

## TRAINING: Guidance on Recommendation Letter

大学申请推荐信培训

College Counseling Department SIA 03/2023



### What is A recommendation letter?

推荐信是什么?



### The Importance of Recommendation Letters 推荐信重要性

- They corroborate the reliability of other application materials and enrich applicants' dynamic images.
- 大学推荐信可以佐证其他申请材料的可信度、真实度,且可以完善申请者的形象。

- "In most cases, these letters serve to support all of the other pieces of your application and reaffirm what we've seen in your transcript, test scores, extracurricular activities, and personal essay. It is certainly one thing to hear how you describe yourself as a student, person, and community member, but we also want to hear from your academic and personal mentors to learn their perspectives on your achievements."
  - --Vanderbilt Admission Office



### The Number of Recommendation Letters Needed 推荐人数量

#### U.S.美国

● Three recommendation letters from a School Counselor, a Liberal Arts Teacher, and a Science Teacher

美国普遍需要3封推荐信: 一封升学指导,两封任课老师。有些大学可能是optional或不需要提供,但是一般都是两个科任老师推荐信的名额,建议一个文科、一个理科。

• One optional recommendation letter concerning outstanding performance in extracurricular activities such as internship, research, and artwork programs

校外:一般一封,如实习直属领导、艺术作品指导人,有的学校没有此名额。

#### U.K.英国:

- One recommendation letters from a school counselor or a subject teacher related to major applied
- 一封推荐信,来自升学指导或者专业相关的科任老师

#### Hong Kong香港

- Two recommendation letters with at least one concerning academic performance
- 普遍需要2封推荐信,其中至少有一封是来自学术方面的。

#### Australia澳洲/Canada加拿大/Singapore新加坡:

• Normally, none needed 基本上不需要推荐信



### Recommendation Letter from Counselor 升学指导推荐信

- The recommender's title should be a counselor.
- 推荐人的头衔——升学指导老师 (Counselor)
- The evaluation should cover school performance, learning attitude, and other noticeable skills.
- 对申请者的基本评估:主要包括申请者的在校表现、学习态度、能力特长等。
- The honors mentioned should be related to in-campus activities, roles in school organizations, etc. Out-of-school activities can be mentioned around the end of the letter.
- 申请者获得的奖励:主要包括参加过的校内活动、在学生组织中的任职等,可以在文末提一下申请者校外 活动
- The emphasis is on the student's personal characteristics and skills.
- 内容更多涉及到个人特质、能力特长等方面



### Recommendation Letter from Subject Teachers 学科老师推荐信

- Specify the subject.
- 注明推荐人任课学科
- The evaluation should cover the student's subject knowledge, learning attitude, grades and academic achievements.
- 对申请者的基本评估:主要包括申请者的专业知识、学习态度、学习成绩和学术成就估计
- The honors mentioned should be related to academic competitions, field research reports, internships, etc.
- 申请者获得的奖励:学术方面—学术比赛、调查报告、实习等。
- The emphasis is on the student's subject learning and grades.
- 内容更多的是关于申请者的学习和成绩方面



- 1.是否可以写缺点?
- 需要慎重,即使写了,也建议写学生的缺点正在不断的成长和磨练中改正和完善。
- 2.推荐人是否地位越高越好?
- 不一定, 取决于推荐人是否和学生有较多接触, 是否对学生有足够了解。
- 接触多的推荐人写出的推荐信才有说服力。
- 3.可以让中介修改推荐信吗?
- 以自愿为原则给学生或者学生的中介看推荐信,但不允许中介凭空干预推荐信内容。
- 这是为学生负责,要保持老师对所有学生推荐信一致性与可信度。



### **FERPA**

"FERPA的全称是Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 是美国一套保护个人隐私的法案。在填写CA时,会有弹窗询问是否放弃(waive)查看相关信息的权利。小H看到CA的弹窗询问是否要waive看推荐信的权利时,没有多想的小H竟以为这真是一道能够自由选择的题目,一时兴起,竟点了"do not waive"。殊不知,对于一些院校来说,不放弃查看推荐信的权利会导致该学生的推荐信作废。还好小H最终在与同学交流时意识到了这一点,在与已提交申请的院校沟通后,才幸运地避免了悲剧的发生。"

- 1. How does FERPA relate to your college application?
  - FERPA regulates the privacy of student education records, which could include your application to the college where you enroll. FERPA also gives you the right to review confidential letters of recommendation provided as part of that application after you enroll.
  - 2. In the application you'll be asked if you want to waive the right to review confidential letters of recommendation. What you should you know about this waiver?
- Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.
- Some recommenders may decline to write a letter for you if you do not waive your rights. Check with your counselor or teachers to see if any of them follow such a policy.

