

So, you want a letter of recommendation? If you want faculty to agree to write letters on your behalf, you want the letters turned in on time, and you want the letters to be effective there are some general rules of etiquette to keep in mind. First and foremost it is not uncommon for faculty in our department to write between 70 and 100 letters during "letter season". Help us help you by being organized and directed in your approach.

Etiquette:

- Before asking for letters thoroughly research programs you may be interested in. *You might have a list of 15 or more initially. You need to narrow this to 6 programs.* Two can be dream programs, 2 should be a good match to your background and academic record, and 2 should be "back up" programs. If you do not get into 1 of these 6 programs with this organized approach, you would not have been accepted into any of the 15 original programs. Narrowing your list allows you to focus and put together better application packets and prevents you and us from wasting time. A poorly and quickly put together application has a low probability of getting you into any program. **Timeline:** *This narrowed list should be completed a month to a month and half before the first application deadline.*
- Now that you have narrowed your programs to six you can set out to find letter writers. You will get the best letters from faculty with whom you have had more than one class, or with whom you have conducted research. If the faculty member has had you in only one class it should be a class in which you achieved something distinctive. **Choose faculty members that can say something about your ability in the field of the program(s) where you are applying.** It does not make sense for an organic professor to write you a recommendation letter for a botany program (unless they are your academic advisor)! **Timeline:** *Make a list of faculty members to talk to a month or more before the first deadline.*
- Using your list, request appointments to talk to the professors (some professors in some instances may be comfortable agreeing to write letters through an e-mail discussion). Your application to these programs is a big deal and it is better to have time for discussion instead of just catching the faculty member in passing. If the faculty member does agree to write your letters you should be prepared to provide a list of programs organized by due date that includes a description of the program, physical address of the program, web link to program, and a detailed process for how the letter of recommendations need to be submitted for each program. An example is shown below. **Timeline:** *As soon as a professor has agreed to write a letter for you, supply them with a copy of your transcript, resume, and a letter of intent (or other application type essay)*
- **Point of emphasis:** Members of the Chemistry and Biochemistry department will not write letters for past due applications. Many places are willing to take your application fee and past due application even though you have **no significant** chance of getting into the program. It is best not to waste your money and our time.
- **Point of emphasis:** If you are asking for a letter where a deadline is less than a month away, expect that it may not be possible for the faculty member to produce a good letter. It is highly likely that the faculty member will not have enough time to write any letter at this point.
- **Point of emphasis: It is not** permissible to add programs to the originally agreed upon six without contacting the faculty member and getting their permission. IF there are compelling reasons to want to add additional programs make an appointment to talk to the faculty member. **"I stumbled upon this really cool program while browsing the web. My friend is applying to this program. I found a program by the beach."** The preceding examples are NOT compelling reasons to add programs.

Due Date	Program (REU examples)	Website	Labs interested in	Submission instructions
2/19/2016	FDA Summer Student Research Program (NCTR) designed for science and mathematics students preparing for future careers in toxicology, regulatory science, or related scientific disciplines.	http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/WorkingatFDA/FellowshipInternshipGraduateFacultyPrograms/ucm243662.htm	NA	Electronic: Z-intellect will send an email invitation to your faculty email address. This invitation will provide instructions on how to upload the letter of recommendation to their website as either a word document or a PDF.
3/1/2016	University of California, Irvine (UCI) 10-week summer research opportunity for undergraduates in the STEM disciplines including the fields of Biochemistry; Chemical Biology, Chemical Engineering; Chemical Physics, Computer Science, Molecular Biology, Material Science; Nanoscience, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharmacology, and Analytical, Atmospheric, Bioinorganic, Bioorganic, Computational, Environmental, Inorganic, Organic, Physical, Polymer, Surface, and Theoretical Chemistry	http://www.chem.uci.edu/reu/	Elizabeth Jarvo: Stereospecific Cross-Coupling Reactions for Synthesis of Anti-Cancer Compounds Shau-Chuan (Sheryl) Tsai: Molecular Biology and Biochemistry; Pharmaceutical Sciences: Chemical Biology and Structural Enzymology of Natural Product Biosynthesis Christopher D. Vanderwal: Synthesis of Diverse Heterocycles Starting from Pyridines	This program prefers that an electronic copy of the letter of recommendation be e-mailed directly as a PDF attachment to: chemsurf@chem.uci.edu
Due Date	Program (Gradschool examples)	Website	Labs interested in	Submission instructions
15-Dec-15	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Department of Chemical Engineering Master's program	http://www.engin.umich.edu/che/graduate/applying	Admitted graduated students do three rotations before selection whom they would like to do research with.	Once my online information is submitted the University of Michigan will send an e-mail to your faculty e-mail address. This e-mail will indicate my name, the program I applying to and provide instructions n how to electronically submit the letter of recommendations.