

## Policy on Recommendation Letters

When you apply for a scholarship, job, or graduate program, you may be asked to provide recommendations that vouch for your ability and potential. You may even want me to write a letter on your behalf. I am happy to write recommendation letters for students with whom I've interacted, but I also take that privilege very seriously.

As such, I have a few policies to ensure I am fair to all requestors and that I am able to write an honest and comprehensive (you want this) letter. I will only write recommendation letters for students who meet the following criteria:

- Must have taken at least one class with me
- Must have finished in the top 20% of my class
- Requests the recommendation letter at least 1 month before the deadline
- Waives their right of review, if applicable

If you meet the above criteria, I ask that you send me an email with the following information, typically in a google spreadsheet:

- Name of the program, organization, or scholarship you are applying to/for
- The deadline for the recommendation letter
- The contact information for the program and/or organization, if necessary
- A description of the things you'd like me to focus on with the letter (e.g., your ability to analyze data, program using different languages, and/or produce academic studies)
- A copy of your resume or CV, and any relevant documents (e.g., cover letter or essay)

If you think you may want me to someday write a recommendation letter for you, **please** come chat with me outside of class. If you're thinking that far ahead, chances are I would like to get to know you better. This will enable me to write a more comprehensive assessment of your ability. (A great deal of aptitude may not come through during class time alone.)

If you have any questions about this policy, please get in touch. If I decide not to write a recommendation letter on your behalf, it does not mean that I question your ability. It simply means that I cannot highly recommend you based on the available evidence. Therefore, you probably want someone else to write a letter for you.

Professor Lei