

**Requesting Letters of Recommendation for Study Abroad, Cross Cultural
Trips and Scholarships**

- **Ask first:** Before you prepare your materials ask your potential letter writers if they would be comfortable writing you a strong letter of recommendation for you.

- Pay attention to the type of recommenders the program requires (Some require recommendations from professors or supervisors in specific areas.)

- Be well prepared:

1. Prepare a typed request in memo form that details the following:

- The name and address of the agency/program/organization to which you are applying. If possible, also provide the name and credentials of the person the letter should be addressed to. (In general, a letter to a specific person will make a better impression than one addressed to “To whom it may concern”.)
- If traveling, include a brief summary about why you are interested in travel to this particular location.
- Include a copy of your resume which lists your current GPA. In many cases it will be helpful to meet with your letter writer to discuss your interests, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Specific instructions on how the recommendations are to be done such as:
 - Indicate if a separate letter is required in addition to a form provided by the program.
 - State whether the recommendation should be in a sealed envelope with the writer’s signature across the seal.
 - State whether the recommendation should be returned to you or mailed directly to the program. If it should be mailed directly to the program, be sure to include the mailing address, including the department or person to whom the recommendation should be addressed.
 - Include the deadline when the recommendations should be returned to you or to the program.

2. If the program has a recommendation form, fill out the information you need to provide. If you need to sign the form do so in blue ink (not black). Many forms require that you sign a form indicating your preferences

regarding confidentiality. Be sure that you take care of this before you give forms to your recommenders.

Some forms are available electronically or may be completed interactively on the web. If forms are involved, ask your recommender if they prefer to receive a paper copy of the form or if you should e-mail them an electronic copy. **Do not** send your recommender a web link and expect them to search for information.

If you e-mail your recommenders an electronic copy of the form you still need to type in your name (and any other information you need to provide such as the program you are applying to or your address).

3. If your letter writer is a faculty member at Messiah College, the faculty member will provide you with a college stationary envelope. If your letter writer is off campus you should provide him/her with both an envelope and the appropriate postage.

-Allow your recommender adequate time. Provide your recommenders with the necessary information a **minimum** of two - three weeks before you need the completed recommendation. Keep in mind that Messiah College faculty are not on contract during the summer months. Plan accordingly.