

Drafting the Recommendation Letter

Choose a theme. Organize your nomination letter around one big idea. This helps the reviewers follow along. It also helps them remember your nomination because everything will point back to a single theme instead of a lot of disconnected information.

Explain your connection to the nominee. You should directly state that you are nominating this person for an award. Also, share how you know the person you are nominating, and include a brief anecdote about them.

- For example, say “While teaching an adjunct class together, I learned that Jane Smith is a shining example of patience and kindness, which is why I’m nominating her for the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Staff Award for *Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment.*”

Compile a list of reasons that your nominee should be selected. Reasons could include examples, stories, illustrations, and statistics about an individual's work. You should be as specific as possible. Help the reviewers visualize this individual.

- For example, “Edward has received five letters of recommendation from customers since joining the University and his customer feedback performance is the highest within the group.”

Share your faith in the candidate. Explain to the committee that you have the utmost faith in this person to continue to do well. Make it clear that they are an excellent candidate for the award.

- For example, “Susan continues to strive for excellence as demonstrated by her commitment to obtain her Bachelor’s Degree.”

Ensure you have met the criteria. Read over the details of the award and remove unnecessary or inapplicable material, as well as anything that doesn’t fit the theme you have chosen. If you haven’t followed the guidelines, your nominee may be disqualified. Also, check to make sure you have used concrete examples.

- The more specific and detailed you can be when sharing a particular story, the better your chances of the review committee remembering your nomination. Keep the examples concise, but detailed.

Proofread your nomination letter. Read your letter and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Ensure that the format is consistent and clean. Ask others (including the Staff Senate Employee Recognition Committee) to look it over, as well. Other people will be able to provide more objective feedback, as well as offer a different perspective.

Make final changes. Decide what you need to cut, what you need to modify, and what you might need to add. Take the ideas and suggestions of others into consideration.

- Keep your nomination letter under two pages. Anything longer than that is unlikely to be remembered in a positive light.