

Letters of recommendation

Students planning on professional school, graduate school and a variety of undergraduate (e.g. REU) and post-graduate (e.g. NIH fellowships) experiences need to obtain letters of recommendation from faculty and often from non-faculty (e.g. employers, people from organizations where you have shadowed/volunteered, etc.). We ask students send these **“individual letters”** to Interfolio, a commercial, internet-based operation, that serves as a storage place for letters of recommendation.

Students applying to graduate school and many professional schools (pharmacy, physical therapy, physician’s assistant, nursing) will ask interfolio to send these reference letters to whatever schools they apply to. Note that **most** institutions want ‘confidential’ letters (i.e. letters that are not available to you) so you should ask for ‘confidential’ letters.

The Premed Committee (also the Dental Committee and Optometry Committee) uses Interfolio to acquire applicants’ individual letters of recommendation and to put them together into a **“composite letter of recommendation”** which we upload electronically to either AMCAS (for allopathic medical schools) or to VirtualEvals (for osteopathic medical schools). [AMCAS will know which allopathic schools you have applied to and provides our letter to them; **you need to tell us** which osteopathic schools you applied to so that we can tell VirtualEvals who they should make the letter available to.]

Students should set up an account with Interfolio by going on-line to Interfolio.com and registering with them. This costs money and you can subscribe for one or multiple years (we generally recommend getting at least a five-year subscription). If you are thinking about medical, dental or optometry school you should ‘affiliate with’ SUNY Geneseo Pre-Med to make it possible for the Premed Advisory Committee to access the letters.

Once you have registered with Interfolio you can ask references to write and submit their **individual** letters of recommendation. We strongly recommend that you do this earlier rather than later. Unless you are going to continue interacting with a faculty member/employer/etc., there is no point waiting, they are only going to forget you over time. Your references submit letters to Interfolio, but you need to tell Interfolio that the letter is coming. Interfolio will supply you with a link that allows letters to be submitted electronically, or it can be submitted by mail. You can add letters whenever you have the opportunity.

Students can have these individual letters of recommendation sent wherever they want (for example if they are applying to an REU) by paying Interfolio a fee and directing them where to send the letter. By ‘affiliating’ with SUNY-Geneseo Pre-med all the letters are available to the Premedical Advisory Committee for free; all you have to do is to tell either Dr. O’Donnell or Dr. Briggs that your file is complete and we can pick up all the letters electronically. We will pass them along to your composite letter writer (you will find out who this is at the premed interviews). When you fill out the AMCAS application you will need to list who the composite letter writer is and print off a form that you send to us; it includes a ‘letter ID number’ that is included in our composite letter.

We recommend **at least** three letters of recommendation (five is better) with at least two from science faculty. We rarely use more than six letters in our composite letter but sometimes having more allows us to use those letters that express things the best.

Our **composite** letter of recommendation does NOT go to Interfolio, i.e. do not tell Interfolio that there is a letter coming from the Premedical Advisory Committee.

Our composite letter is confidential and your individual letters of recommendation should also be confidential, i.e. you waive your right to see them.