

All Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) reference letters are submitted in the Research.gov Reference Letter Submission (RLS) system. **All reference letters must be submitted to NSF by the annual deadline in October.**

Starting the Reference Letter Process

- GRFP reference letter writers will receive a system-generated email from the "Rgov-No-Reply@nsf.gov" sender email with "NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request..." in the subject line.
- The email includes GRFP Applicant details and instructions to access the Research.gov RLS system.
- A confirmation email is sent to the GRFP Applicant after the system-generated reference letter request email is sent to the writer. The GRFP Applicant can track reference letter submission status in the Research.gov GRFP module.
- The system will send a separate email for each GRFP Applicant requesting a reference letter (i.e., writers who receive more than one reference letter request will receive an email for each GRFP Applicant).

Example System-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request Email



Reference Letter Due Date

Applicant Details

Instructions

RLS Help Documentation

NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request for Griffin Applicant - Due 10/11/2024 05:00 p.m. EDT

Rgov-No-Reply@nsf.gov
To: RLS-TEST

Sent to Reference Writer: btreference@gmail.com

You have been requested to submit a reference letter for a fellowship applicant. Please ensure reference letters are **submitted prior to the Reference Letter Due Date listed below.**

Reference Letter Due Date: 10/11/2024 05:00 p.m. EDT

Fellowship applicant details:
Name: Griffin Applicant
Email: grfapplicant@gmail.com
Program Applying For: [Graduate Research Fellowship Program \(GRFP\)](#)

To accept the request and provide your reference letter through Research.gov:
1. Check if you have an NSFID. If not, [Register](#) as soon as possible to ensure that you have the required access to provide a reference letter by the due date.
2. Navigate to [Manage Reference Letters](#), also found under "Fellowships" on the Research.gov homepage. ([Sign in](#) to Research.gov required)
3. Select this Applicant Name linked in the table.
4. Upload, review, and submit the reference letter to NSF.

Please note that clicking on the **Submit to NSF** button is required to complete the process and make the letter available to NSF. You will receive a confirmation email once you successfully submit your reference letter to NSF.

Please click [here](#) for more information/help on the reference letter submission process.

For additional assistance, contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-800-381-1532 or rgov@nsf.gov.
Please DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE, as this email was sent from an address that cannot accept incoming messages.

Step 1: Register for a new NSF account in Research.gov.

Note: Skip to Step 2 in this guide if you already have an NSF account in Research.gov. Use the [NSF ID Lookup](#) tool to check if you have an existing NSF account. If needed, contact the NSF IT Service Desk for account verification assistance at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET; Monday - Friday except federal holidays) or via rgov@nsf.gov.

Follow the steps below to create a new NSF account. There is also a three-minute [Register for a New NSF Account video tutorial](#) and [Register for a New NSF Account job aid](#) for a detailed walk-through of steps with associated screenshots.

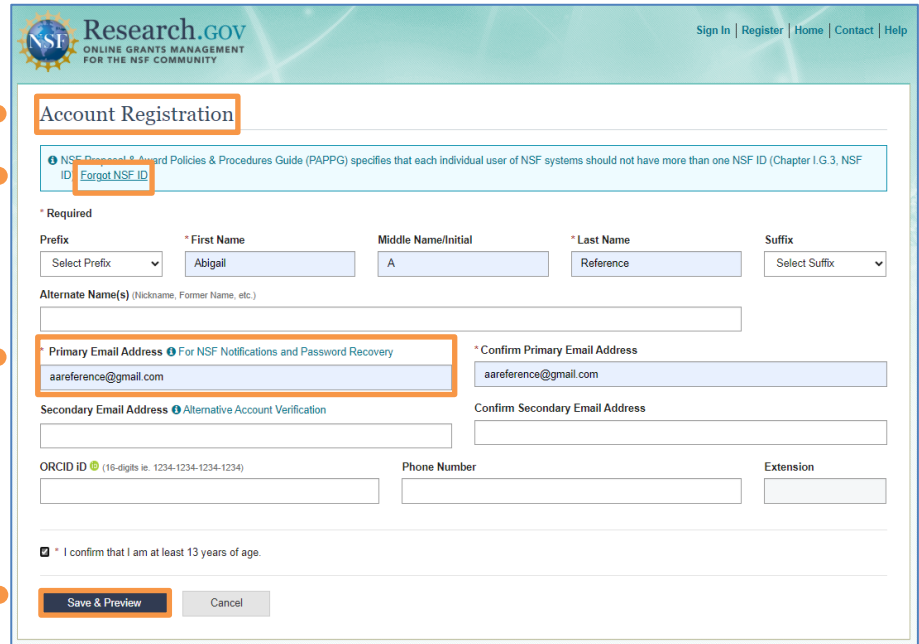
- Open [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- Click "Register" located at the top of the screen.
- Enter the requested information on the Account Registration page (**one-time process**)

NSF Account Registration page

NSF ID Lookup tool link

NSF account Primary Email field

Save & Preview button is enabled after age confirmation box is checked



NSF Account Primary Email Address Tips:

