

How to establish a credential file, request letters, and place an order:

- 1 Log in to the Hofstra portal at **my.hofstra.edu**.
- 2 Click on the “Support” tab and then under “Career Services,” click on “Pride-Career Management System (Pride-CMS).” Once there, select the “Credentials” tab.
- 3 You will be prompted to complete the Personal Data Form. This data will be included in the credential folder that is generated and mailed.
- 4 You must make a request for a letter through Pride-CMS. Click on the “Request a Recommendation” tab and click “Add New.” Remember, this online request should come **AFTER** a personal conversation with the writer. The comments field in the request section can assist you and the writer in identifying your purpose for the letter. You must have the writer’s e-mail address if you want the writer to submit the letter electronically to your account. You will also need to indicate whether you want the letter to be confidential or nonconfidential (please see the “Confidential vs. Nonconfidential Letters” section in this brochure).
- 5 Once you submit the request, you will have the option to review or resend the request to the writer (for future use) from the “Request a Recommendation” page.
- 6 You will receive an e-mail confirmation to the e-mail account you listed under the profile feature in Pride-CMS informing you when a letter has been submitted to your account by a writer.
- 7 The “My Recommendations” tab is where you can review your letters (if they are nonconfidential).
- 8 Orders can be placed from either the “My Recommendations” or “Orders” tabs. Place check marks next to the letters you want to include in your mailed packet. You must complete the delivery target name (i.e., the name of the school/employer to which you are applying), the mailing method of your choice, the delivery address and the target completion date (the date you would like your file mailed). Please note that The Career Center is unable to guarantee same day mailing requests. You can check the status of your order under the “Orders” tab.

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Initiation and Management of Your Credential File

*A Guide for
Students and Alumni*

What is a credential file?

A credential file is an online file that allows students/ alumni to request, store, manage and send letters of recommendation to graduate schools or potential employers. Specifically, these letters of recommendation and related online services are best utilized by undergraduates seeking admission to graduate and professional schools, candidates seeking to apply for teaching positions, or doctoral students seeking to send information to search committees.

What is the Pride-Career Management System (Pride-CMS)?

The Hofstra University Career Center utilizes a comprehensive software system to manage the credential file system, all full- and part-time job opportunities, internships, and several recruitment and career fair events. All students and alumni have accounts in this system that are available 24 hours a day, seven days week.

What are letters of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation appropriate for a professional credential file include letters written by faculty, University administrators, previous employers, cooperating teachers, principals and supervisors, among others. The letters should emphasize the candidate's abilities and related skills. It is advantageous to gather these while the writers are available and are familiar with your qualifications. Personal reference letters (i.e., letters from a friend or parent) should not be included in your credential file.

It is important to speak with the potential writer and formally ask if he or she is willing to write a letter of recommendation. It is both courteous and professional to state your purposes for the letter and remind the potential writer of your accomplishments. Give the writer a copy of your resume, offer the writer detailed information about your purposes for the letter, and tell him/her if the letter should be tailored to specific programs, schools, or type of employment.

The Career Center recommends that you request your letters of recommendation a few months in advance of when you need them mailed. It takes time to write a good letter of recommendation; be prepared to wait. You should

provide the writer with "A Guide for Writers of Letters of Recommendation," which details how the writer should create a letter to be uploaded to your online credential file.

It is recommended that you have between two and five letters in your online file before requesting that the credential file be mailed to an employer or graduate school. Most graduate schools request a specific number of letters as part of their admissions guidelines.

How do the letters get into my file? electronic vs. paper submission

Once you make a request to a writer through the system, a link and instructions will be e-mailed automatically to the writer. All writers have the option of writing within Pride-CMS or uploading an existing letter directly into your account.

If the writer or you prefer paper submission:

- ▶ If you possess the paper letter, it must be typed on valid letterhead and contain the writer's signature. This letter will be designated as nonconfidential and can be submitted in-person at The Career Center. The Career Center staff will scan the letter directly into your online account.
- ▶ If the writer you have chosen prefers to type a letter on valid letterhead with an original signature, he/she must indicate on the letter if it is confidential or nonconfidential, and must mail the letter in a sealed envelope (with his/her signature across the seal) directly to The Career Center.

Please note: Original letters received by The Career Center will not be released to file holders, as Hofstra University becomes legal custodian over these documents.

Confidential vs. Nonconfidential Letters

Each time you request a letter, the system will prompt you to select whether you are requesting a confidential or nonconfidential letter. The writer will see this request online before writing the letter.

CONFIDENTIAL FILES: You, the user, waive the right to read confidential letters.

NONCONFIDENTIAL FILES: You, the user, can review the letters anytime through your online Pride-CMS account.

We encourage you to speak with a career counselor and discuss the consequences of each choice. In addition, you may choose to discuss this decision with professionals in your field of choice, or with graduate school admissions representatives.

What is mailed as part of my credential file?

After you place an online order for your credential file to be mailed, your letters and supporting materials will be assembled into a Hofstra presentation folder. The folder includes a Personal Data Form (you will have completed this form when you initiate your online file) and the specific letters you have selected for a particular mailing.

Please note:

- 1) Transcripts are NOT part of your credential file. If the graduate school or employer is seeking a transcript, you must request an official copy from Hofstra's Office of Academic Records. Visit [hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/Student Services/AcademicRecords/](http://hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentServices/AcademicRecords/) for more information.
- 2) Resumes are NOT part of your credential file. Ordinarily, you will have forwarded your resume and cover letter to a prospective employer or graduate school separately as an initial step in your application process.

Is there a fee?

There are no fees to establish or maintain a credential file. Fees are based on the type of mailing method you request. For current and registered students, all First-Class Mail requests are FREE. For alumni, there is a minimal fee for First-Class Mail. For all users, there is a fee for Express Mail. Further payment instructions for mailing are detailed in Pride-CMS.

**All fees are subject to change based on changes in postal rates.*

What if I already have a paper credential file?

If you already have a "paper" file at The Career Center, we can convert your file to an electronic version. Please contact The Career Center to discuss this request.