

## *Brief guidelines for applying to scholarships, summer opportunities and jobs*

Applying for scholarships, awards, and summer programs is an important part of being a SCERP scholar. How you go about applying can actually improve your chances at getting one of these exciting opportunities. Listed below are a few guidelines to help you plan your applications.

1. Start early. Scholarships and summer programs typically have application deadlines in February or March. This means that you need to identify the programs that you want to apply to BEFORE the beginning of February.
2. Applying:
  - Tailor your application to the program. Use the program guidelines to help you develop your application and be sure to address every point requested in the announcement. Generic application essays sent to multiple programs are much less likely to be reviewed favorably.
  - Start your application essay early. Plan to have a draft essay completed AT LEAST two weeks before the application is due (even earlier if you are applying to a summer program or graduate school).
  - Write, review, revise and re-write your essay.
  - Make sure you have at least one other person give you feedback on your essay. This means giving them the application guidelines and your essay with enough time for them to read and comment on it and for you to then revise it.
  - When you think you are done have someone else PROOFREAD your application.
3. Requesting letters of recommendation:
  - Approach your prospective letter-writers as early as possible (a month is reasonable). Ask them if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation. Include the name of the program and the deadline with your request. Let them know that if they are willing to write a letter that you will be giving them additional information to help them craft their letter in support of your application.
  - Make it as easy as possible for your letter-writers to write a strong letter. This means giving them complete information on the scholarship/program that you are applying to no later than TWO

WEEKS before the letters are due. Just as you will be crafting an application to address the goals of the program, your letters of support also need to focus on how you are a good match for a particular program. At the very least you should provide (1) the name of the program, (2) a description of the program (usually provided in the application), (3) the name of the contact person to whom the letter should be addressed, (4) the address where the letter should be delivered, (5) the due date for the letter, (6) your application essay (remember you will complete a draft 2 weeks before the application is due, and a draft is fine), (7) a copy of your resume/CV, and (8) an addressed envelope (stamped if it is going off campus). All of these materials should be given to your letter writers in hard copies, not via email.

- No later than 3 days before the application is due you should send a gentle reminder about the letter and its due date. Ask in this email if there is anything else you can provide to the letter writer to help them (e.g., ask if you need to re-send information on the program).

#### 4. Requesting letters on short notice:

- At some point everyone needs to ask for a letter of recommendation that is due within a week. This is ok. Realize that your letter writers may not be able to meet the deadline and approach them with this in mind.
- When you approach the letter-writer, apologize for asking with such short notice and make your request in the nicest possible way. Acknowledge that it may be too late.
- Recommenders that agree to write you a letter on short notice are doing you a BIG favor—they must alter their plans to make time for you and your letter.
- Be sure to give them all of the materials listed above.
- Do not make a habit of making late requests.

#### 5. After applying:

- Send a thank you email to your letter writers.
- When you win a scholarship or are admitted to a program let the people that helped you know (e.g., people that provided feedback, proofreaders, letter writers, etc.)! Thank them, in writing, for their support (a short thank-you card is appropriate).