

# Writing A Scholarship Letter Of Recommendation

Many of the coursework scholarships available at RMIT University require the applicant to provide a letter of recommendation, preferably from an academic.

An academic is a lecturer, tutor, teacher, program or year level coordinator.

If an applicant cannot provide a letter of recommendation from an academic, a personal referee may be used. This can be an employer or someone who knows the student through their involvement in the community, i.e. volunteering or a sporting team.

Letters of recommendation cannot be written by a family member, relative, partner or friend.

This letter of recommendation is a very important part of the application. The selection process for most scholarships does not involve an interview so the Scholarship Selection Committee relies heavily on written references to ensure that each scholarship goes to a deserving applicant.

Your letter of recommendation may make the difference between a student receiving a scholarship and not receiving one. Always be honest: the Scholarship Selection Committee considers your letter of recommendation to be a true critical appraisal from someone who knows the student.

## TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

- Keep your letter of recommendation to one page, maximum.
- Many scholarships consider factors other than a student's academic performance. Where possible, please comment on their personal circumstances, any obstacles or challenges they have encountered, leadership potential and/or community participation.
- Please include how you know the student and how long you have known them.
- Write specifically about the individual student, rather than providing a generic letter. If you don't feel that you know the student well enough to be specific, consider declining to write the letter of recommendation and assist them to approach someone else instead.
- Where possible, please provide information about:
  - situations when the student has excelled
  - their accomplishments in the time you have known them

- how they conduct themselves, work in a team or participate in class, if relevant
- whether they show leadership qualities
- whether they are motivated to excel, both in and outside of their program.

- Comment on whether the program the student is studying aligns with his/her career aspirations.
- Please include any community or volunteer work that the student does and whether it's related to their career path. Note that leadership and/or volunteer participation are essential requirements of some scholarships.
- If applicable, discuss any difficult circumstances the student has faced that impacts their study.
- Tell us openly and honestly about the student's weaknesses and/or areas for improvement.

## SUBMITTING THE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Please ensure your letter of recommendation is signed, dated and where possible, on a letterhead. The letter should be in Word or PDF format so that the student can upload it with their scholarship application. Please do not send letters of recommendation directly to the Coursework Scholarships Office.

## WHEN TO SAY NO

There are some students you simply can't write a letter of recommendation for so it would be better for you to decline.

Please say no if:

- you feel that you can't positively support the student
- you don't know the student well enough—knowing their grades are not sufficient
- you don't have time to write a considered letter of support
- the student has approached you in an inappropriate manner.

## CONTACT

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