

Letter of Recommendation Instructions
Dr. Brian Wissman
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

If I have agreed to write a recommendation for you, please give me:

1. A copy of your unofficial transcript.
2. A copy of your personal statement and CV/resume if they are required for the application.
3. All necessary forms, paper-clipped together. (Separately, if there is more than one.)
4. For any applications requiring the recommendation be mailed directly, come see me for envelopes to address.

At least two weeks before the first letter is due, write up and give me your answers to the following questions (the more details the better):

1. What is your name, year, and major?
2. List the programs to which you are applying along with their due dates. (Sometimes the due date for your material is different than for the recommendations. Please give me the recommendation letter deadline.)
3. Who else (if anyone) is writing you a recommendation letter?
4. Why do you feel that I am particularly qualified to write you a letter?
5. Describe how you distinguished yourself in my class(es) or in the other contexts in which we interacted?
6. How would you describe yourself?
7. What are some of your academic accomplishments? (Include all you feel are noteworthy, even if you feel I know about them.)
8. What are some of your non-academic accomplishments?
9. Why are you a particularly good candidate for this position/honor/award?
10. What are your long term goals and will this position/honor/award help? If so, how?
11. Should I write a general letter about you or focus on any particular aspects, such as character or academic ability?
12. Additional comments (REU's, summer research, interesting jobs, hobbies, etc.)?

If any of your letters require online submission, please ensure you have completed the following steps at least one week before the first online letter is due:

1. Started the online application process.
2. Entered my details as a letter writer. My address, phone number and email address are 200 W. Kawili Street, Natural Sciences Division, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 932-7534, wissman@hawaii.edu Moreover, the Natural Sciences fax number is (808) 932-7218, and my title is “Associate Professor, Chair of Mathematics.”
3. Saved or submitted the results. This is important as this typically generates and sends an email to me giving me the link I need to submit the reference letter. Please try to complete this step for all your online applications as early as possible as it saves me time to submit all the letters at once rather than one every few days. (This will help me from missing a submission too!)

Two final remarks. One, please waive your rights to see your letters. David Richeson explains why it is to your advantage to do so. (Along with other very good information!) Secondly, many online applications ask for rankings in different categories (ability to work individually, in groups, motivation, drive to work beyond class material, ect.) so even if I have your letter written, it still takes time to complete your recommendations. (Another reason for you to get things in early.)

As always, I am more than happy to discuss the process with you, so feel free to talk with me.

(Based on a list from Peter McNamara.)