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.** Reference letter writers do not need to have an NSF Account in Research.gov to access RLS.

Fellowship Reference Letter Process

- GRFP reference letter writers will receive a system-generated email from "Rgov-No-Reply@nsf.gov." The subject line will be begin with "NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request."
- 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 request will receive an email for each GRFP Applicant).

Example System-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request Email

Step ①: **Click on the unique link in the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email**

- Click on the link in Step 1 of the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email to start the upload process; you will be navigated to the Manage Reference Letters page.
- *Note:* This process must be repeated for each GRFP Applicant (i.e., if you are nominated to write a reference letter for two GRFP Applicants, then you will receive two NSF Fellowship Reference Letter request emails each with a unique URL corresponding to each of the requesters).
- A confirmation email is sent to the GRFP Applicant after the reference letter is submitted. GRFP applications cannot be submitted until they have received at least two reference letters.

Step ② : Enter the One-Time Password (OTP) to access the Applicant detail page

- After clicking the unique link in the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email, you will receive another email with a One-Time Password (OTP); locate the email from noreplyadmin@nsf.gov with the subject "Your One-Time Password" in your inbox.
- Enter the One-Time Password in the One-Time Password field on the Manage Reference Letters page. Be sure not to add extra blank spaces at the end of the One-Time Password.
- Click Continue to proceed.
- After clicking Continue in the One-Time Password window, the Reference Letter Applicant detail page will display.
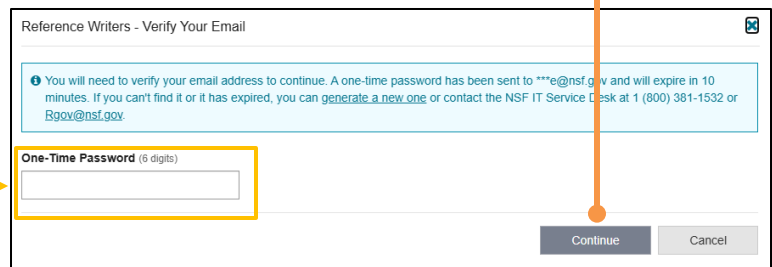
Continue button is enabled when 6-character One-Time Password is entered

Example System-generated One-Time Password Email

The National Science Foundation needs to verify your email address before you can continue with your activity on Research.gov.

Enter the one-time password where prompted. Note that this password expires in 10 minutes.

One-Time Password:
833686

If you did not make this request or you require additional assistance, contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-(800)-381-1532 or Rgov@nsf.gov.
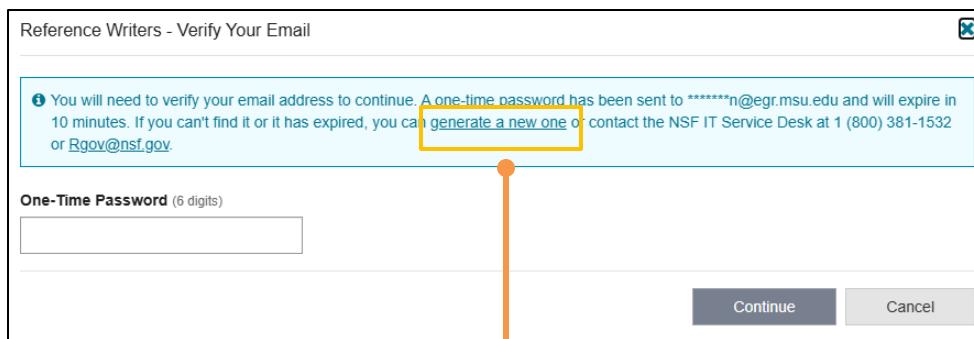
Reference Writers - Verify Your Email

ⓘ You will need to verify your email address to continue. A one-time password has been sent to ***e@nsf.gov and will expire in 10 minutes. If you can't find it or it has expired, you can generate a new one or contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1 (800) 381-1532 or Rgov@nsf.gov.

