

## Information for Students Requesting a Reference Letter from Dr. Chen

Thank you for all your hard work in the SHL! I'm generally able to write letters that are detailed enough to be helpful, for students who have completed a Directed Studies or Honours Thesis in the SHL. If you worked primarily with one of the grad students or postdocs in the lab, I will ask them to provide detailed input as well. Therefore, it generally does NOT make sense to ask both me and your grad student/postdoc supervisor for two separate letters, because the content would overlap too much (if you think your situation warrants an exception, please ask!).

A reference from me is most likely to be helpful to you in the context of graduate school applications, or applications for academic positions such as a full-time lab manager. If you are applying for non-academic positions, it is usually better for you to ask someone who has supervised your day-to-day work closely (such as a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow). If you're unsure who would be best suited to write you a letter, please ask me for advice!

I receive a large volume of requests for letters, and I invest a lot of time in writing each one. Letters that will strengthen your application for competitive programs need to contain detailed information about your activities and accomplishments, and speak highly of your personal qualities, demonstrated strengths, and abilities. The more lead time you give me, the more time I will have to write you a letter that is sufficiently detailed and personalized to your situation. *One month* of advance notice ("notice" includes sending me the information specified below) is ideal during peak season (Nov-Jan deadlines). Unless there are truly extenuating circumstances, **I do not accept any new requests with less than two weeks notice.**

Please send me a list schools you'll be applying to, along with deadlines and any special instructions for how to submit my letters (e.g., through a website vs. emailed). A shared spreadsheet (e.g. using Google Docs, with columns for School, Program Type, Deadline, and Notes/Special Instructions) works well for this: you can add to or edit your list as necessary, and you'll be able to see my progress. Set permissions so that I can edit the spreadsheet; I'll mark off the schools I'm done with as I go. After I have created an initial draft of your letter, it can still take me some time to tailor your reference for each individual program that you are applying to. Therefore, please use the individual school's application portal to **generate an invitation email for your letter writers at least three days—and ideally one week—before that individual school's deadline for receiving your letters.**

On any paper and online forms, please fill in as much of my information as possible:

- Position: Associate Professor of Psychology
- Address: 3521-2136 West Mall, Vancouver BC Canada V6T 1Z4
- Phone: 604-822-2549
- Email: [frances.chen@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:frances.chen@psych.ubc.ca)
- ...and so on. Please also provide stamped, pre-addressed envelopes for any schools that require hard copies. (All of this saves me a lot of time, and is much appreciated.)

So that I will have a lot of material to draw from, please send me:

- a current CV and transcript, with GPA (overall and psychology) calculated
- month & year that you began and finished working in the SHL

- list of your roles and responsibilities in the SHL, and any special highlights (for example: “there was a time where I took the initiative to \_\_\_\_/there was a time when I volunteered to fill in on the weekend to \_\_\_\_/there was a time when I came up with a creative solution to a problem with \_\_\_\_”)
- a few sentences describing your career goals, and what makes you most passionate about pursuing further graduate studies and/or the position you are applying to (can be taken/adapted from your personal statement)
- any other information you think could be helpful (GRE scores, LSAT scores, etc.)
- Note that the Canada Graduate Scholarships - Masters (CGS-M) program has a unique format and requirements for references. **If you plan to apply for a CGS-M fellowship, please let me know at least two weeks in advance of the deadline and ask me to send you additional information that is specific to the CGS-M application process.**

DO send me a reminder email if you haven't received a confirmation of a submission by two days before your deadline. Good luck!