e.g., law school, MPA, MA), the type of submission (mail or electronic), and the due dates. Provide this even if there is only one application.
- your CV/resume
- an unofficial copy of your transcript
- any personal statement/research statement/cover letters you will be submitting with your applications

4. I have the relevant materials to submit: For reference letters that require mailed submissions, please provide: (1) a physical copy of each form (if applicable), with your information completed; and (2) an addressed, stamped envelope for each school (put the GRS departmental address as the return address). (Most institutions that use snail mail require that the letters be mailed directly from the letter writer, with their signature across the back of the envelope.) Please note that I do not courier or fax reference letters.

5. Follow up!: When you request the reference letter(s), I will provide you with an estimated date on when I will submit the letter(s). Please check with me to confirm that the letters were in fact submitted.

Good luck with your applications!

Reference Letter Request: Student Checklist

- I am requesting the letters at least three weeks in advance of the due date.

- I have provided the professor with a one page overview that lists:
 - all of the classes you have taken with her, and when the classes were taken;
 - my final grades in the classes;
 - information on my written assignments for the classes (paper topics and grades);
 - any other information that I feel may be relevant.
 - a clear list of all of the schools or scholarship programs to which I am applying, the type of program (e.g., law school, MPA, MA), the type of submission (mail or electronic) and the due dates.

- If the program requires a hard copy reference, I have provided the professor with:
 - a physical copy of each form (if applicable), with my information completed; and
 - an addressed, stamped envelope for each program (with the departmental address as the return address).

- I have added a date to my calendar to follow up with the professor about the reference letter submissions.