



HUMAN BIOLOGY

PROGRAM AT
HUNTER COLLEGE

Pro Tips

Requesting a Recommendation Letter

As you plan to continue your education after your undergraduate studies, you may need to ask a professor for a recommendation letter. Start early! Having your information together and planning in advance ensures a more organized application and a less stressful experience.

Preparing Your Request

- ✓ **Review the requirements** for the recommendation letter(s) you need. Usually, programs request letters from professors who belong to certain departments, or have worked with you for more than one semester. In addition, some programs may include specific topics that they want your recommender to cover in their letter. Make a list to keep track.
- ✓ **Reflect** on your most recent years in college. Remember that you want your recommenders to be professionals who know you well, and who you have worked closely with recently. Think about your recent classes, specifically the ones you excelled in, when trying to find a professor to ask to recommend you.
- ✓ **Narrow down your list** to professors whose fields are connected to that which you are applying for. Make sure you are also thinking about when you worked with this professor last. Choosing a professor that you had for one semester in your freshman year will make for an impersonal letter that doesn't describe you in the current moment. On the other hand, choosing a professor who you have taken multiple courses with or have conducted research with will make sure that your letter is detailed.
- ✓ **Find out when your recommendation letters are due.** From there, find a date that is about two weeks prior-- that will be the date you ask your recommenders to submit their letters by. Leaving room for any last-minute changes ensures that your application is finished on time and that your recommender can reach out to you with any questions or ask for an extension. *(*You should be giving your recommender at least three weeks to work on this letter, meaning that you should begin this planning process well in advance of your application's due date!*)*

Reaching Out

- ✓ **Email** the professor who you are asking to recommend you. Be sure to provide...
 - your name
 - courses you took with this professor
 - more information about the program or position to which you are applying (with links, if possible)
 - why you are interested in this program/position (and why you think you're qualified)
 - why you chose this professor
 - more information about your studies (to catch them up from when they last worked with you)
 - your long-term career goals
 - any additional information that you need included in your letter
 - the due date for their letter
 - information on how the letter would need to be submitted

CONTACT US

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Following Up

- ✓ **Follow up with your recommenders.** Email them when you receive their letter, thanking them for their time. In addition, feel free to reach out when you receive the good news about your accepted application! Keeping that channel of communication open with your recommenders increases the chances of future opportunities and possible additional recommendations. Feel free to reach out to them even after you begin the next chapter of your studies; keeping in contact is networking!

SAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: Recommendation Letter Request

Message:

Hi Dr. [Professor's Last Name],

I hope this email finds you well! My name is [Your Name] and I'm currently a senior at Hunter majoring in Human Biology, working on planning my next steps after graduation. After taking ANTHP 302 with you during the Spring 2019 semester, I found myself interested in genetics and am now pursuing becoming a genetics counselor. In order to achieve this, I am planning on applying to Stanford's Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling MS Program. I'm writing to ask you if you would be willing to write a recommendation letter for me. Although this program is highly competitive, I believe that my multiple internships with the New York Presbyterian Hospital network and experience working in Dr. Science's research lab can speak for my familiarity with the subject and ability to handle a rigorous courseload. Since ANTHP 302, I have completed my Human Biology major and also decided to pursue my interest in human development by minoring in Psychology. I hope that, after my graduate studies, I'll be able to assist patients in planning their family's growth as a genetics counselor. If you are able to recommend me for this program, I would need the letter submitted through the Stanford application portal by March 16. According to Stanford's website, your letter would specifically address my performance in ANTHP 302. I have attached my unofficial transcript as well as my final paper to refresh your memory. If you need any other information or have any questions, feel free to reach out to me! Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Best,
[Your Name]

C O N T A C T U S

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