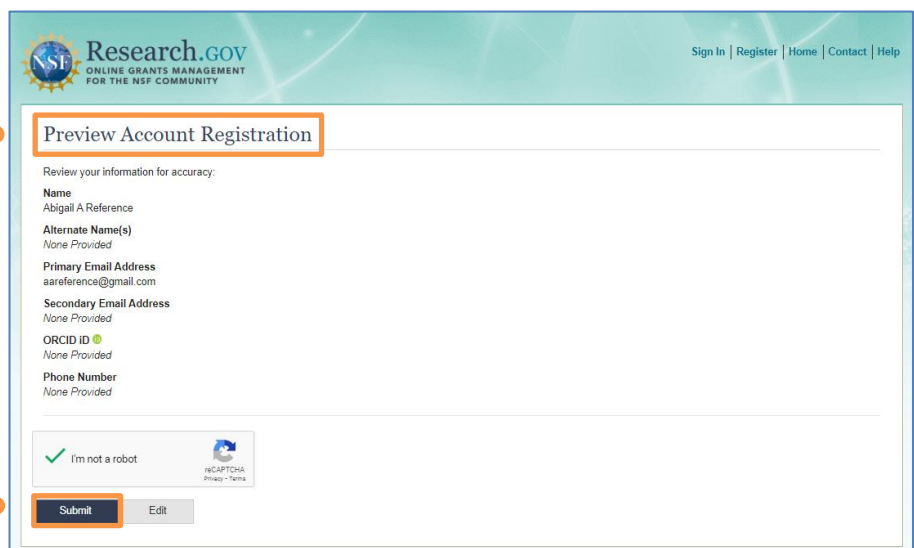
- Your NSF account primary email address will be used for NSF account notifications including password resets and may be used to verify your NSF account.
- Please make sure you have ongoing access to this email account (e.g., Gmail address).
- It is critical that you have continued access to this email account if you change organizations.
- NSF account holders can update their NSF account primary email address without NSF IT Service Desk assistance after registration.

- After previewing your account registration information, click **Submit**.

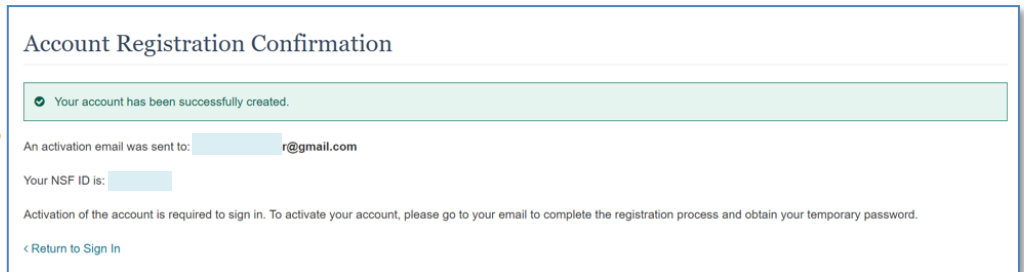
Preview Account Registration screen to verify NSF account information

Submit button is enabled after the I'm not a robot box is checked

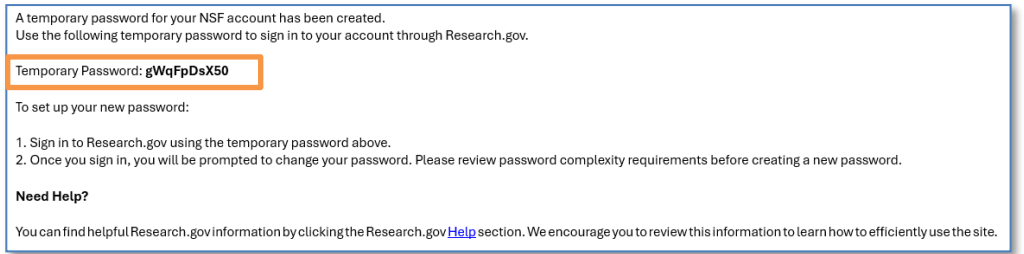
Use the Edit button to make changes



- You will receive an Account Registration Confirmation on the screen.
- You will then receive two system-generated emails at your NSF account primary email address.
 - One email will contain your new NSF ID for your NSF account.
 - The second email will have your temporary password so you can sign into [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). Follow the instructions provided in the email to change your temporary password.



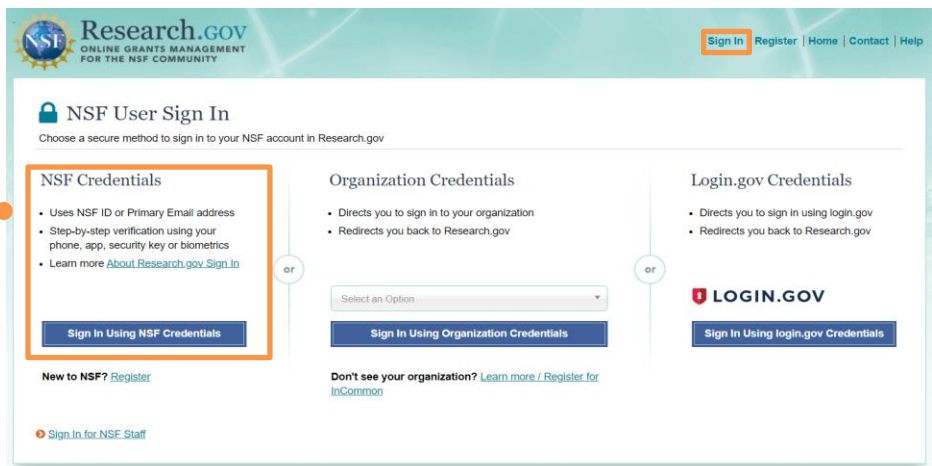
Confirmation message indicates successful NSF account creation



System generated email is sent to the NSF account primary email address with temporary password to sign into Research.gov

Step 2: Sign into Research.gov and complete one-time process to set up multifactor authentication.

- Access [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- Click **Sign In** located at the top right of the screen to enter NSF account credentials.
- Enter NSF account credentials. (**Note:** See the Appendix for information about signing into Research.gov with organization credentials or Login.gov credentials after establishing an NSF account.)
 - Type your NSF account primary email address or NSF ID in the **Primary Email Address or NSF ID** field. You are encouraged to sign in with your NSF account primary email address.
 - Type your NSF account password in the **Password** field.



