The Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards

Letters of Recommendation and Supplemental Materials

Dr. Adrienne Stephenson | Assistant Dean & Director
Dr. Keith McCall | Assistant Director
Honorine Rouiller | Graduate Assistant

www.ogfa.fsu.edu
Workshop Guest Speaker:
Dr. Reinier Leushuis

Professor and Department Chair
Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
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

| 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 |

| 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.”

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 $3 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)
Contact Information

The Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards
Honors, Scholars, and Fellows House 127 Honors Way

ogfa-info@fsu.edu
ogfa.fsu.edu
850-645-0850

@ogf afsu /ogf afsu