

Recommendation Letters Procedures¹

June 10, 2011

The department will send out recommendation letters exclusively in three ways: by snail mail, by email, or through <http://EconJobMarket.org>. The department will NOT accommodate requests from any employer (apart from the IMF) to deliver letters through a different procedure. (Some employers have attempted to set up their own database systems and want recommenders to obtain login ID, password, etc then upload letters themselves. THIS IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. Employers trying to do this must be sent the letters by one of our three accepted methods – they ALL can accept letters by snail mail).

Broadly, your steps are as follows:

1. Produce a list of your recommenders' names (3 or 4 names) ON PAPER which you will give to the staff so that they can tick off recommenders' names as their letters are received.
2. Produce a version of `EmployersMoniker.xls` that contains *all* the employers, and *only* the employers, that you are applying to. (You probably will have some employers you have thought about but have decided not to apply to; if you want to preserve that information, please copy and paste it to another spreadsheet, and remove it from your main `EmployersMoniker.xls` spreadsheet.
3. Sort your `EmployersMoniker.xls` spreadsheet according to five sort keys: 1) Date you asked the staff to send the recommendation letters 2) Method of recommendation (snail mail, email, or EconJobMarket.org); 3) Academic vs. Nonacademic; 4) Domestic vs. International; 5) Employer Name. (There should be a macro built into `EmployersMoniker.xls` that can be executed to accomplish this sort – see the instructions on the first page).
4. *After* having *completed all* their <http://EconJobMarket.org> applications, each student will give the staff a hard-copy list of his/her employers sorted by whether the letters will be sent by snail mail, email,

or <http://EconJobMarket.org> (and further subdivided, in each category, into academic vs. nonacademic, and domestic vs. international). Students are allowed to give the staff no more than two lists, one in the middle on November and the other at the beginning of December once the new JOE is out.

Our system for organizing and keeping track of letters requires the existence of a special gmail account for each recommender. These accounts, which are accessible only to the staff (and not to the recommender), have already been created for all current JHU faculty, and even for some others like Pravin Krishna, Peyton Young, and Matt Shum. But if one of your recommenders is not among these “usual suspects” you will need to notify the JMCC to have the appropriate account created. These email addresses follow the format, e.g., LastnameFMJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, so that professor Carroll’s email alias is for example CarrollCDJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com. The correspondence to these email accounts is forwarded automatically to the staff.

More detailed procedures are below:

1. **Snail Mail:** Students will ask the staff for business size envelopes (reporting the Johns Hopkins return address), attach the address labels for their employers, and return them divided into 4 groups (academic-USA, non-academic-USA, academic-International, non-academic-International) held together by rubber bands (one envelope per employer). On the first envelope of each group, students will attach a post-it reporting their name, the letter type (academic or non-academic), destination (USA or international), the names of the recommenders and the number of envelopes. Here is an example of the post-it:

Student’s name
Academic - USA
Prof. Carroll
Prof. Faust
Prof. Jeanne
35 envelopes

Staff can thus pick up a group of letters and immediately see how many copies of the letters to print, the recommenders’ names and

the letter type (academic or non-academic). Staff can ask students to help sealing the envelopes and applying postage. The mail is picked up at 1:30 in the afternoon, so the staff will usually need at least a day or two to get your letters out. Further advice from several former Hopkins students (successful job seekers!) is available in the documents labelled `AdviceMoniker.pdf` in the Resources folder on the JHUJobMarket page.

2. **email:** In order to speed up the process, students will provide the staff with as few as possible email groups (in general two, for academic and non-academic employers). In particular, students will send to `mailto:JHUEconJobMarketStaff@gmail.com` one single email with subject “email lists for recommendation letters for [your name]” whose content will look like this:

- **GROUP 1** (recommenders: Prof. Carroll, etc.)
 - **subject:** Academic Recommendation Letters for [your name]
 - **bcc:** CarrollCDJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, SecondRecommenderJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, ..., employer1@aaa.aaa, employer2@aaa.aaa, employer3@aaa.aaa, etc.
- **GROUP 2** (recommenders: Jesus H. Christ, Carl Christ, Adrian Pagan, etc.)
 - **subject:** Nonacademic Recommendation Letters for [your name]
 - **bcc:** ChristJHJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, ChristCJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, ..., employer1@aaa.aaa, employer2@aaa.aaa, employer3@aaa.aaa, etc.
- **GROUP 3** (recommenders: James Bond, , etc.)
 - **subject:** Extra super secret special jobs Recommendation Letters for [your name]
 - **bcc:** BondJamesBondJHUEconJobMarket@gmail.com, ..., employer1@aaa.aaa, employer2@aaa.aaa, employer3@aaa.aaa, etc.

The staff should create one email for each group (copying and pasting the “Subject” and “Bcc” fields from the student’s email), attach the appropriate letters (academic or nonacademic) and request an “acknowledged” receipt. The staff should verify if error messages are returned (for example for a mistyped email address, or over quota of the

recipient's account, etc.) and forward them to the students. Students are responsible to verify the source of the error and provide the staff with an alternative email address.

3. **EJM:** Students submit some of their applications to a centralized electronic system (<http://EconJobMarket.org>) which requires the email addresses of recommenders. Students use the email alias of faculty members so that the requests to upload letters are forwarded to the staff at JHUEconJobMarketStaff@gmail.com. The staff has to click on the link provided for each recommender, click on the name of the student who required the letter, upload the (academic) letter, select all the employers, and tick the box saying that the same letter should be sent to all the employers the student will apply to over the next 3 months.