GRADUATE SCHOOL LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Brainstorm
• Think about faculty and others who might serve as good reference writers for you.

Narrow it Down
• Select several contacts who can speak positively about your academic and research abilities and the likelihood that you will be successful in graduate school or professional school.
• Advisers, internship supervisors, job supervisors, and others may say good things about you but probably haven’t evaluated you in a situation similar to academic training in graduate school.
• Important Note: Be sure to ask your potential recommender if he/she feels comfortable writing a letter for you!

Connect
• Set up an appointment to meet with your potential reference writer
• Put together a packet to show him/her that contains:
  □ Your resume
  □ List of schools you are applying to
  □ Your future goals
  □ A transcript that includes that courses you took from this faculty member with the grade(s) received
  □ A timeline of dates when the recommendation must be received
  □ A stamped envelope to send the confidential reference letter directly to the graduate program.
  □ Alternatively, the recommender may be asked to sign the sealed flap of the envelope containing his/her letter and give it to you to send in with your entire application.
  □ On the other hand, if the letters of recommendation are to be submitted online, provide your reference the URL and directions for uploading he letter.

Note: If you plan to take a year off before applying for graduate or professional school, tell the faculty member your plans and say that you will keep in touch over the year to keep him/her abreast your activities and plans. Be sure to make note of the faculty member’s email address.

Follow-up
• Send formal thankyou notes or e-mail to your recommenders to show your appreciation. Keep them apprised of your acceptances or rejections.

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.