EDU | DIRECTORATE FOR STEM EDUCATION

Division of Graduate Education (DGE)

Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Reference Writers and Research Mentors

National Science Foundation
Directorate for STEM Education (EDU)

Preparing a diverse STEM workforce and a well-informed citizenry

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ABOUT NSF GRFP

U.S. National Science Foundation

SINCE 1952

70,000+ GRFPS AWARDED

40+ FELLOWS HAVE GONE ON TO BECOME NOBEL LAUREATES

FELLOWS FROM/IN EVERY STATE

450+ FELLOWS HAVE BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

ANNUAL STIPEND $37,000

EDUCATION ALLOWANCE $16,000

5-YEAR FELLOWSHIP PERIOD

3 YEARS FINANCIAL SUPPORT

NO POST-GRADUATE STUDY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

~ Per Competition

12,000+ APPLICANTS

2,000+ OFFERS

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED

500+

~ Per Competition

Submit Early

OPEN TO:

Individuals Pursuing RESEARCH-BASED MASTER'S & DOCTORAL DEGREES In Eligible Fields of Study

nsfgrfp.org

DECISION TREE

FORMAT COMPLIANCE CHECK

ELIGIBLE MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY

- Chemistry
- Computer and Information Sciences
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Life Sciences
- Materials Research
- Mathematical Sciences
- Physics and Astronomy
- Psychology
- Social Sciences
- STEM Education and Learning Research

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Deadline

All reference letters must be submitted through the NSF Reference Letter System	Friday, October 11, 2024, no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).
• *Reference letters will not be accepted via email.*	• *No exceptions to the reference letter submission deadline will be granted.*

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Reference Letter Guidelines

- Institutional (or professional letterhead), if available.
- Signed, including the name, professional title of the reference writer, department, and institution
- Two-page limit
- PDF file format; cannot be password protected or encrypted
- Standard 8.5” x 11” paper size
- New Times Roman font; 11-point or higher with 1” margins on all sides
- Single space using normal (100%) single-line spacing

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GRFP Reference Writing Tips

PROVIDE	Provide details that can aid reviewers in evaluating the application using the NSF Merit Review Criteria. Describe how the applicant stands out from the crowd.
ASSESS	Assess the applicant's potential for significant achievements in STEM in graduate school and beyond. Support and elaborate upon other components of the application.
COMPARE	Compare the relative placement of the applicant among peers (without naming other students), including GRF applicants and fellowship recipients.
EXPLAIN	Explain the nature of your relationship with the applicant. *If you are a graduate advisor, it is especially important to identify yourself as such.*

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Application Review Criteria

Remember that reviewers evaluate applications based on the NSF Merit Review Criteria: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts

- Reviewers are instructed to use a comprehensive, holistic approach in their review and take a balanced consideration of all components of the application
- Reference letters are a key component of a strong application package and provide another opportunity to demonstrate an applicant's potential for significant achievements in STEM!

Intellectual Merit

Potential to advance knowledge

Evidence of potential and ability:

- Demonstrates intellectual ability (grades, curricula, awards, publications, presentations, etc.)
- Shows engagement in leadership, outreach, and service activities
- Works as a member of a team as well as independently
- Plans, conducts, interprets and communicates research
- Takes initiative, solves problems, persists
- Displays potential to advance knowledge in the chosen field(s) of study

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Broader Impacts

Potential of individual or research to benefit society

Societal benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- Full participation of the full spectrum of diverse talent in STEM
- Improved STEM education and educator development at any level
- Increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology
- Improved well-being of individuals in society
- Development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce
- Increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others
- Improved national security

