

## **Instructions for those Requesting a Recommendation from Dr. Moran**

Thank you for asking me to write a recommendation letter for you. I am honored and delighted that you have turned to me to speak on your behalf.

As you are aware, recommendation letters are an important component of the application process for both employment and graduate school. In order to ensure that the best possible job is done, I need you to follow the instructions below.

My general policy for recommendation letters is: You write it, I sign it. Obviously, I edit heavily once I receive it (if it is needed). I have this general policy for a variety of reasons:

a) The student/candidate will include in this letter information that I need (grades, classes taken with me, extracurricular activities, etc ...)

b) The student/candidate will also include information that I need with regard to how the recommendation will be used (grad school, employment, scholarship organization, etc ...)

c) The student/candidate will tend to know their own strengths/weaknesses that they feel should be emphasized.

d) The student/candidate will, some day, be in positions in which they themselves will need to write recommendations for others. There is no time like the present to learn how to do this!

e) Those students/candidates that will be working in government/military will need to learn how to do this as well for themselves - this is how annual reviews are done in most agencies!

I recognize that this can be a challenging process. It is challenging because, on the one hand, we are told to be modest and humble, on the other hand, a recommendation letter must basically state that, "I walk on water and leap tall building in a single bounce."

In writing this letter, go with the water walking and tall building leaping.

You should not omit information regarding classes taken with me (i.e. include information from **all** classes taken with me). You should also not misrepresent yourself (i.e. don't lie about grades, papers, etc ). Misrepresentation of this nature indicates a serious character flaw - I will not recommend an individual with such a character flaw for any job or school.

Now for the bad news (for some). I only write letters which "recommend." I do not write mediocre letters. What this means - I do not write letters for mediocre students.

**For Graduate/Law Schools & Scholarships:** I only write letters for "A" students. If you received a grade in any of my classes other than an "A" I will not write a letter for you. This is not punitive. I simply have become convinced that an undergraduate "A" is equivalent to a

graduate school "C". If you are earning "B"s as an undergraduate, you have not yet displayed the aptitude or diligence required for success in graduate school.

**For Employment Purposes:** I will write letters for "A" and "B" students for employment purposes (unless you have been involved in a case of academic misconduct).

**Please use the format found below in writing your letter.**

**Good luck!!**

### **SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION**

15 October 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this recommendation for John Q. Doe.

Mr. Doe was a student in my class, POLS 4431: The Politics of International Terrorism, during the Spring semester of 2016. This course is an advanced course in international affairs, designed to encourage students to think about international terrorism within a variety of countries systematically, logically, and coherently.

Over the course of the semester, I had ample opportunity to assess Mr. Doe's intellectual abilities. In class, he always had intelligent, thought-provoking comments and presented them in clear, precise form. Not only were his observations always analytically sound, but they contributed greatly to the class discussion in so far as they provoked further reflection upon topics that needed to be emphasized. His class participation superb, but he received excellent marks on all of his assignments. His term paper expertly analyzed the role of humiliation in the Middle East as a factor leading to suicide terrorism. He received an "A" on this paper, an "A" for class participation, and "A"s on both in-class exams. Overall, he ranked in the top 5% of this class.

As you can see, Mr. Doe's performance in this course was **outstanding**. He is an extremely promising student - **highly motivated, persistent, and intelligent**. It has been a joy and a privilege to have him in my class.

Mr. Doe's personal qualities match his intellectual qualities. I have found John to possess all of the qualities required to excel in virtually any environment - **maturity, seriousness, impeccable respect** for fellow students, **dedication**, and a **positive outlook**. Most importantly, I believe Mr. Doe to be an individual of **impeccable integrity** - highly suited to a position of leadership and responsibility in our country.

It is obvious to me that John will make an excellent student in your graduate program. I believe that Mr. Doe will be a **tremendous asset** to your institution .

I **highly recommend** him for just such an endeavor.

Very Respectfully,

John P. Moran, Ph.D.

Professor of Political Science and International  
Relations