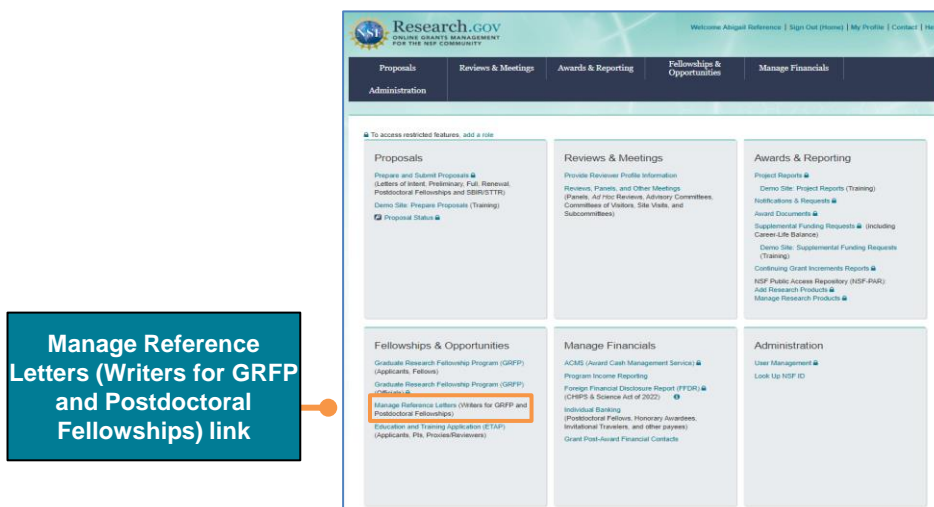
Sign in with your NSF account NSF ID or Primary Email Address

Research.gov Multifactor Authentication Setup

- All Research.gov users must use multifactor authentication (MFA) to sign into Research.gov as of October 27, 2024.
- A **one-time** MFA enrollment step is required when you sign into Research.gov the first time with your NSF account credentials if you have not yet enrolled in Research.gov MFA.
- After Research.gov MFA enrollment, you must use your selected MFA method each time you sign into Research.gov with your NSF credentials.
- View the [MFA Options Overview](#). Since you are a reference letter writer, you can use a standard MFA method (Google Authenticator or Okta Verify) to sign into Research.gov unless you have another administrative or financial role in Research.gov which requires you to set up a phishing-resistant MFA.
- Use the **Google Authenticator** [how-to guide](#) and [video tutorial](#) (2:25 minutes) to enroll in MFA using Google Authenticator OR use the **Okta Verify** [how-to guide](#) and [video tutorial](#) (3:44 minutes) to enroll in MFA using Okta Verify.
- See the [Signing Into Research.gov page](#) for additional MFA guidance and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- There is no cost to enroll in Research.gov MFA. Be sure to install the **free** apps if using the Google Authenticator or Okta Verify MFA methods.
- Please do not attempt to enroll in MFA with a generic QR scanning app as these apps may divert users to webpages with payment walls not associated with NSF.
- Do not delete the Google Authenticator and Okta Verify apps after MFA setup since they will be needed to sign into Research.gov each time.
- For MFA questions or assistance, please contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or rgov@nsf.gov.

Step 2 : Access the Reference Letter Submission system.

- You will be on the Research.gov homepage after signing in.
- Click the **Manage Reference Letters (Writers for GRFP and Postdoctoral Fellowships)** link under Fellowships & Opportunities.
- You will be navigated to the Reference Letter Submission system.



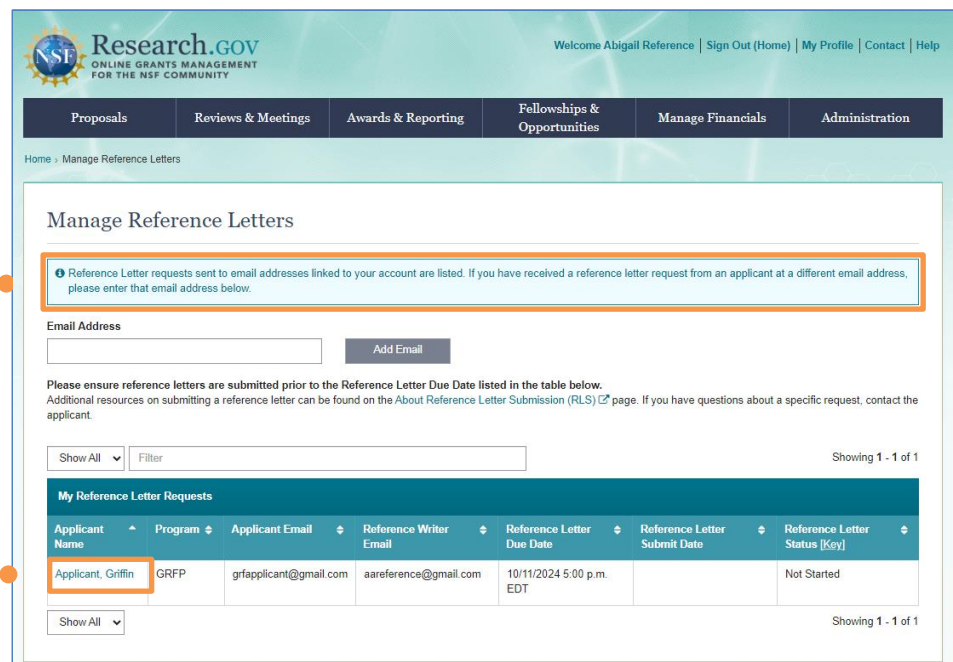
The screenshot shows the Research.gov homepage dashboard. A callout box on the left points to the 'Manage Reference Letters (Writers for GRFP and Postdoctoral Fellowships)' link in the 'Fellowships & Opportunities' section. The dashboard includes sections for Proposals, Reviews & Meetings, Awards & Reporting, Fellowships & Opportunities, Manage Financials, and Administration. The 'Manage Reference Letters' link is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow pointing to the callout box.

