Recommendation letters are extraordinarily important during the academic job search process. You should start thinking about who your letter writers will be well in advance of application deadlines.

SELECTING REFERENCES

Detailed & Positive:
- Letter writers should be able to speak deeply and passionately about your strengths, qualities, and experiences.
  - The individuals you ask to write letters should have first-hand knowledge of your skills – they’ve seen you teach, co-authored articles with you, worked closely with you on committees, etc.
- You should be confident that the individuals you ask to write letters can write positive letters on your behalf. If you’re unsure, ask them directly.

Topical Areas:
- Universities usually request three letters but sometimes request as many as five.
- One of your letters, generally from your dissertation chair (or PI), should address your potential as a researcher.
- Your second letter should discuss your teaching strengths.
- Your third letter should discuss other skills highlighted in the job description and your cover letter.
  - For example, if you emphasized your leadership in professional organizations, perhaps your third letter should be written by somebody with whom you have served on committees.
- As an alternative, if you wish to emphasize your solid background as a researcher (or teacher), perhaps your third letter could focus on research and supplement your other letter on research.
- If you have two letters addressing the same basic topic, one should be written by somebody outside of your academic department if you want the letters to have maximum impact.

HELPING YOUR REFERENCES

Start Early:
- Writing recommendation letters is an important job that most faculty members take seriously because they want their students to become successful professionals, so do not be shy about asking for letters.
- On the other hand, writing thoughtful effective letters takes significant time and energy so it is imperative that you provide your references with sufficient time.
- It is best to ask for letters early in your job search, perhaps even before you’ve seen interesting job postings.
- At the very least, give your references 2-4 weeks to write, edit, and send each letter.

Provide Documentation:
- You should provide your letter writers with adequate information about your background and the job description so they are able to write vivid, thorough, exceptional letters.
- Try to schedule a meeting with each of your letter writers.
• Provide each of your references with important documents such as a copy of the job description (with the department’s website and contact information), your targeted CV, targeted cover letter, research statement, writing samples, teaching statement, teaching portfolio, transcript, etc.
• Highlight awards, publications, and experiences you want your references to address in their letters.

Talk Logistics:
• Let your recommenders know that academic reference letters are usually 1-2 pages in length.
• Indicate the application deadlines.
• Tell your letter writers when you intend to submit your application packet and inform them to send their letters when they have them ready (even if it is before you send the rest of your application).

INTERFOLIO
Description:
• The Career Center no longer has a letter of recommendation service for students applying to academic positions.
• We now refer students to an external vendor called Interfolio. Here is a snippet from Interfolio’s website.
  o “Store and manage all of your job, fellowship, and promotion documents in one place. Letters of recommendation remain confidential, but you control where they go and when they get there. Calm the chaos
  o Dossier offers a secure place to manage the documents and credentials you need to apply for academic jobs, fellowships, and promotions.
  o When you send application materials, our team checks to ensure all documents are properly addressed and complete before delivery.
  o Need letters of recommendation? We contact your letter writers with instructions for uploading materials and a due date.
  o As an added bonus, Dossier allows you to build an online portfolio to present your scholarly work and experience.
  o We deliver application materials via email, online application systems, and a variety of domestic and international mailing options.”

Fees:
• A one-year account is $19 (they also offer 3-year and 5-year accounts).
• Web-based deliveries start at $4; email and postal deliveries start at $6.

Additional Information:
• Visit - http://www.interfolio.com/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
• University of California at Berkeley - http://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhD Academic.stm