

Canyon Del Oro High School



Letter of Recommendation Guide for Students

Many out of state college and university applications, as well as most scholarship applications, require letters of recommendation. This guide is offered as a resource to help you secure quality letters of recommendation.

Dear CDO Student,

You know that you need a letter of recommendation, now what do you do? The information that follows will help you with the process for requesting letters of recommendation, and will provide you with tips for ensuring that you secure the best possible letters of support.

1. Once you know that you will need a letter of recommendation, fill out the “Letter of Recommendation Request” form found in this guide, in the counseling office, or on the counseling webpage. It is important that you fill out this form honestly and completely. Once you have completed the form, you can make an appointment with your counselor or teacher to submit it.
2. Give your recommender at least two weeks’ notice (more is preferable) when at all possible. While we understand that you sometimes find out about a scholarship opportunity less than two weeks before the deadline, and will do everything we can to help you in those situations, it takes a lot of time for someone to write you a quality letter. Please remember that the individual you asked to write your letter also has a full-time teaching/counseling job and other students whom they are writing letters for as well. Letters written in haste can be detrimental to your application.
3. Provide your recommender with deadlines for each recommendation so that there is no confusion as to when the letter is due.
4. Let your recommender know how the letter will be used. Is it to be a general college admissions letter? Is it for a scholarship? If so, what kind of scholarship? What qualities is the scholarship committee looking for in a strong candidate?
5. On the recommendation form, we suggest that you waive your right to view the recommendation. This gives more credibility to the recommendation in the eyes of the college/scholarship committee.
6. Ask for the letter in person – not by email, not by just dropping off the form, and not by phone. This is especially important now that more applications are online and students have the opportunity to input their recommender’s name and email address, and the recommendation form is sent directly via email. Students need to let the recommender know that this email is coming – before the recommender receives it!
7. Provide the necessary information regarding how the letter is to be submitted. Will it be uploaded to a website? If so, please provide the appropriate web address. Will it be mailed in? If so, please provide an addressed, stamped envelope. Will it be returned directly to you? If so, you will need to arrange a time to retrieve it.
8. Whom to ask? Check first to see what the college/scholarship committee is requesting. They will often be specific about who they want to see letters from (For example, one counselor, one academic teacher, and one additional). Ask the people who know you best! The teacher for the class in which you excelled isn’t necessarily the best one to write you a letter, if you just sat in the back of the room and didn’t add much to the class.

It might be better to ask the teacher for whose class you were an active participant, where you helped other students in the class, or where you demonstrated improvement.

9. How many to submit? Again, check first to see how many are required. Follow the wishes of the college/scholarship; do not inundate them with more than they ask for (one extra is sometimes okay, but not two or more).
10. Thank the recommender after the letter is completed (hand written thank you notes are very nice).
11. Follow-up with the recommender and let him/her know the outcome of your application. (Did you get accepted to the college? Did you get the scholarship?)

If you have any further questions regarding your needs for a letter of recommendation, please do not hesitate to visit us in the counseling office. We wish you luck with your applications, and we hope to be writing you a letter soon!

Sincerely,

Your CDO Counselors

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUEST

If you need a letter of recommendation from your counselor, please complete this form in its entirety. Once the form is complete, please schedule an appointment with your counselor to review the form and discuss your needs. (Many teachers appreciate receiving a copy of this form as well)

Letters of recommendation take approximately ten working days to complete.

Student Name _____ ID # _____

<u>Name of school(s)/scholarship(s) applying for</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>How will it be submitted?</u> (i.e online? Return to student? Mail?)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

So that your counselor may write you a quality letter that will distinguish you from other applicants, please take your time to think about and respond to the following questions. Do not write what you think is the “correct answer” or what you think colleges want to hear. Instead, please respond honestly and in ways that genuinely reflect who you are, what you think, and how you feel. Please feel free to type your answers on a separate sheet of paper if you wish to do so.

1. Is your high school academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? If not, what do you consider the best measure of your potential?

2. Are there any circumstances in your life that may have impacted your academic performance? If so, please explain.

3. What are your proudest academic AND personal accomplishments?

Academic: _____

Personal: _____

4. Describe a time that you took on a leadership role.

5. How do you demonstrate a love of learning? (if not applicable, please skip)

6. What extracurricular activities (jobs, community service, clubs, athletics, etc.) have you participated in? Which one did you enjoy the most and why?

7. What skills/hobbies/interests do you have?

8. What was most challenging about your high school experience and why?

9. What life experiences have been most influential? (travel, family, education, etc.) Please describe.

10. What do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

11. What motivates you?

12. What do you plan to major in AND what influenced that choice?

13. What sets you apart from the other students in your graduating class?

14. Is there anything that you would like me to focus on in your letter? Or, anything that you would like to make sure that I mention?

Students: Please share the following section with your parent/guardian.

As colleges and scholarships become more competitive, it is necessary to create an accurate and comprehensive profile of your student in a letter of recommendation. Parents/Guardians can provide the most in depth picture of a student complete with anecdotes and background information. We would appreciate it if you, as parent/guardian, would please take a few moments and address any, or all, of the following questions on a separate sheet of paper or on the back of this form. Once completed, please have your student submit your feedback along with this form to the counselor. We thank you in advance for your support of your student and this process.

1. What do you consider to be the outstanding accomplishments of your student during the past three years?
2. If you had to describe your student in 5 adjectives, what would they be?
3. Are there any unusual or personal circumstances which have affected your student's educational experiences?
4. Describe any early childhood passions/talents that are still evident in your student's life today.
5. How would you describe your student's outlook on life?
6. Does your student have any hidden/unknown talents?
7. Please share any anecdotes exemplifying your student's maturity, responsibility, creativity, independence, enthusiasm, leadership, trustworthiness, involvement, personal strength, dedication, peer relations, sense of humor, or any other special characteristics.