

Dr. McGrath often receives requests for letters of recommendation. She is willing to write strong, supportive letters for impressive research volunteers or outstanding students with whom she had considerable contact. To ensure letters are completed promptly and without error, follow these guidelines precisely.

Rules of thumb

- Request letters from professors who taught courses that you enjoyed and performed well. If you performed better in other professors' courses, consider soliciting letters from them first.
- For admission to graduate programs, you will ordinarily need letters from professors in whose courses you received a B+ or better. Dr. McGrath writes stronger letters for students with higher grades who were also active participants in class discussion, asked thoughtful questions during office hours, and demonstrated clear written communication skills.
- The strongest letters Dr. McGrath writes are for students who she knows personally, who performed outstanding in several of her courses, who conducted impressive research under her supervision, and who demonstrated exceptional service to the PPHP lab.

Instructions - Read carefully

1. **Dr. McGrath requires 4 weeks request prior to your earliest deadline.** First, email Dr. McGrath to see whether she is willing to write you a strong, supportive letter of recommendation. Briefly explain what you are applying for and in what capacity she knows you (student, volunteer). No letters of recommendation are provided for the Clinical Psychology program at Concordia University; Dr. McGrath feels strongly that you should apply elsewhere for your graduate studies.
2. **If Dr. McGrath agrees to write your letter, she will send you a copy of the Recommendation Request Form.** Deliver the hardcopy to Dr. McGrath's mailbox (SP244). You must ALSO send an email indicating that all of the materials have been left in Dr. McGrath's mailbox. Do not simply return the form as an email attachment. Dr. McGrath will not write letters if you send an email attachment of this form or if any information is missing.
3. When filling out the form, you will need to know **all** of the positions/programs that you plan to apply. You must include requests for all letters of recommendation at the same time, regardless of their due dates. Do not request a few at a time over the semester as you figure out where you wish to apply. This will require advanced planning on your part.
4. Some positions/programs have extra pages or forms to be included with the reference. Be sure to complete your personal information. Also, complete basic, identifying information for Dr. McGrath (see below). Saving Dr. McGrath time means more time spent on writing your letter. It is in your best interest to complete these with a computer or a typewriter (neatness suggests you are organized).

Reference: Jennifer J. McGrath, PhD, MPH

Position: Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Address: Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St West, SP244, Montreal QC H4B1R6

Phone: (514) 848-2424 ext.5287
Fax: none
Email: jennifer.mcgrath@concordia.ca
Relation: Supervisor (thesis students), Instructor (courses), Lab Director (volunteers)

5. **Some schools now have PDF fillable recommendation forms on websites. Do not point Dr. McGrath to the website.** Download the form when possible. If the form is a form-fillable PDF, ensure you fill in all the necessary information (your information & my identifying information). Then print out and provide to Dr. McGrath (SP244). Letters of recommendation are mailed directly to your application site. If forms cannot be printed out, send Dr. McGrath one email that includes all links for any of these forms for all of your sites (do not send separate emails for each site).
6. **Some schools now require electronically submitted recommendation forms.** Make clear note of any electronic submissions on your Recommendation Request. Include any links to the sites if possible, on your form. To the extent possible, print out a copy of their blank recommendation form so Dr. McGrath can plan accordingly when writing your letter (e.g., word count limits, specific organization of letter content). Even if all of your letters of recommendation are electronic, you still must put a hardcopy of the Recommendation Request form in Dr. McGrath's mailbox (SP244) so she can be sure to complete. Send an email to inform her you left the forms in her mailbox. Be very mindful of the dates of online letters; they should coincide with the due dates you list on your form. Submit your application as soon as you send Dr. McGrath the Recommendation Request form so there is no delay in her ability to submit your letter (even if your application is not due for a few months, you need to register so she can upload your letter when she prepares all letters at one time).
7. **Do not supply envelopes.** Dr. McGrath will prepare, print, officially stamp, seal and sign the back flap of the envelopes. Due to reasons of confidentiality, she does not provide students with a copy of their letters. All letters are mailed directly to the site or are completed online. Ensure you have the correct mailing address listed on the Recommendation Request Form.
8. **Dr. McGrath will send you an email when she has completed your letter(s).** If you have not received a confirmation email from her one week before your first deadline, you may send one single email as a reminder of your upcoming deadline. If you still have not received a response, please send a second email with the subject line "URGENT".