

The Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards

Letters of Recommendation and Supplemental Materials

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Common Application Components

- Application Form
- Personal Statement
- Research Proposal
- Short Answer Essays
- **Letters of Recommendation**
- **Supplemental Documents**



Letters of Recommendation

- Letters of Recommendation play an important role in the review process and should not be left to the last minute!
- Who are you asking to write your letters? You may want to ask different recommenders for different awards.
- If you're early in your graduate career, begin cultivating those relationships!

Letters of Recommendation

- Think about diversity among your letter writers.
- Different writers can discuss your different capabilities/strengths/experiences.
- Having three letters that each discuss you in a seminar setting may be less effective than 1 letter about seminar setting, 1 letter about teaching experience, and 1 letter about lab work.


Letters of Recommendation

- Ask your potential writers if they can write a “strong recommendation.”
- Provide reviewers with information about the fellowship and give them your essay drafts
- It’s OK to give reviewers some direction: “I’m asking you to write this letter because you supervised my work at the writing center and can discuss my abilities as a mentor.”

Supplemental Materials

- Many Fellowship and Grant Applications require **additional documents from your university**, such as **enrollment verification** or **PhD Candidacy verification**
- Identify the right person: Registrar, Chair, Dean?
- Easy to get, easy to forget!
- Don't leave till last minute!

Worksheet to Organize LORs

 Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards Recommenders Worksheet	
Name of Award:	Ford Dissertation Fellowship
Website:	https://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_171939
Deadline:	Dec 8 2022
Required Number of Letters of Recommendation:	3 <input type="button" value="v"/>
Recommender 1	
Name:	Example 1
Position:	Example 1
Why this person? What do you want them to focus on?	
Example 1 is dissertation advisor, in best position to discuss my research; should highlight my archival research work and how project fits broadly with Ford's mission	
Notes on follow up:	
Contact to ask for letter by Oct 1; plan to meet sometime to discuss this fellowship/application	
Recommender 2	

OGFA Resources

- The OGFA [Resource Toolbox](#) has resources for different application components, including Personal Statements, CVs, Letters of Recommendation, and Research Proposals.
- The [Fall 2022 OGFA Newsletter](#) contains a Letters of Recommendation “Pro-tip.”

The screenshot shows the OGFA Resource Toolbox website. The header includes the URL <https://ogfa.fsu.edu/resources/toolbox/elements-of-a-fellowship-application/letters-of-recommendation> and the Florida State University logo. The main navigation bar lists: HOME, ABOUT US, EXTERNAL FUNDING RESOURCES, OGFA RESOURCES, GRAD IMPACT, LET'S MEET, and FAQs. The sub-navigation bar lists: HOME / RESOURCES / TOOLBOX / LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION. The main heading is "Letters of Recommendation". Below it, a paragraph states: "Your letters of recommendation are an important component of your application and should be taken seriously. Your letters should come from people who know you well and can speak to why you are a good fit for the award you are applying for. Since your application as a whole is painting a picture of who you are, consider how each letter writer can support other components of your application. Help your letter writers write strong letters for you by ensuring that you provide them with information about the fellowship or award you are applying for as well as the details of your project. In doing so, your professors will be able to tailor their letters to the specific fellowship. Avoid submitting general letters of recommendation that could be used for multiple purposes. Most importantly, make sure to allow enough time for your professors to compose and submit the letters before the deadline!" Below this is a "Pro-Tip by a Graduate Student" section featuring a photo of Bryan Keller and a quote: "Letters of Recommendation are important, and you should not ask someone to write you a letter if they do not know you well. Most reviewers would rather hear from your manager of a couple years vs. a department chair who has only interacted with you a few times. Additionally, the letter of recommendation should directly address the published rubric, so inform your letter writers what you hope their letter will contain. Also, try to diversify who you ask to write a letter. Reviewers like to see these letters highlight different parts of your character and abilities, so having three letters from professors who have interacted with you in the same capacity is not ideal." At the bottom, there is a "Video: How to ask for letters of recommendation" section with a video player thumbnail showing a woman speaking.

Fall 2022 OGFA Newsletter

Last year was a banner year for FSU graduate students in the fellowships and awards arena, with graduate students receiving over 5.1 million dollars in external fellowships and awards. The Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards wants to work with you to make the 2022-2023 academic year even more successful!

If you have won an external award for the current academic year, we want to celebrate you. Please submit your award information [here](#).

If you are interested in applying for fellowships and awards but don't quite know where to begin, check out the Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards Let's Meet [webpage](#) for more information on how to jumpstart your fellowships and awards journey.

Fellowship Pro-tip: Letters of Recommendation

OGFA: How do you view your role as a letter writer? What do you hope to convey in your letters as the recommender?

Dr. Leushuis: Recommendation letters are very important for funding and grant agencies, and/or for admission decisions for graduate degree programs. It is the part of the applicant's dossier that provides a review committee the best close-up picture of the candidate, their interests, background, and professional personality and vision. As a letter writer, I therefore strive to provide a picture of the applicant that emphasizes their uniqueness, i.e., not a general "excellent" but "what makes this particular individual stand out." For this purpose, giving examples (for instance, how impressed I was with their performance on a specific assignment they did in one of my classes); or the way in which they showed to be good team-players in a specific collaborative project) provides more valuable information than broad and abstract brushstrokes about their general performance over time.

We know faculty are busy and often have multiple letters to write at a time. How can students facilitate the process of letter writing? What materials should students provide to recommenders? How long before a submission deadline should students request a letter?



OGFA

Services & Resources

- Funding search assistance
- One-on-one & small-group meetings
- Document review/feedback
- Workshops & Info Sessions
- Online application tips & resources
- Check out past award winners here (Grad Student Award Recipient Database)



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