Step 3 : Select or Add GRFP Applicant in the Reference Letter Submission system.

- The GRFP Applicant is added to the *My Reference Letter Requests* table automatically if the reference writer's NSF account primary email address matches the email address provided by the Applicant and used on the "To" line of the system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email to the reference writer.
- Note: Skip to page 9 if the "To" email address on a system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email does not match your NSF account primary email address.** To view your NSF account primary email address:
 - Sign into Research.gov and select the My Profile option at the top of the screen
 - Your primary email address is shown on the Contact Information tab
- Click the Applicant Name link in the *My Reference Letter Requests* table to continue.

Info message on adding Applicant requests to the *My Reference Letter Requests* table when To email does not match NSF account primary email

Applicant Name link



Home > Manage Reference Letters

Manage Reference Letters

Reference Letter requests sent to email addresses linked to your account are listed. If you have received a reference letter request from an applicant at a different email address, please enter that email address below.

Email Address

Please ensure reference letters are submitted prior to the Reference Letter Due Date listed in the table below. Additional resources on submitting a reference letter can be found on the [About Reference Letter Submission \(RLS\)](#) page. If you have questions about a specific request, contact the applicant.

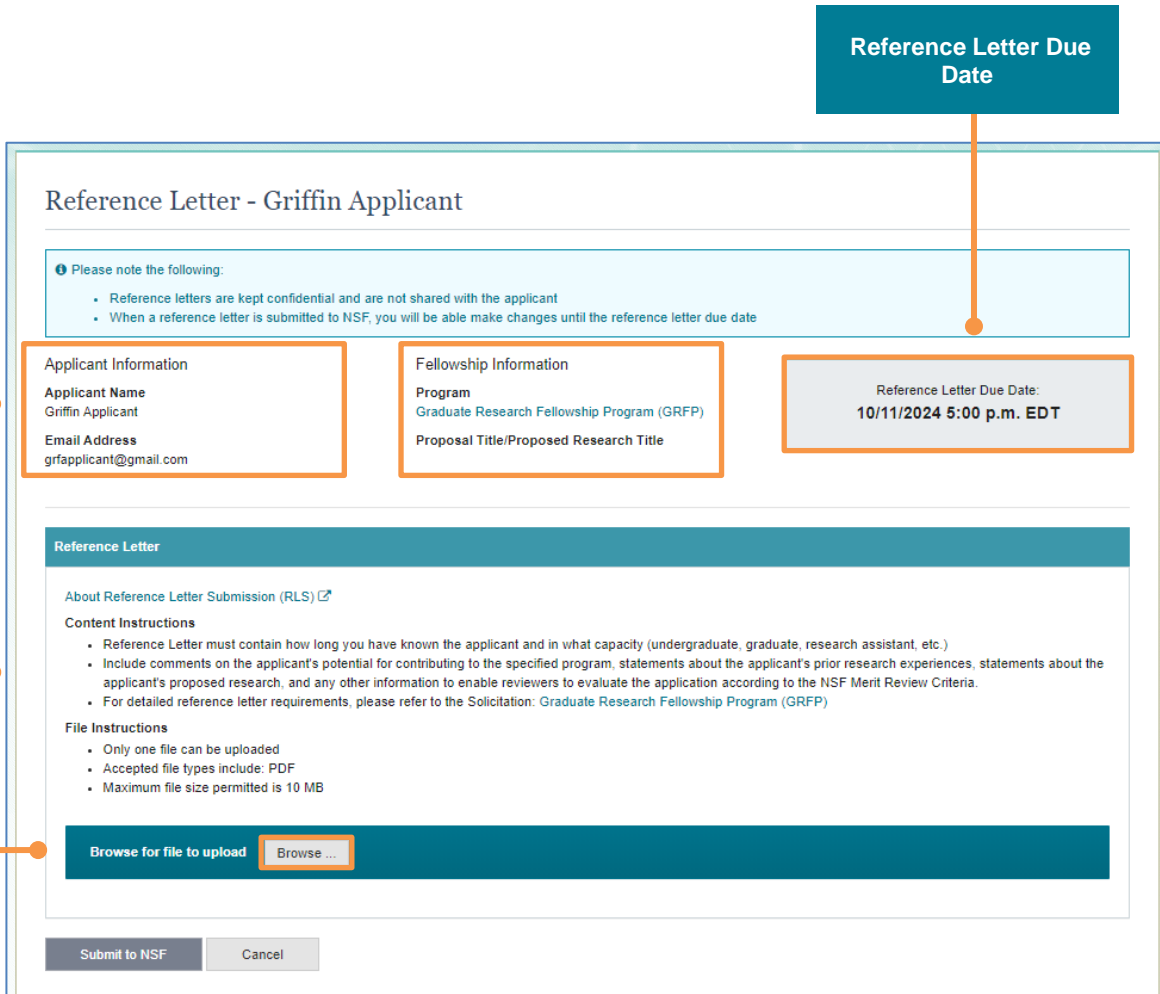
Show All Filter Showing 1 - 1 of 1

Applicant Name	Program	Applicant Email	Reference Writer Email	Reference Letter Due Date	Reference Letter Submit Date	Reference Letter Status [Key]
Applicant, Griffin	GRFP	grfapplicant@gmail.com	aareference@gmail.com	10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT		Not Started

Show All Showing 1 - 1 of 1

Step 4 : Display Reference Letter Applicant detail page.

- Clicking the Applicant Name link opens the Reference Letter Applicant Detail page which includes information about the Applicant, Fellowship, reference letter due date, and reference letter instructions.
- The system will **not** accept reference letter submissions after the due date.
- The reference letter is uploaded on the Reference Letter Applicant detail page and must be uploaded as a PDF.
- Click the Browse button to continue.