What happens if I don't waive my FERPA rights?
Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), after you matriculate you will have access to the recommendation form and all other recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf after matriculating, unless at least one of the following is true:

- 1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation (you can check if a school saves recommendations post-matriculation in the My Colleges tab).
- 2. You waive your right to access, regardless of the institution to which it is sent.



# How to write a good recommendation letter?

如何完成一封优秀的推荐信?



#### See attachment

### Full Preparation 充分的准备工作

- Brag sheet, CV, or even PS from students with details such as numbers and facts
- 完整详细的学生自荐信、CV,甚至于PS,以方便推荐人写推荐信。尽量给老师提供一些<mark>数字和事例</mark>, 让推荐信更加具体且富有细节
- Personal talks with students about his/her personalities, dream schools and reasons, efforts made towards his/her goals, etc.
- 推心置腹的面谈,了解学生的个性、为人、理想等,以及想要申请哪些学校,为什么要选择这些学校, 以及学生为了这些目标做了些什么,利于写出更好的推荐信
- Clear knowledge of submitting deadline (preferably two months ahead of application deadlines on recommender systems)
- 知悉推荐信提交时间,<mark>建议提前两个月</mark>,最好不要拖过大学申请的deadline(推荐人系统可以看到 截止日)

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### USA

• Early: 10.15 11.1 11.15

• Regular: 12.1 12.15 1.1 1.15 2.1

#### UK

• 10.15 (Oxford, Cambridge & Conservatory)

• 1.27 ( Other )

### **Hong Kong**

• Early: 10.15

• Regular: 1.15

### Deadlines 参考截止日



## Consistent with the course level 结合课程难度

### Detailed Content 详实的内容

- What is the context of your relationship with the applicant? 「与申请人的关系是?
- Has the student demonstrated a willingness to take intellectual risks and go beyond the normal classroom experience? / 学生是否具有学术挑战精神及有优异的课堂表现?
- Does the applicant have any unusual competence, talent or leadership abilities? What motivates this person? What excites him/her? / 学生是否具有突出的能力、天赋或领导力? 学生追求成就的内驱动力是什么? 学生对什么学科方面感兴趣?
- How does the applicant interact with teachers? With peers? Describe his/her personality and social skills. / 学生和老师关系如何? 和同学呢? 描述一下学生的个人性格及与他人的日常交往情况
- Has the applicant ever experienced disappointment or failure? If so, how did he/she react? / 学生是否遇到过挫折?若有,学生是怎么克服的?
- What if a student doesn't stand out that much?

- Write positively about his/her attitude and efforts made in and out of the class. There must be something good if you would like to recommend this student.

be



### Detailed Content 详实的内容

- Highlight impressive characteristics and skills beyond his/her own self-advocacy
   突出申请者个人特点及能力
- Specific and storied: support your conclusions with facts and anecdotes
   以具体事实及事例支撑推荐人对学生的评价
- Provide the information and impressions we cannot glean from the rest of the application
   展示学生更立体全面的形象
- Try to give a complete sketch of the student and the context of his/her accomplishments.
   为学生的优异表现提供背景支撑

MIT推荐信写作建议: How to write good letters of recommendation - MIT



### Well-organized Structure 有条理的结构

### 1. Introduction / 开头

- Introducing the relationship between the recommender and the applicant and the duration of this relationship
- 介绍他和申请者的关系以及他们接触的内容,比如是申请者某专业课的老师或者是Counselor,以及认识的时长,这样会增加这篇推荐信的可信度和真实度。

