**Best practices of approaching a faculty member for a Letter of Recommendation**

1. **Reach out to the faculty member early in the semester/session to establish a relationship.**

Never wait until the end of the semester/session to talk to your professor about getting a letter of recommendation. If you want a good letter, the professor needs to have an established relationship with you. Since many professors have hundreds of students in their classes in a given semester, it is your job to reach out to them first, build a relationship, and then ask for a letter.

1. **Meeting the faculty member as an online student: utilize online/virtual office hours!**

Many ASU faculty members who teach online courses hold virtual office hours via Skype, Zoom, or other online conferencing programs. Don’t be shy about turning on your webcam when you log in because it is important for the faculty member to connect your name to a face. Ask meaningful questions related to the course content during these office hours to show that you care about the course, and attend as many virtual office hours so the professor knows who you are.

1. **Be respectful in your communication.**

How you convey your message via e-mail is very important. As an online student, most of your communication with your professor will occur via e-mail. Address faculty members with their proper title (Dr., Prof., Director, etc.). Simply starting your e-mail with “Hi”, “Hey”, “What’s up” etc. is not a good method of delivery.

1. **The faculty member may have a set of guidelines for letter of recommendation requests: follow the guideline.**

Some professors have a questionnaire that you need to fill out. Some professors may require that you set aside time for a 30-minute meeting. Some professors may require you get an ‘A’ in their courses. If the faculty member has a set of rules you must follow, take it seriously, and put in the effort to do what is asked of you.

1. **Never wait until the last minute to ask for a letter!**

Professors are generally very busy with teaching, research, and administrative duties. This is why you should never ask for a letter of recommendation a week or days before the application is due. Giving the professor about 1-2 months of advanced notice is ideal. As you build a relationship with your professor, you can politely ask if he or she would be willing to write a letter in the future to preempt such conversation later.

1. **Don’t be upset if the professor says “No” to writing you a letter.**

Professors are not required to write letters for their students, so when you ask them for a letter, you are essentially asking them for a big favor. If a professor says that he or she cannot a write a letter for you, don’t take it personally. It is best to thank them for their time and consideration (professional approach), and find a different professor to write you a letter.