

Graduate School Match: MBA

Recommendation Guide

The two letters of recommendation in your application allow the admissions committee to learn more about you from another point of view. Given its importance in the admission process, it is critical to plan ahead and carefully consider who to ask to be your recommenders.

Who should you ask to be your recommenders?

Your recommendations should be written by people who are senior to you and familiar with your work. They should be professional in nature; academic letters of recommendations are discouraged. One of your recommendations should come from your current direct supervisor. If that is not possible, perhaps because you are not ready to disclose your plans to your current employer or you are self-employed, you may ask another professional contact. This can be a former supervisor or someone else who is more senior to you and knows your work well. For entrepreneurs, this can be a board member or VC funder. Be sure to explain why you are not choosing a current direct supervisor in the additional information section. Your second recommendation should also come from someone who knows you in a supervisory capacity, but it can be from a different setting such as a previous job or a volunteer role.

How to ask for a recommendation?

Schedule time to meet with your intended recommenders before you register them. Take the opportunity to strengthen your relationship and explain the reasons behind your business school decision, so that your request doesn't come out of the blue. Let them know what to expect when it comes to the recommendation process: they will receive an individualized link via email from QuestBridge upon your registration, and the form will be due on the same date as your application. If you choose to rank Stanford GSB and/or Wharton, your recommenders must also submit their references directly to each school by their Round 1 deadline.

Confirm with your intended recommenders that they have the bandwidth to write a strong recommendation. You want your recommenders to be able to write positively and passionately about your strengths and accomplishments based on their experience working with you. Make your requests early so they have ample time to consider and prepare compelling references. After they have submitted your recommendation, make sure to follow up and express your gratitude.

What makes a strong recommendation?

A strong recommendation comes from someone who knows you well and can provide detailed anecdotes that show your professional contributions and leadership experience. It might be helpful to walk through your resume together to highlight your accomplishments and growth experiences. If appropriate, remind them of the role they might have played in helping you to achieve them. It can be a piece of important feedback they provided, or a positive influence they have had on your career journey. You should also share your career vision and why you are seeking an MBA at this time.

Your recommenders must be the sole authors of your letters of recommendation. We suggest you to not send your written application materials to your recommenders. Seeing similar language on your essays and their recommendation may raise concerns regarding the independence of your application.

How do recommendations for school-specific supplements work ?

In addition to the QuestBridge application, you must submit [supplemental materials](#) directly to the schools you rank. Applicants who rank Stanford GSB and Wharton will be required to complete their full applications, including the two letters of recommendation, by their Round 1 deadline. Thus, if you choose to rank Stanford and/or Wharton, your recommenders must submit their recommendations for both the QuestBridge application and the Stanford GSB/Wharton applications separately in each school's system. They may use similar content for these recommendations. For Chicago Booth and Yale SOM, recommendations from your QuestBridge application will be accepted, so your recommenders would not need to submit separate forms.