- The longer this relationship lasts, the better for the authenticity of details to be guaranteed.
- 一般认识越久越好,越知道近况越好。



方面的综合素质,挖掘学生独特的闪光点

#### SHOW!

### Well-organized Structure 有条理的结构

#### **NOT TELL!**

#### 2. Body / 主体

Two to three paragraphs describing the student's strengths concerning academic performance, extracurricular skills, and personal characteristics supported by stories and facts
 分段列举两到三个学生的优点,选取最能展现能力、个性、特点的事例,反映学生在学科方面的潜质,展现学生各

- Avoid using fancy but empty and not-fact-based words like excellent, distinguished, and ambitious
   若文章充满 "excellent", "distinguished", "ambitious" 等顶级赞美之词,却没有具体的例子来支持。这样的推荐信不仅不能使招生官增加对申请者的了解,反而会让他们觉得无法对申请者有一个真实的认识。
- Don't repeat a student's resume. Admissions counselors get a copy of that, too. Kati says, "I know this comes from a desire to portray the student as well-rounded and also to pad out what you're worried will be a short letter, but trust me: Two paragraphs actually specific to the student are so much better than a page of puff."



### Well-organized Structure 有条理的结构

### 3. Conclusion / 结尾

 Recommendation letters are targeted at all universities to be applied, so no specific university names should be mentioned.

推荐信不针对任何一所学校,不需要在文末特地注明学生适合某个学校



### Formal Format 工整的格式

Neat and formal format (Please refer to Attachment "SIA- Recommendation letter sample (with format)")

严谨工整的书信模式,以免被视作不严肃、不认真,影响推荐效果(详参附件"SIA- Recommendation letter sample (with format)")

- Standard A4 paper with school letterhead and recommender's official (electronic) signature
   标准A4纸,上方有学校抬头,下方有落款签名(可以插入电子签字)
- 300-500words, 500+ words would be highly recommended 300-500词, 500词以上更佳

Personalized but Unified writing style for all recommended students
 每个老师可形成自己的写作风格,为每位学生使用一样的格式与口吻

CONSISTEN CY



### Notes 注意事项

- Special attention should be paid to recommenders' contact info when students are not SIA graduates (specifically, Shenzhen Experimental School-Senior High School
- 落款注意区分不同校区的学生
- Contradictions to transcripts, certificates, and other official documents should be avoided.
- 内容与其他申请材料如成绩单、获奖证书等信息吻合,不要出现矛盾
- Specific words of standardized tests such as SAT, TOEFL and ACT should be avoided.
- 标化老师不要出现SAT. TOEFL. ACT字眼(要和成绩单的科目一致!!)
- Be careful with mentions of students' disadvantages and weaknesses. Fair comments of mild and insignificant weak points are allowed, if necessary.
- 避免写缺点,弱点!如果很想写,可写少量并不重要但很中肯的小缺点
- Do be generous with praises and compliments!
- 不要吝啬赞美之词!



#### • Teacher recommendation for David:

- It is a great pleasure for me to recommend David for admission to MIT. He is one of the most extraordinary students I have encountered in 20 years of teaching. I **taught** David A.P. Calculus last year as a tenth grader, and he was one of the very top students in an extremely able group of mostly seniors. He has **a high aptitude** for math and was very much involved in his work, applying himself with persistence and dedication and often going beyond the regular class assignments.
- David's abiding interest, however, is computer science. He has developed a series of "strands" for use in providing computerized drill and review in the basic skills and techniques of algebra and arithmetic and has recently adapted these to other subjects. David's work in this area has been so original and significant that he has published a paper on it and delivered several lectures to professionals in other parts of the country. This is a phenomenal accomplishment for anyone, especially a young man in rural Arkansas. It is also worth noting that both last year and this year David taught computer programming to a tenth grade class of mine for two weeks. He took over completely, preparing lectures, assignments, and tests with great care and thought. His lectures were clear and well organized, and it was obvious that he had expended a great deal of effort to make the course the success that it was.
- David's personal qualities are as impressive as his intellectual accomplishments. An extremely kind, sensitive and sensible boy, he has had a difficult family situation for a few years now. He provides emotional support to his mother through her battle with cancer without allowing the situation to undermine his own stability and accomplishments. He has exhausted all that we have to offer him in this small community, and the maturity that he has demonstrated leads me to believe him capable of entering college a year early, as he now plans to do. I sincerely hope that you will be able to offer him a place in MIT's freshman class.



