

Letters for students, as they pursue internships, apply for graduate school, or seek leadership positions on campus or in the community. It can be tempting to automatically agree to write letters for a student, even when you feel conflicted about doing so. Before agreeing, consider whether a halfhearted letter is worse than no letter at all.

Before you agree: Weigh your own experience with the student, including the quality of her/his work, work ethic, personal attributes, etc. Get a clear picture of the context for your letter, and determine whether your experience with the student is suited to the details. It also can be helpful to know what s/he would most like you to emphasize.

Saying "no":