The screenshot shows the 'Reference Letter - Griffin Applicant' page. It features a header with the title and a 'Reference Letter Due Date' callout pointing to the date '10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT'. Below the header is a 'Please note the following:' section with two bullet points. The main content is divided into three columns: 'Applicant Information' (Griffin Applicant, grfapplicant@gmail.com), 'Fellowship Information' (Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)), and 'Reference Letter Due Date'. Below this is a 'Reference Letter' section with 'About Reference Letter Submission (RLS)' and 'Content Instructions' (Reference Letter must contain how long you have known the applicant...), and 'File Instructions' (Only one file can be uploaded, Accepted file types include: PDF, Maximum file size permitted is 10 MB). At the bottom, there is a 'Browse for file to upload' section with a 'Browse...' button and 'Submit to NSF' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Reference Letter Due Date

GRFP Applicant and Fellowship information

Reference Letter instructions

Browse button

Reference Letter - Griffin Applicant

Please note the following:

- Reference letters are kept confidential and are not shared with the applicant
- When a reference letter is submitted to NSF, you will be able make changes until the reference letter due date

Applicant Information
Applicant Name
Griffin Applicant
Email Address
grfapplicant@gmail.com

Fellowship Information
Program
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
Proposal Title/Proposed Research Title

Reference Letter Due Date:
10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT

Reference Letter

About Reference Letter Submission (RLS) [↗](#)

Content Instructions

- Reference Letter must contain how long you have known the applicant and in what capacity (undergraduate, graduate, research assistant, etc.)
- Include comments on the applicant's potential for contributing to the specified program, statements about the applicant's prior research experiences, statements about the applicant's proposed research, and any other information to enable reviewers to evaluate the application according to the NSF Merit Review Criteria.
- For detailed reference letter requirements, please refer to the Solicitation: Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

File Instructions

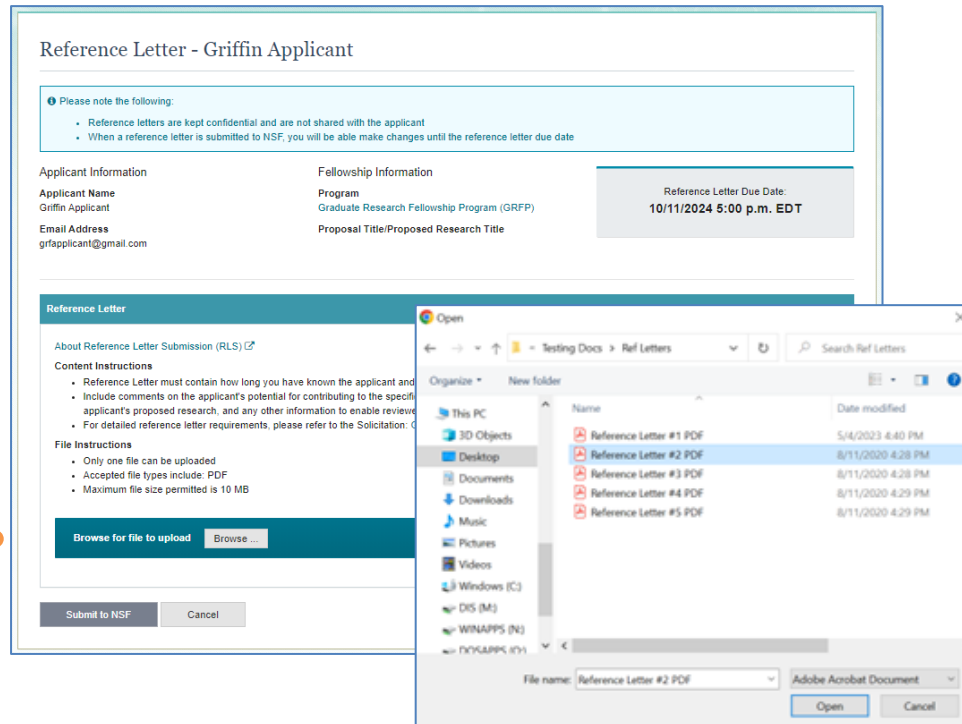
- Only one file can be uploaded
- Accepted file types include: PDF
- Maximum file size permitted is 10 MB

Browse for file to upload

Submit to NSF

Step 5: Upload GRFP Applicant reference letter.

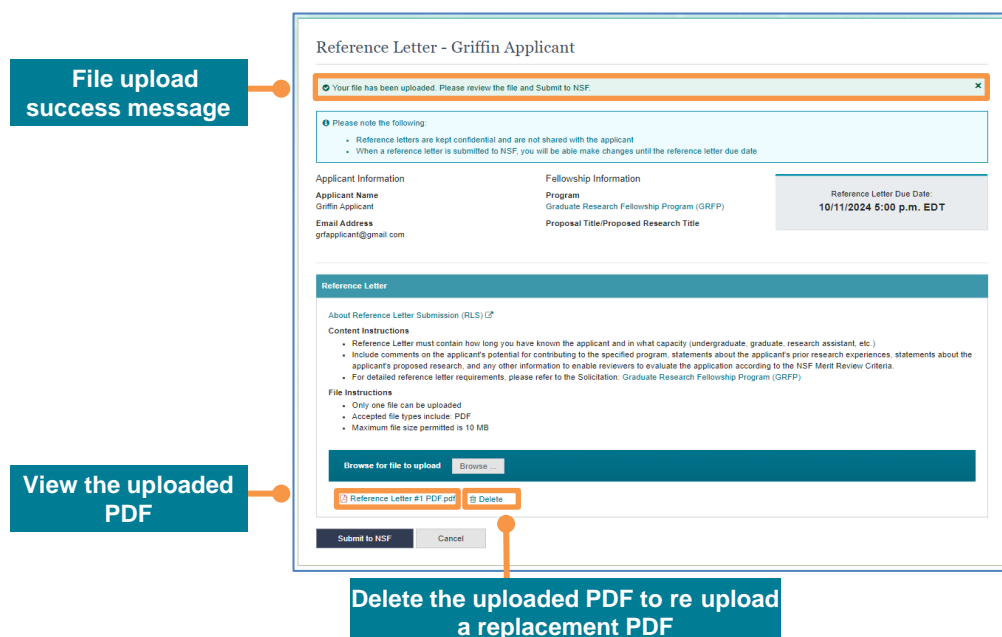
- Use the Browse button to select the reference letter PDF file to upload.