### • Critique:

• Excellent! This recommendation is filled with comments from someone who clearly knows this student well. We get a clear sense for not only David's intellectual capacities, but also emotional maturity. His genuine love for computer programming comes through in this teacher's description. We also realize that he is pushing academic boundaries in his community and making opportunities for himself - a trait that is especially important for a candidate seeking college admissions a year early.



#### • Teacher Recommendation for Jen:

- Jen was a student in one of my predominately senior physics classes. She took physics her junior year in high school and was a good student. Through hard work, she was able to develop a good understanding of the subject material.
- Jen also had personal qualities that are commendable. In the two years that I have known her I have never known her to be dishonest or untrustworthy. Once on an exam paper I had made a grading error in her favor. She brought this to my attention even though it resulted in a lower test grade.
- In conclusion, I feel that Jen has both the academic and personal qualities to be a credit to the college of her choice, and I give her my recommendation without reservation.



### • Critique

• We receive thousands of recommendations like this each year. It is all positive, but it doesn't give any real depth to the candidate. In this instance, the reader is left feeling the writer is reaching for something to say. Honesty and trustworthiness are certainly admirable traits, but they are not uncommon among the nation's top college applicants. We are looking for a compelling reason to admit someone, so information on the class material does not help the candidate. Although Jen may be a hard worker, most of our applicants are. Although the comments are positive, it is difficult to grasp onto anything tangible to make this candidate's case stronger. Was this faint praise intentional? How does Jen fare in comparison with other (more outstanding?) candidates at the school?



### Reference 参考常用词

#### Scholastic aptitude (学习方面的才能)

- Native intellectual ability / 天赋
- Imagination / 想像力
- Creativity / 创造力
- Capacity for analytical thinking / 分析思考能力
- Intellectual curiosity 或 Spirit of inquiry / 好奇心
- Ability to work independently / 独立学习工作的能力
- Memory / 记忆力
- Accuracy / 正确性
- Methodology / 研究方法

- Capability for abstract reasoning / 抽象推理的能力
- Potential as a researcher / 研究的潜力
- Potential as a teacher / 教学的潜力
- Ability to express his ideas orally and in writing / 口头或文 字的表达能力
- Capacity, desire, and determination for good quality graduate work / 获得学业成功的能力、愿望与决心
- Probable success as a high school student / 作为高中生成功的 可能性



### Academic performance (学业上的表现)

- Breadth of general knowledge / 知识丰富
- Knowledge of literature in his field / 本专业领域知识
- Grade or achievement / 成绩或成就
- Industry, diligence/勤勉
- Participation in discussion / 讨论积极
- Academic maturity / 学业上的成熟

### Reference 参考常用词





### Languages (语言能力)

- Ability to speak, understand, read and write the English language / 听、说、读、写英文的能力
- Ability to read significant literature in languages other than English / 英语以外的语言阅读能力



### Character (品行)

- Honesty; integrity / 老实
- Sincerity / 诚恳
- Sense of responsibility / 责任感
- Cooperation / 合作
- Enthusiasm / 热诚
- Conscientiousness / 自觉性
- Ethical and moral standards / 伦理与道德标准
- Reliability; dependability / 可靠性

### Reference 参考常用词



如何上传推荐信?

How to upload a recommendation letter?

