



Financial Aid & Awards

GUIDE TO OBTAINING
QUALITY REFERENCES
FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Have a question?
Contact Us

Financial Aid and Awards Office HA 120
+1 780 479 9220

finaid@concordia.ab.ca
financialaid.concordia.ab.ca

HOW TO REQUEST A REFERENCE

- Acknowledge the time commitment you are requesting
- Provide the referee with details they will require to write the reference letter (e.g. eligibility and selection criteria)
- The reference should discuss your oral and written communication skills, interpersonal and leadership ability
- Ask the referee to provide examples and explanations to support their evaluation
- Remind them to seal and sign the envelope
- Express your gratitude for their help (i.e. send a thank you note)

WHO TO ASK?

- Ask someone who knows you well
- Depending on the nature of the award ask: teachers, professors, employers, coaches, club advisors, volunteerwork, supervisors, and religious leaders.
- Choose people who are relevant to the scholarship donor's goal (e.g. ask a science teacher for a reference for a science scholarship)
- Never ask family members
- Ensure the referee has strong writing abilities

DO'S AND DON'T'S

Do's

- Strong References provide a vivid sense of what distinguishes the applicant from others
- References should provide some context as to how the referee knows the applicant as well as the length of time
- The reference should highlight specific examples of your accomplishments
- References should discuss why the applicant is a strong candidate and how the candidate exemplifies the selection criteria
- References should include remarks of colleagues for supporting evidence and acknowledgement of specific strengths

Don't's

- Reference letters that are too short
- Generic references
- References that fail to provide specific examples
- References that do not focus on the applicants accomplishments and strengths
- Too much focus on how the referee knows he applicant
- References that consist of unsupported praise
- References that focus on experiences or events from many years ago

HELPFUL HINTS

- Create an accomplishments resume to provide to the writer of your reference letter. This is a summary that lists your academic and extra curricular accomplishments.
- If applicable, provide a copy of your essay to your referee
- Inform each referee of your subsequent success