The screenshot shows the 'Reference Letter - Griffin Applicant' page. At the top, there is a note: 'Please note the following: Reference letters are kept confidential and are not shared with the applicant. When a reference letter is submitted to NSF, you will be able make changes until the reference letter due date'. Below this are sections for 'Applicant Information' (Name: Griffin Applicant, Email: grfapplicant@gmail.com) and 'Fellowship Information' (Program: Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)). A 'Reference Letter Due Date' box shows '10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT'. The 'Reference Letter' section contains instructions and a 'Browse for file to upload' button. A file selection dialog is open, showing a list of PDF files in a folder named 'Ref Letters', with 'Reference Letter #2 PDF' selected.

Clicking the Browse button opens the file selection feature

- A success message is generated after the PDF file is uploaded if no file compliance errors are detected (e.g., attempted upload of a file format other than PDF)
- The uploaded file linked at the bottom of the page may be:
 - Viewed** by clicking the file link. Please ensure that the uploaded file is for the intended Applicant.
 - Deleted** by selecting the Delete link. Note that an existing uploaded PDF must be **deleted** before a replacement PDF can be uploaded.



The screenshot shows the 'Reference Letter - Griffin Applicant' page after a successful upload. A success message at the top reads: 'Your file has been uploaded. Please review the file and Submit to NSF'. The 'Reference Letter' section now shows a list of uploaded files: 'Reference Letter #1 PDF.pdf' with a 'Delete' link next to it. The 'Submit to NSF' and 'Cancel' buttons are visible at the bottom.

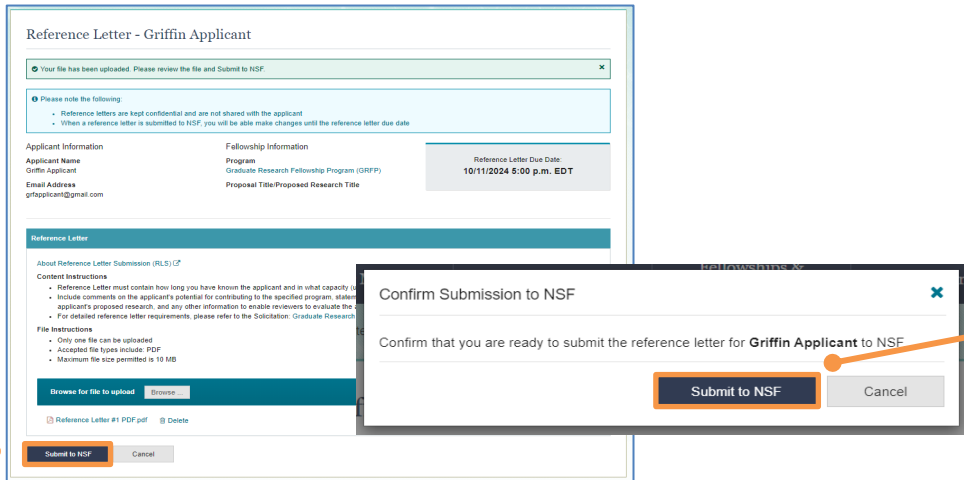
File upload success message

View the uploaded PDF

Delete the uploaded PDF to re upload a replacement PDF

Step 6 : Submit reference letter to NSF.

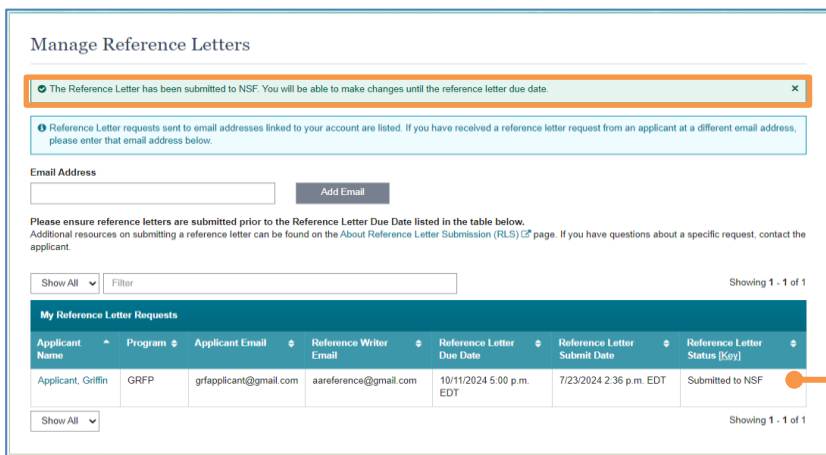
- After confirming that the correct reference letter has been uploaded, use the Submit to NSF button to complete the submission.
- A modal will display to confirm that you are ready to submit the reference letter for the specified Applicant.



