

Law School Recommendation Letters

How are letters submitted to law schools?

You will collect your letters through the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) provided by LSAC.org. When you create your portfolio through CAS, you pay a fee to set up your file. Your file is available for your use for 5 years, however, many law schools will prefer your letters be newer than that. While your CAS fee pays for 5 years of use, you will pay additional fees to have reports (letters and transcripts) sent to individual law schools. Read more about [CAS Letters of Recommendation](https://www.lsac.org/applying-law-school/jd-application-process/credential-assembly-service-cas/letters-recommendation) <https://www.lsac.org/applying-law-school/jd-application-process/credential-assembly-service-cas/letters-recommendation>

How long are letters available for use?

As long as your CAS is active, your letters are available. Thus, your letters are available for 5 years. Many schools, however, prefer more recent letters. It is a good idea to discuss with schools if your letters will be more than 2 years old.

Do letters have to be electronically submitted?

It is preferable, but not required for your letters to be submitted electronically. Ideally you will enter your letter writer information into the CAS AFTER the letter writer has agreed to write the letter and the CAS system will email the letter writer directly with information allowing access so that the letter may be uploaded.

If a letter writer prefers to write a paper letter, you will need to print the required recommender form and provide it to your letter writer. They will need to send that form along with the signed letter to LSAC.

Can recommenders submit more than one letter?

Yes. If, for example, a letter writer wants to write a general letter that will go to all of your law schools but also wants to write a more specific letter for a law school that they attended, that can be done. You will need to follow the LSAC directions to specify the number of letters the writer will provide and then which letters are to be directed to which school.

How should I ask for a letter?

- Give your writer as much time as possible, preferably a month or more before you need the letter.
- Remember they are doing you a favor.
- Ask for an appointment before or after class or in an email, but **DO NOT** ask them to write the letter over email or before/after class.
- Ask for a letter in person. Explain you are applying to law school and ask if they can support your application by providing a **positive** letter of recommendation. You need to see their reaction. Is the request met positively? If the writer is hesitant to write a letter, thank them and move on.
- If the writer is willing, provide a résumé and other materials to assist the letter writer in writing the letter. Be willing to provide any additional materials they request. Follow up in a few weeks to see if they need any additional information.
- Check on CAS periodically to see if the letter has arrived. If not, check in with your letter writer.
- Once the letter has arrived, send a thank you note to your recommender.

Additional Tips...

- Make sure you talk to your letter writer **before** you list them in your application.
- Again, when asking for a letter, be sure to ask if the writer feels they can write a **positive** letter of recommendation.
- Your letter writer should be able to speak to your skills (research, writing, communication, presentation, teamwork, leadership) as well as your dedication and suitability for a career in law.
- Do not ask family friends for letters even if they are lawyers or judges unless you have worked in their law offices and they can comment on your work.

- Be sure to follow-up in CAS and make sure your letters have arrived.
- Don't forget to send thank you notes to your letter writers. They will really appreciate it.
- When you are admitted, let your recommenders know!

Should I waive my right to see the letter?

- **Yes!** It adds credibility to the letter because it is assumed letter writers will be more honest if they know you will not see the content of the letter.
- Schools may also assume you were expecting something negative in the letter if you maintained your right to see it. So again, it is better to waive your access. This is why it is useful to ask letter writers in person allowing you to see their reaction to your request.

Be sure to follow each school's requirements for letters!

More Tips on Law School Letters

Tips from the [National Jurist Magazine](http://www.nationaljurist.com/prelaw/how-get-excellent-law-school-letter-recommendation) <http://www.nationaljurist.com/prelaw/how-get-excellent-law-school-letter-recommendation>

[University of California Berkeley](https://career.berkeley.edu/Law/LawLetter) has a good discussion of law school letters <https://career.berkeley.edu/Law/LawLetter>

Tip for Parallel Planning: If you will be applying to other programs at the same time as you are applying to law school, ask your letter writers to save a copy of the letter on their computer for use in your other applications.

Alternatively, you might also be able to have a more generic letter sent to an online letter service which allows you to control how the letter is used and distributed for a fee. One useful service is [Interfolio](https://www.interfolio.com/) <https://www.interfolio.com/>