### What Is Cialfo?



## Cialfo is an online college and career planning platform schools use to support students in post-secondary planning.

- Counselor, Student, Guardian, and Teacher access
- Communication: Broadcast email, SMS, and Inbox chat
- Career and personality assessments
- Track student progress
- College and university search
- College and university list management
- Document management (recommendations, transcripts, forms)
- Document sending to colleges & universities

### Cialfo是什么?



### Cialfo是一个在线大学和职业规划平台,学校可以通过它来有效管理学生的升学指导工作。

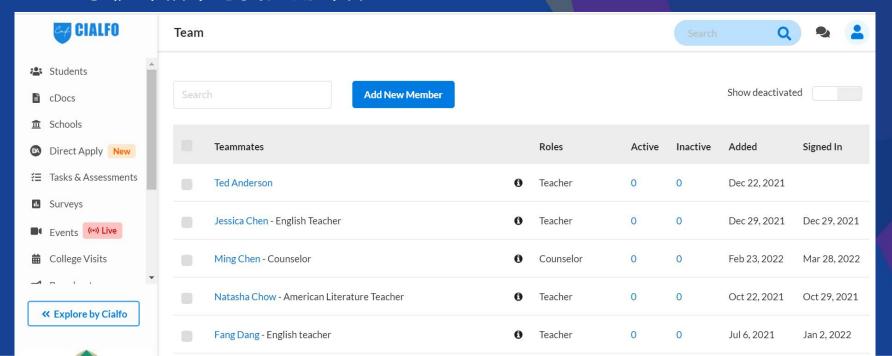
- 升学指导老师、学生、家长和学科老师都可以登录平台。
- 在日常工作方面,升学指导老师可以通过Cialfo的任务清单&进度管理(Task List & Progress)给学生创建任务并对学生的完成情况在线上进行追踪管理;发送广播公告、建立会议邀约、创建共享笔记、在平台内部聊天工具上与学生对话等通信套件(Communication Suite)可以保证升学指导老师与学生、家长保持信息畅顺,沟通无障碍。
- 备战申请、选校定校时,专业的职业性格测评(Career Assessments)可以帮助老师和学生快速确定专业方向;Cialfo强大的院校专业搜索引擎(School Search)(覆盖50多个国家)和散点图(Scattergram)功能可以帮助学生进行大学调研,参照历史录取数据来客观分析录取机会,选择适合自己的大学。
- 在忙碌的申请季,Cialfo的电子申请材料发送(cDocs)模块还完成了与Common App和Parchment的对接,可以让升学指导老师通过Cialfo为学生直接把电子申请材料递交到这两个平台,并且还可以在Cialfo上随时查看学生的申请状态。这一切都让大学申请变得更加简便、高效,可以大大减少文书处理及与各方沟通的时间。



### Steps to Upload Recommendation Letters @ CIALFO CIALFO系统上传推荐信步骤

- 1. Set up a CIALFO account / 创建老师的CIALFO账户
- Find the "Registration" email (from notifications@cialfo.co) in your @sendelta.com