Submit to NSF button

Confirm submission to NSF

- A success message is generated after reference letter submission.
- The status is changed to “Submitted to NSF” in the *My Reference Letter Requests* table.
- A system-generated confirmation email is sent to the reference letter writer and to the GRFP Applicant to notify of the reference letter submission.
- **Note: A reference letter PDF can be replaced as many times as needed BEFORE the reference letter submission deadline by clicking the Delete link on the Reference Letter Applicant detail page and repeating steps 4 through 6.**



Reference letter submission success message

Reference Letter Status updated to Submitted to NSF”

Applicant Name	Program	Applicant Email	Reference Writer Email	Reference Letter Due Date	Reference Letter Submit Date	Reference Letter Status [Key]
Applicant, Griffin	GRFP	grfapplicant@gmail.com	aareference@gmail.com	10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT	7/23/2024 2:36 p.m. EDT	Submitted to NSF

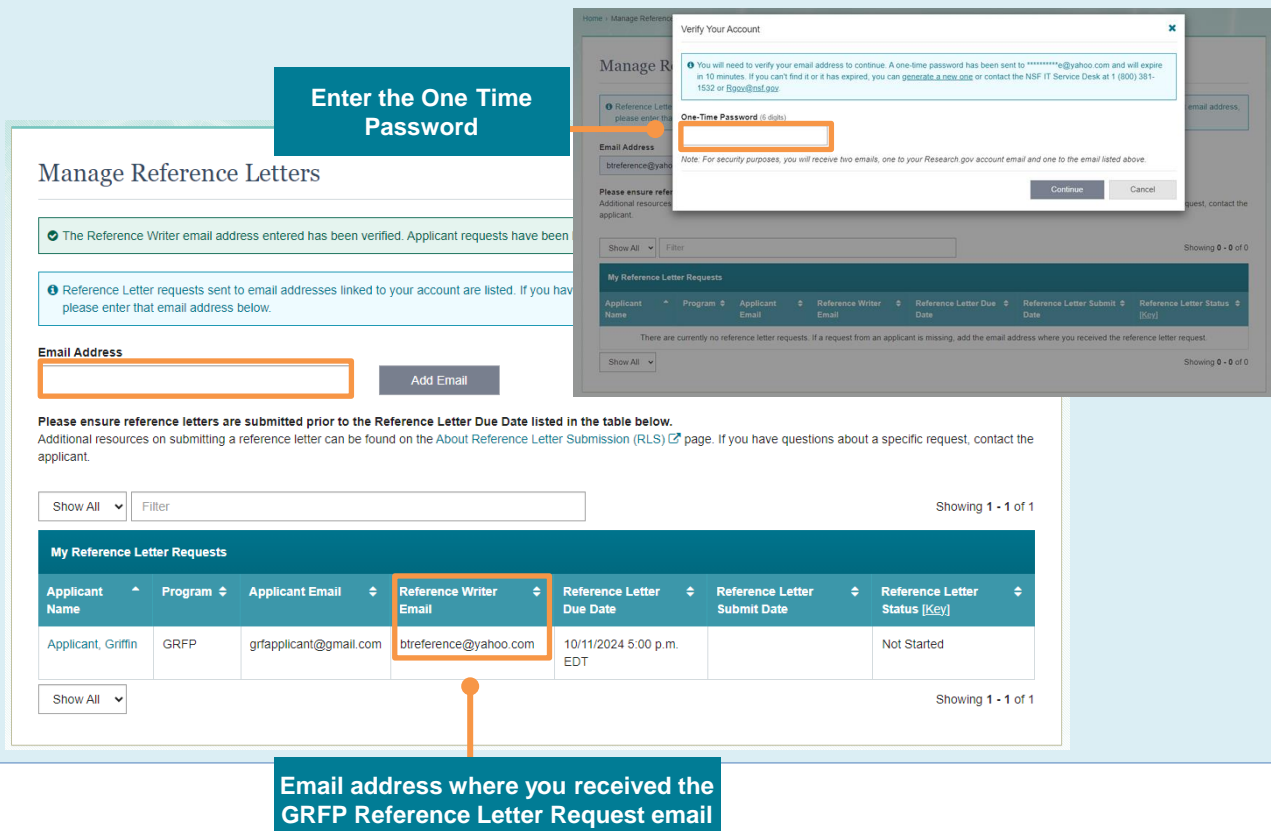
Questions?

- Questions about the GRFP reference writer process should be directed to the GRF Operations Center (website: <https://nsgfrp.org>) at 1-866-NSF-GRFP (1-866-673-4737) or by email to info@nsgfrp.org.



Additional Step May be Required to Add GRFP Applicant

- If the “To” email address on a system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email **does not** match your NSF account **primary email address**, an additional step is needed to add the GRFP Applicant to the *My Reference Letter Requests* table.
- View your NSF account primary email address:
 - Sign into Research.gov and select the My Profile option at the top of the screen
 - Your primary email address is shown on the Contact Information tab
- Follow these steps if the “To” email address on a system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email **does not** match your NSF account primary email address:
 - Enter the email address where you received the GRFP Reference Letter Request email in the *Email Address* field and click the **Add Email** button.
 - Check your email for a message from *noreplyadmin@nsf.gov* with the subject “Your One-Time Password.” Note that this password expires in 10 minutes.
 - Copy the 6-digit One-Time Password in the email and enter it in the One-Time Password field. Click the **Continue** button.
 - The GRFP Applicant will now be added to the *My Reference Letter Requests* table.
- If you have received requests by more than one GRFP Applicant, this process would be repeated for each Applicant when the “To” email address on the Applicant-specific system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email does not match your NSF account primary email address.



Enter the One Time Password

Manage Reference Letters

The Reference Writer email address entered has been verified. Applicant requests have been

Reference Letter requests sent to email addresses linked to your account are listed. If you have please enter that email address below.

Email Address

Add Email

Please ensure reference letters are submitted prior to the Reference Letter Due Date listed in the table below. Additional resources on submitting a reference letter can be found on the About Reference Letter Submission (RLS) page. If you have questions about a specific request, contact the applicant.

