

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

A General Statement: Teachers recognize that many schools require students to have letters of recommendation and that we have an obligation, as a faculty, to assist students in meeting those requirements. Students should realize that composing an initial letter takes one to two hours. Each application can add an additional one half hour to complete. Asking a teacher to write letters for five schools, for example, can take several hours.

Expectations:

- Include all materials in a manila envelope
- **Print in chronological order on the outside of the envelope the schools with the dates that the applications are due**
- Include stamped envelopes attached to each application with the return address as:
**University High School
4771 Campus Drive
Irvine, Ca 92612**
- **Make sure that all portions of forms that you are responsible for are filled out; don't forget to sign it.**
- In the case of a "common form", include ONE copy of the form, indicate on your manila envelope which schools will require that form, and clip the form to all of the envelopes that will use the form.
- Submit all requests for letters at a single time.
- Give teachers a minimum of ten *working* days (and more if possible)

Things to Include:

- **Copy of transcript. This is a must.**
- Brag sheet – List SAT I and SAT II scores, AP exam scores, GSE exam scores. List of clubs, sports, honors, and activities outside of school. Work experiences and any hobbies that you have. Courses completed at any other campus.
- Answer the following prompts:
 1. *What are three words that you would use to describe yourself? Explain.*
 2. *How would a friend describe you? Explain.*
 3. *Have you received any academic awards or recognition while in high school? Include a description of the award and its significance to you.*
 4. *What aspect of your academic experience would you particularly wish to have pointed out as a strength? What weakness should be explained?*
 5. *Describe any circumstances that might have affected your school performance.*
 6. *Tell me how you made contributions to **my class** (AP Biology/CS2). If there was a project, activity that you excelled at; situation where you really improved; etc.*
 7. *What has been the most significant course you have taken in high school and why?*
 8. *Tell me about two significant activities (include community service and volunteering) that you have been involved in. What was your **role** in the activity and what impact has it had on you?*
 9. *Why should admissions choose you over another candidate? What makes you so special and different?*

- Specific things you may wish the teacher to note. Is there an event or circumstance that has altered your perspective on things or played a role in making you the person that you are?

Manners:

- Keep in mind that teachers of honors, AP and other upper division courses often receive more requests than they can reasonably handle. Ask early and have a backup choice.
- Understand that sometimes teachers do not feel comfortable writing letters for certain individuals. Respect their refusals.
- Choosing not to sign the “confidentiality waiver” may not be in your best interest. Many teachers feel constrained when their letters are shared with the student. The result is a letter that is more generic and does not describe your special abilities.
- Considering the limitations on teachers’ time, please apply only to schools that you are seriously considering attending.
- Asking two or more teachers from the same subject area in order to “split their load” only adds an additional burden on everyone. Please minimize the number of teachers per department whom you ask to write a letter.
- Teachers like to know if you were admitted to the school of your choice and where you plan to attend. Don’t forget to tell them.