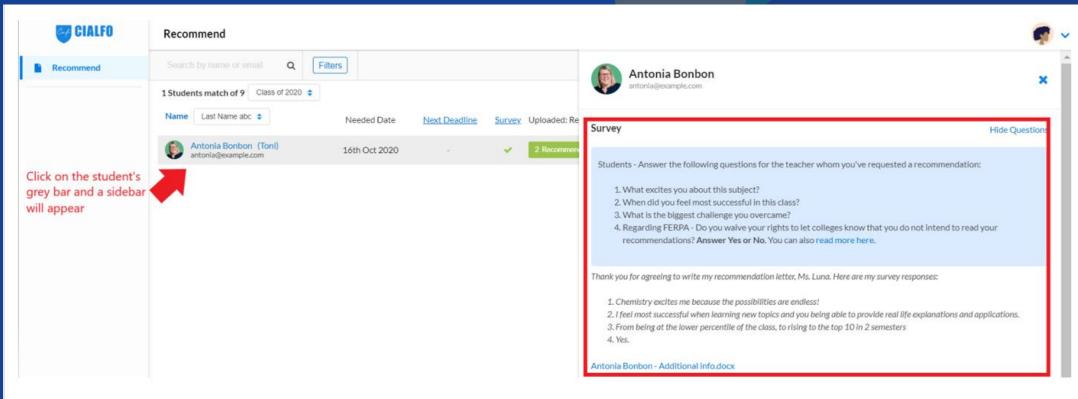
在sendelta学校邮箱中寻找注册邮件





2. Click on a student, and a sidebar will appear

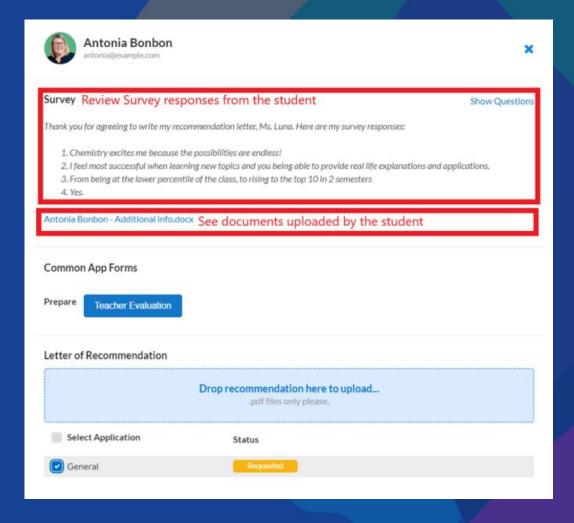
### 点击学生,出现侧方栏





3. Review information from the student to assist in writing your recommendation

查看学生提供的信息,为推荐信提供素材



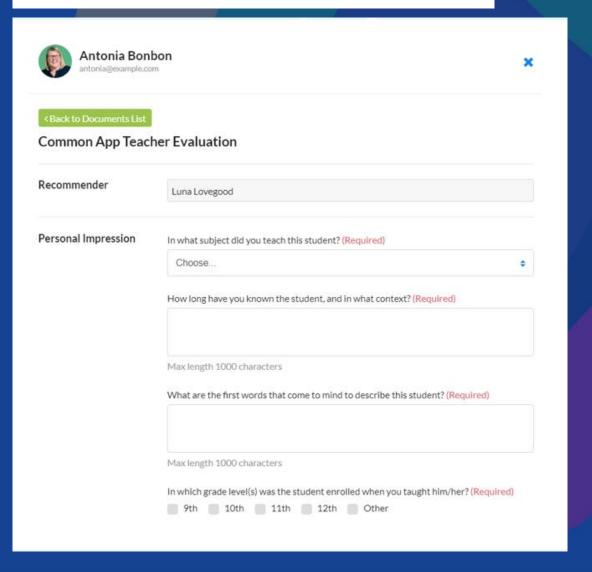


### 4. Prepare Common App Teacher Evaluation Form

填写Common App的教师评估表

- a. Click on the blue Teacher Evaluation button 点击蓝色的Teacher Evaluation按钮
- b. Complete the form in the sidebar 在右边弹出的新弹窗里完成评价表的填写
- c. Click "Save" at the bottom when completed 要记得点击"Save "进行保存哦!

