



CAREER CENTER
ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY
320.308.2151
Centennial Hall 215
www.stcloudstate.edu/careercenter

Guidelines for Recommendation Writers

Dear Recommendation Writer:

On behalf of St. Cloud State University and the Career Center, we want to thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for one of our students/alumni. We sincerely believe that letters of recommendation are a valuable aid to candidates seeking employment. It is our hope that you will be able to write an objective and meaningful recommendation. If you feel that you cannot write positively on behalf of the candidate, please discuss this with the candidate and feel free to deny the request for a reference. Please note that according to Minnesota Statutes, the candidate upon request may review all recommendations.

In an effort to assist you in writing as positive and relevant a reference as possible, we have encouraged the candidate to complete the back of this sheet highlighting some of their significant accomplishments and experiences. We have also listed below some "Suggested Guidelines for Reference Writers" that may be of help to you in this process.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR REFERENCE WRITERS

- Do not give out information about the candidate without the candidate's written consent.
- Write your letter on company or department letterhead stationery, if possible.
- Address your letter "To Whom It May Concern."
- Indicate that you are "writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of (insert candidate's name)."
- Know the purpose of the letter. Is it for employment, graduate school, internship, other? Find out from the candidate what skills, knowledge, training or qualities their prospective employers or graduate schools may be seeking and try to target your letter accordingly.
- Use specific examples, based on your personal experience with and/or observation of the candidate, to support what you are relating about him/her.
- Convey factual information (rather than subjective judgments) on how the candidate has performed in your class, on the job, in an organization, etc. Be able to document all of the information you release.
- If you express an opinion, clearly identify it as an opinion and not a fact and explain the circumstances upon which you base the opinion.
- Be positive, honest and objective.
- Do not include information that might indicate the individual's race, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, citizenship status, gender (unless by the individual's name it is obvious) or marital status.
- Keep a copy of the letter of recommendation for your file as well as the candidate's written request (or consent) for a recommendation from you.
- Make arrangements to have the recommendation letter picked up by the candidate, mailed or emailed.

Your willingness to assist our students/alumni is greatly appreciated.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION SHEET For Writing Letters of Recommendation

NOTE TO CANDIDATE: Letters of recommendation play an important role in helping employers and graduate schools make their candidate selections. Therefore, it is crucial that you identify recommendation writers who know you well enough to give potential employers or graduate schools specific examples of your relevant skills, knowledge, training and qualities. In order for writers to be able to do this, they must be familiar with your background and career goals. They must also know something about the skills, knowledge, training and qualities sought by your potential employers or graduate schools.

In order to assist your references in writing the strongest possible letter of recommendation, we suggest that you complete this Candidate Information Sheet and offer it to your writers after they have agreed to serve as a reference. You may also want to provide them with a copy of your resume. It is also recommended that you discuss your significant qualifications with them prior to their writing your letter of recommendation.

CANDIDATE: Please complete the following:

Anticipated Date of Graduation: _____

Name: _____ Degree Level: BA ____ BS ____ Other _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Major(s): _____ Minor(s): _____

Emphasis: _____ Certificates: _____

1. In what capacity does this recommendation writer know you (classroom instructor, advisor, supervisor, university or community organization, other)? List all that apply. Include relevant dates.
2. Career Goal: What job(s) or internship(s) are you seeking or why are you applying to graduate school?
3. What are the key skills, knowledge, training and qualities potential employers or schools may be seeking?
4. Please list employment, internships, volunteer work, academic projects, extracurricular, leadership or group activities or other experiences that may be used to cite relevant skills, knowledge, training and qualities.
5. Significant accomplishments (from items in #4 or elsewhere) that might be highlighted.
6. Anything else that may make the reference more productive.