

A Letter of Reference from Prof. Jake?

Updated by JJG, January 2024

Reference Policies

It is my professional responsibility to provide professional or grad school references to students who have taken classes with me or participated in my lab group. If you would like me to serve as a reference for you, please just ask via email.

I will tell you if I am unable to provide a positive and informative reference. There are some cases (e.g., medical school applications for a student who has taken one class with me) in which I may suggest that you find a referee who knows you better than I do.

The first letter of reference that I write for you always takes the longest for me to write. Please give me 1-2 weeks of notice if you need a “first” letter, but ask anyway if the schedule is tighter. After this, I appreciate three (working) days to a week of lead time for requests. More time is always fine!

My preference would be for you to send me an email with all of the information I need (see below) to write the reference. You can include this information in the same email in which you ask me to write the letter (I will say so if I have to decline!). If you are requesting several letters at once, you can share a spreadsheet with me in which you provide the information for each letter.

I am generally good at getting letters in ahead of time, but it is your responsibility to double-check and remind me if I have not turned the letter in by the day before its due date. Please just email me if it seems I have forgotten a letter!

Information to Provide for Each Letter

Not all information will be relevant to each letter. You can leave out elements that don’t seem to apply or are obvious. You don’t have to repeat the same information if you’re requesting a lot of similar letters or if you’re requesting a lot of letters at once.

Information to Provide	Example 1	Example 2
Name of Position or Program	Plant Ecology Intern	Ph.D. program
Name of Organization	Northern Research Station, USDA	Kim Lab, Department of Physical Geography, University of Northfield
Name of Letter recipient (if	Dr. Karen Lizárd (research	Graduate Program

available)	coordinator at NRS)	Admissions Committee
Due Date for Letter	29 May 1453	14 October 1066
How letter is to be submitted	Direct email to _____@usfs.gov	I will enter you as a reference and you will receive an email form.
Important qualifications/qualities to be mentioned in the letter	Experience with ecological fieldwork, comfortable working in teams	R Coding, familiarity with ecological literature, water relations physiology
Reminder of any major projects you completed for the class or research experience through which we interacted	In BIO 261, I studied radish and corn in the species interaction lab and compared the phenology of white oak and red maple in the phenology lab. In ENVST 137, my two group projects were on Indigenous knowledge around whale biology and the environmental impacts of soybean farming.	I was responsible for all lab group measurements of TLP in July 2023 and presented a poster about my findings at the CURI symposium.
Anything unusual about the position	This is a summer position that could get extended, so please comment on my strengths as a long-term USFS employee.	The Kim lab works mostly on soil fertility and erosion, so don't make this all about plants.

You can also share with me (optionally):

A copy of your updated resume or CV (if I haven't seen it recently)

Personal statement(s) or essay(s) for the position