

## **Guidelines for Requesting Letters of Recommendation**

Ann Jensen Adams and Laurie Monahan

Each of you will be requesting many letters of recommendation from faculty members over the course of your studies here at UCSB, and each of us wants to be able to write for you the most persuasive letter possible. You can greatly help us do so by following a few guidelines, outlined below.

### **PLAN AHEAD:**

1. Contact faculty well in advance to be sure they are willing and able to write for you. Do this before you have the forms. If you are uncertain about the relative strength of the recommendation that they are willing to write, it is not a bad idea to ask.

**Check the job or fellowship posting** to make sure that a letter is, in fact, **specifically required.**

2. Ideally, give faculty at least four weeks to produce the letter, but in any case at least two weeks.

### **PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION THE FACULTY MEMBER NEEDS TO WRITE THE LETTER.**

This should include the following:

3. A copy of the announcement for which you are applying includes the details of the criteria by which awards will be made.

4. Note any special kinds of information that are requested (e.g., special language or other skills, travel locations, length of the grant period, your goals within the grant time frame.

**For each application** PROVIDE the following:

- a. To whom the letter should be addressed (unless a form is provided)
- b. Each of the criteria you note, and your qualifications for these criteria.
- c. THE DEADLINE. Whether the letter is to be returned to you in a sealed envelope, or mailed separately.

Try to avoid making it necessary for the faculty member to contact you to answer these questions.

d. Your application proposal or letter. Provide a DRAFT of these when you make your request. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL IT IS IN ITS FINAL FORM!!!

e. Your most recent CV. (No need to send duplicates of this for each request)

f. A TYPED ADDRESS LABEL for the envelope in which the letter of recommendation is to be either mailed, or returned to you.

g. A STAMP if the letter is to be mailed.

NOTE: IF YOU SEND INFORMATION BY EMAIL ATTACHMENT, give each file a useful descriptive title with your last name, abbreviation of grant, and due date. YourLastName-AbbreviationOfGrantSought-DateDue, ie. Smith-UnivOfCalif-Dec15, 2008.doc

5. In some cases, faculty will want to review papers and/or exams you have written for them, your art history background, cumulative GPA, or even GRE scores, so be ready to supply these.

We are here to help you succeed in your applications, and can do so best with your help.