Show All Filter Showing 1 - 1 of 1

My Reference Letter Requests						
Applicant Name	Program	Applicant Email	Reference Writer Email	Reference Letter Due Date	Reference Letter Submit Date	Reference Letter Status [Key]
Applicant, Griffin	GRFP	grfapplicant@gmail.com	breference@yahoo.com	10/11/2024 5:00 p.m. EDT		Not Started

Show All Showing 1 - 1 of 1

Email address where you received the GRFP Reference Letter Request email

Signing in to Research.gov with Organization Credentials or Login.gov Credentials

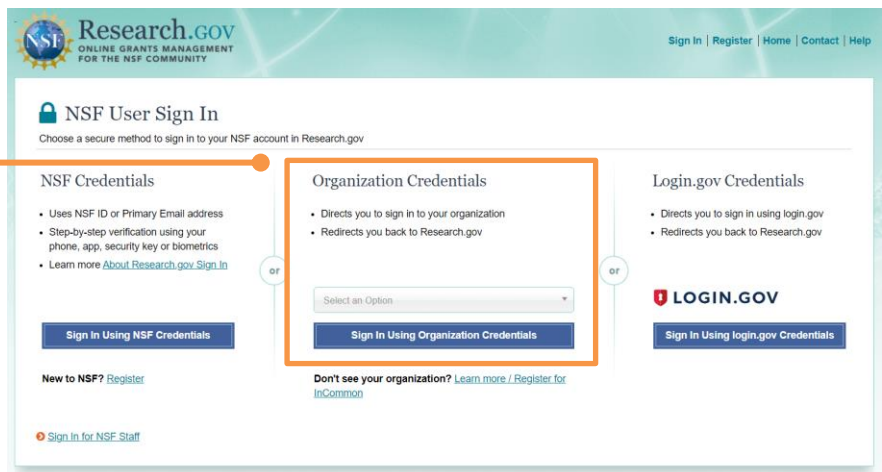


Using Organization Credentials to Sign into Research.gov

After following the steps in this guide to register for an NSF account in Research.gov, you can sign into Research.gov with your organization-issued credentials **if your organization is an InCommon Federation participant and integrated with NSF**. Please check the Organization drop-down on the [Research.gov Sign In page](#) to view the list of InCommon Organizations that currently integrate with NSF.

- Users from InCommon Federation organizations that are integrated with NSF can continue to use their organization-issued credentials to sign into Research.gov after the October 27, 2024, Research.gov MFA effective date.
- If you sign into Research.gov with organization-issued credentials, your MFA enrollment is through your InCommon participating organization. See the [MFA Options Overview](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and the [About Signing Into Research.gov](#) page for details.
- You must register for an NSF account first if you plan to sign into Research.gov with your organization-issued credentials. When signing into Research.gov with organization credentials the first time, ensure your organization email address and your NSF account primary email address are the same so the two accounts can be automatically linked. If Research.gov does not detect a primary email address match for both accounts, the two accounts will not complete the auto-link process.
- Please see the [About the InCommon Integration at Research.gov](#) page to learn more.
- If you have questions, please contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or rgov@nsf.gov.

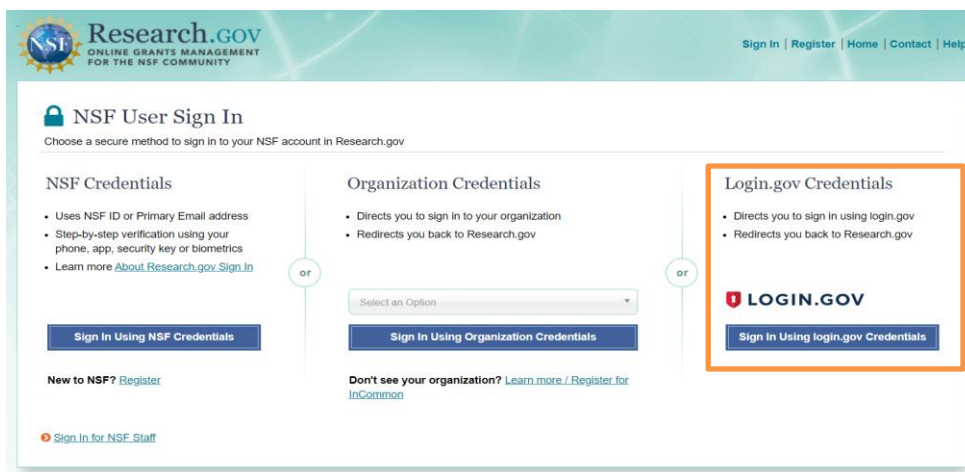
Sign in with your Organization credentials





Using Login.gov Credentials to Sign into Research.gov

- After following the steps in this guide to register for an NSF account in Research.gov, you can sign into Research.gov with your Login.gov credentials. Users can continue using Login.gov to sign into Research.gov after the October 27, 2024, Research.gov MFA effective date if a phishing-resistant MFA is used. MFA enrollment or MFA changes are through Login.gov. See the [MFA Options Overview](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and the [About Signing Into Research.gov](#) page for details.
- [Login.gov](#) is a Federal shared service platform that provides MFA for users to sign into participating government agency systems.
- Accessing Research.gov through Login.gov enables Applicants to have a single username and password for participating Federal systems.
- After Login.gov credentials (username and password) are entered, the Login.gov system will require the Applicant to provide a second authentication factor. The phishing-resistant MFA options in Login.gov are face or touch unlock and security keys. For more information, please see the [Login.gov Help Center Authentication Options](#) page and MFA [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- You must register for an NSF account first if you plan to sign into Research.gov with Login.gov credentials. When signing into Research.gov with Login.gov credentials the first time, your Login.gov account and NSF account will automatically be linked if the same primary email address is used for both accounts. If Research.gov does not detect a primary email address match for both accounts, the two accounts will not complete the auto-link process.
- If you have questions, please contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or rgov@nsf.gov.



Sign in with Login.gov credentials