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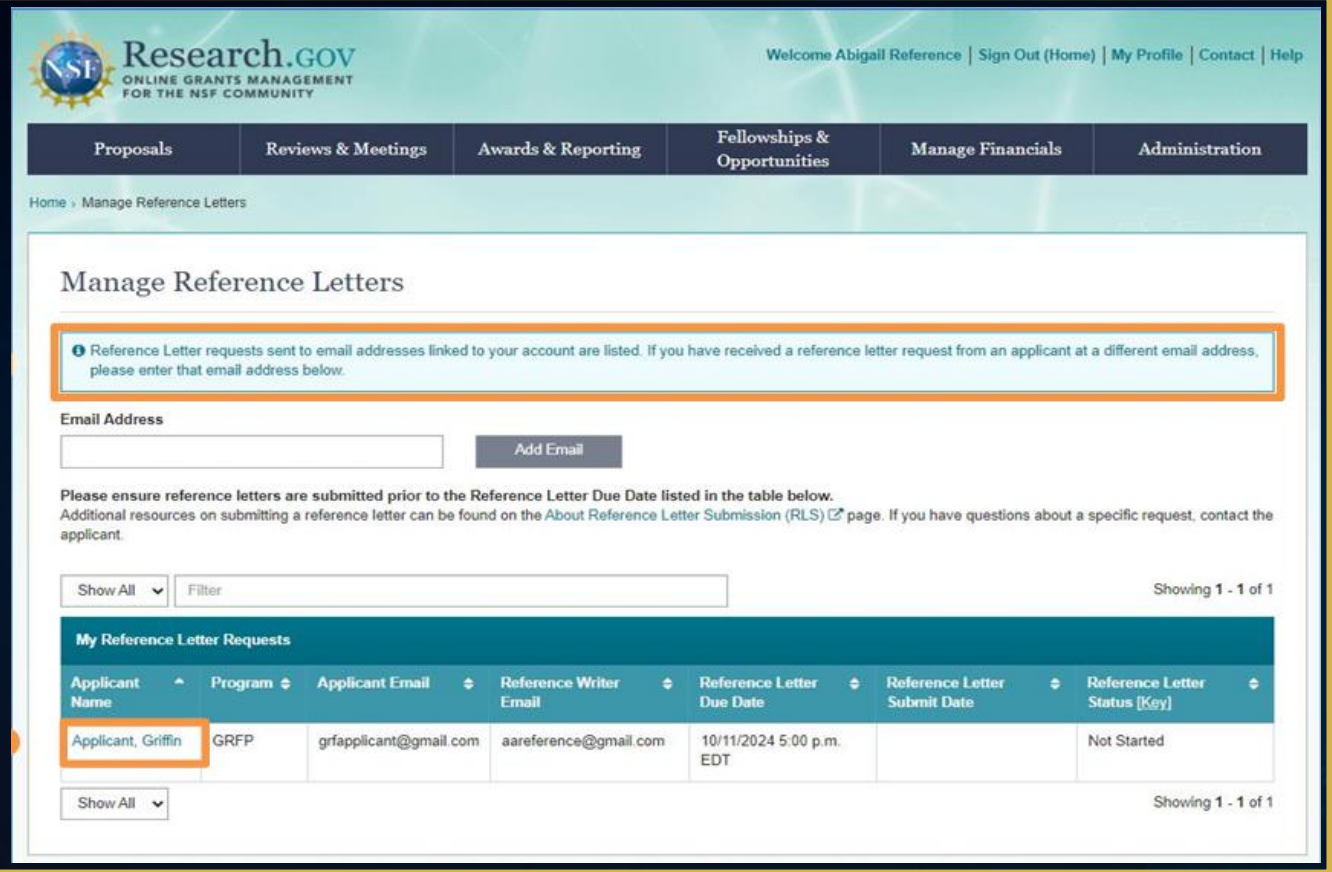
Reference Letter Submission

- All reference letters must be submitted online using the **NSF Reference Letter System.**
- Deadline is **October 11, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EST.**



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Reference Letter Submission

The GRFP Reference Letter Submission (RLS) Guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to submit your reference letter(s):

- To access the RLS, you must register for an NSF account in Research.gov
- In Research.gov, navigate to “Manage Reference Letters” under “Fellowships and Opportunities” in Research.gov
    - Select or Add GRFP Applicant to the Reference Letter System
    - Upload and Submit GRFP Applicant reference letter to NSF

Access the how-to guide at: https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/GRFP_ReferenceLetterSubmissionGuide.pdf

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Reference Letter Submission

- Access the video for a walkthrough of the steps to provide a reference letter:

https://players.brightcove.net/679256133001/NkgrDczuol_default/index.html?videoId=6361933305112

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Thank you!

GRFP Program Contacts

E-Mail: info@nsfgrfp.org

www.nsfgrfp.org/reference_writers

Phone: 866-NSF-GRFP, 866-673-4737

(Toll-Free from the US & Canada)

202-331-3542 (International)

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Questions?

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