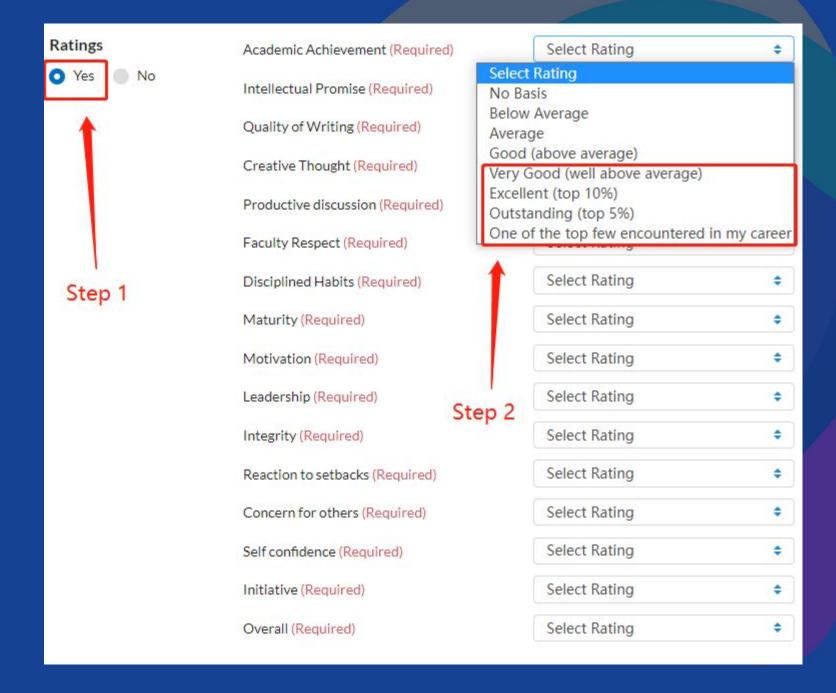






### 5. Ratings

- Rate the student's
   performance in various
   aspects. Preferable ratings
   would be "Very Good",
   "Excellent", "Outstanding"
   and "One of the top few
   encountered in my career".
- 学生表现评分栏处,评级优选
   "Very Good"
   "Excellent"
   "Outstanding"和"One of the top few encountered in my career"



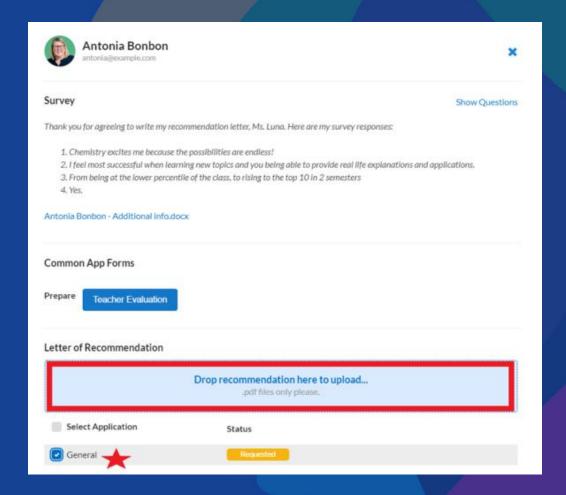


• 6. Upload a PDF file

(PDF only, General only)

上传PDF格式的推荐信(仅支持上传 PDF格式文件)

(注意A: 只需要勾选General only)





 Please confirm the total number of recommendation letters you need to write by the end of June, 2023. Then upload the final letters to CIALFO from June to August 2023. Final submissions of recommendation letters, together with official transcripts, will be done by counselors.

2023年5月底之前确认会写哪些学生(统计自己的工作量),6-8月写好上传到Cialfo(上传不代表提交),由Counselor统一连同成绩单一起提交

• About resigned teachers 关于离职的老师:

The student should ask for the teacher's permission first. If the teacher would like to recommend the student, the teacher could join the CIALFO system by emailing full name, email, phone number and gender to counselor1@sendelta.com for account registration.

学生应首先取得老师的同意。若老师愿意推荐该名学生,老师可以将全名、邮箱、电话、性别信息发送到counselor1@sendelta.com进行CIALFO系统的注册。



 Some universities use their own recommendation letter upload systems, and specific instructions will be sent to recommenders through emails. Please upload these recommendation letters as required by the universities individually.

● 部分大学有自己的推荐信上传系统,具体指引会发送到推荐人的邮箱。请根据这些大学的要求,单独上传推荐信。

### Check email everyday~

### Individual Recommender System

HKUST Admissions: Invitation to Provide Academic Reference (Ref.: 5220( )	
HKUST Undergraduate Recruitment & Admissions Office <ustad 1="" 17:59<="" 2022="" 26="" td=""><td></td></ustad>	
收件人: Counselor 1 抄送: ugadmit@ust.hk	
Dear Miss,	
has applied for studies at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and he/she has nominated you as the referee who may provide reference in support of his/her admissions application.	
Message from the applicant:	
Thank you so much for submitted recommendation letter	
If you are willing to provide reference for him/her, grateful if you would complete the form at the following URL within 14 days:	
https://www.ab.ust.hk/acadrefU2?f_action=A&f_id1=52200132076	
Please note that, under the provision of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance of Hong Kong, information contained in your reference report will be shown to the applicant upon request.	
Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at ugadmit@ust.hk	
Thank you for your kind attention.	

To decline this invitation, please click here:



# Q&A



### Thank you!

感谢聆听