One-Time Password (6 digits)

[Continue] [Cancel]

- *Note:* The One-Time Password will **expire after ten (10) minutes**. If the One-Time Password expires, you can generate a new One-Time Password through either of the following methods:
  - Click the URL in the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email again **(refer to** *Example System-generated Reference Letter Request Email* **in Step 1)** OR,
  - Click on the *generate a new one* link displayed in the Verify Your Email pop-up.

Reference Writers - Verify Your Email

ⓘ You will need to verify your email address to continue. A one-time password has been sent to *******n@egr.msu.edu and will expire in 10 minutes. If you can't find it or it has expired, you can generate a new one or contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1 (800) 381-1532 or Rgov@nsf.gov.

One-Time Password (6 digits)

[Continue] [Cancel]

Link to generate a new One-Time Password

Step ③ : Complete Submission on the Reference Letter detail page

- The Reference Letter detail page includes information about the requester, fellowship, reference letter due date, reference letter content and file upload instructions.
- Reference letter **must** be uploaded as a PDF

- Use the Browse button to select the reference letter PDF file to upload.
- The reference letter will be immediately submitted after a file is selected for upload.
- You can delete and re-upload the reference letter until the Reference Letter Due Date.

Step 4 : You're done!

- A success message will display at the top of the page after the reference letter is submitted.
- The reference letter status is changed to "Submitted to NSF" for the proposer in the top portion of the page under the Reference Letter Information section.
- A system-generated confirmation email is sent to the reference letter writer and to the requester to notify of the reference letter submission.

Reference Letter - Jeffrey B. Cadman (Submitted)

> ✓ The Reference Letter has been uploaded and submitted to NSF. You will be able to resubmit the letter until the reference letter due date. ✕

Reference letter submission success message

Applicant Information

Applicant Name
Jeffrey B. Cadman

Email Address
cadman_jeffrey@bah.com

Fellowship Information

Program
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

Proposal Title/Proposed Research Title

Reference Letter Information

Reference Letter Due Date
7/25/2025 5:00 p.m. EDT

Reference Letter Status
Submitted to NSF

Reference Letter Submit Date and Time
7/18/2025 2:42 p.m. EDT

Reference letter status updated to "Submitted to NSF"

Reference Letter

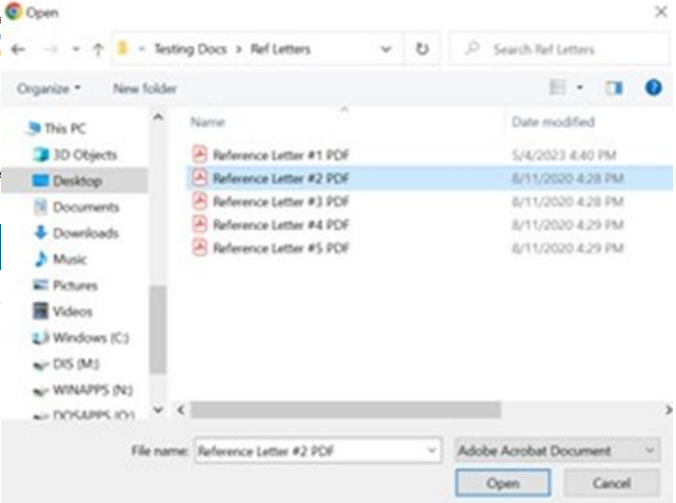About Reference Letter Submission (RLS) ↗

Content Instructions
- Reference Letter must contain information about 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
- Page count cannot exceed 2 pages
- Maximum file size permitted is 10 MB
- The Reference Letter will be immediately submitted after a file is selected for upload. The PDF cannot be viewed once it is submitted to NSF. Please ensure that you are uploading the correct file. You may continue to delete and re-upload the reference letter until the due date.

Browse for file to upload [Browse ...]

📄 Reference Letter #1 PDF.pdf 🗑 Delete

Click Delete link to replace the letter. You may continue to delete and re-upload until the due date.

Questions?

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