

# Postdoctoral Fellowship Proposal Reference Letter Submission Module Guide (Part 1 of 4)

- The following postdoctoral fellowship programs require requested reference letter writers to submit reference letters in the Reference Letter Submission module in Research.gov:
  - Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology (PRFB)
  - Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MSPRF)
- Reference letter writers will not need to have an NSF account in Research.gov to access the Reference Letter Submission module.
- No changes can be made to the reference letter after it is submitted to NSF**
- A confirmation email is sent to the postdoctoral fellowship proposer after the reference letter request email is sent to the nominated writer. The proposer can track reference letter submission status in the Research.gov Proposal Submission System.

## Step 1 : Click on URL in NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email

- Requested reference letter writers will receive a system-generated email from "Rgov-No-Reply@nsf.gov." The subject line will begin with "NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request."
- The email includes a unique URL for the reference letter writers to access the Reference Letter Applicant detail page and lists the reference letter due date.
- This URL within the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email will not expire.
- Click the link in step 1 of the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email or copy and paste the link into any web browser; you will be navigated to the Manage Reference Letters page.
- You will not be required to sign in to Research.gov when the system navigates you to the Manage Reference Letters page.
- Note:* This process must be repeated for each postdoctoral fellowship proposer (i.e., if you are nominated to write a reference letter for two postdoctoral fellowship proposers, you will receive a unique URL in the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter request email corresponding to each proposer).

### Example System-generated Reference Letter Request Email

NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request for Avery Williams - Due 10/15/2025 05:00 p.m. submitter's local time

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

 Mon 9/29/2025 2:45 PM

Sent to Reference Writer: pat.cummings@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: 10/15/2025 05:00 p.m. submitter's local time

**Fellowship applicant details:**  
Name: Avery Williams  
Email: [averywill@gmail.com](mailto:averywill@gmail.com)  
Program Applying For: [Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships \(MSPRF\)](#)

To accept the request and provide your reference letter through Research.gov:

- Click on the link below to start the process (ensure that the pop-up blocker setting in your browser is disabled):  
<https://web.acpt.research.gov/manage-reference-letters?key=4A31808ACC3055BD2A5B65C190CB9EB55F9186038954347FBCE38C2414A79B83>
- From the Manage Reference Letters page you will be prompted to enter a One-Time Password (OTP) for authentication. Find the email with the OTP and enter it on screen.
- Upload and submit the reference letter to NSF.
- You will NOT be able to view the uploaded reference letter. No additional changes can be made to the reference letter. **It is important that you retain this email as you will need to repeat steps #1 and #2 for each subsequent session.**

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.

URL to Access Reference Letter  
module

### 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](mailto: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.

#### 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: **026028**

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](mailto: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 \*\*\*@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](mailto:Rgov@nsf.gov).

One-Time Password (6 digits)

Continue Cancel

Continue button is enabled when 6-character One-Time Password is entered

- Note:** The One-Time Password generated will expire after 10 minutes. If the One-Time Password expires, the reference letter writer 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 on previous slide**) 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 \*\*\*\*\*@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](mailto:Rgov@nsf.gov).

One-Time Password (6 digits)

Continue Cancel

Link to generate a new One-Time Password

- The Reference Letter detail page includes information about the proposer, fellowship, reference letter due date, proposer rating section, and reference letter instructions.
- Reference letter **must** be uploaded as a PDF.

**Proposer and Fellowship information**

Reference Letter - Alan K. Alphaman

**● Please note the following:**

- Reference letters are kept confidential and are not shared with the applicant
- Once a reference letter is submitted to NSF, you will no longer be able to make any changes

Applicant Information	Fellowship Information	Reference Letter Information
Applicant Name Alan K. Alphaman	Program Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MSPRF)	Reference Letter Due Date 10/15/2025 05:00 p.m. submitter's local time
Email Address gblock@associates.nsf.gov	Proposal Title/Proposed Research Title Postdoctoral Fellowship: MSPRF: PSM-RLS Demo	Reference Letter Status Requested
		Reference Letter Submit Date and Time

**Reference Letter Due Date**

**Rating Section**

Rating

\* On a scale of 1-5, please rate the applicant against those with comparable experience from the past five years.

1 - Above all others (stands out above all others at similar career level)  
 2 - Top ten (among top ten scientists or engineers at similar career level)  
 3 - Outstanding  
 4 - Above average  
 5 - Average or below

**Reference Letter instructions**

Reference Letter

About Reference Letter Submission (RLS) [\[link\]](#)

**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: Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships \(MSPRF\)](#)

**File Instructions**

- Only one file can be uploaded
- Accepted file types include: PDF
- 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.

**Browse for file to upload**

**Cancel**

### Step 3 : Make a selection in the Rating section and upload proposer reference letter

- Answer the rating question by selecting one of the five options.
- Use the Browse button to select the reference letter PDF file to upload.
- The reference letter will be immediately submitted after a rating is selected and a letter is uploaded. **No changes can be made to the reference letter after it is submitted to NSF.**

**Clicking the Browse button opens the file selection feature**

Rating

\* On a scale of 1-5, please rate the applicant against those with comparable experience from the past five years.

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Reference Letter

About Reference Letter Submission (RLS) [\[link\]](#)

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**Browse for file to upload**

File name: Reference Letter #2 PDF

# Postdoctoral Fellowship Proposal

## Reference Letter Submission Module Guide

### (Part 4 of 4)

- 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 postdoctoral fellowship proposer to notify of the reference letter submission.

Reference letter  
submission  
success  
message

#### Reference Letter - Alan K. Alphaman (Submitted)

The Reference Letter has been uploaded and submitted to NSF. No additional changes can be made. X

##### Applicant Information

Applicant Name  
Alan K. Alphaman

Email Address  
gblock@associates.nsf.gov

##### Fellowship Information

Program  
Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MSPRF)

Proposal Title/Proposed Research Title  
Postdoctoral Fellowship: MSPRF: PSM-RLS Demo

##### Reference Letter Information

Reference Letter Due Date  
10/15/2025 05:00 p.m. submitter's local time  
Reference Letter Status  
Submitted to NSF  
Reference Letter Submit Date and Time  
7/18/2025 3:48 p.m. EDT

Reference letter  
status updated to  
“Submitted to NSF”

##### Rating

\* On a scale of 1-5, please rate the applicant against those with comparable experience from the past five years.

- 1 - Above all others (stands out above all others at similar career level)
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##### Reference Letter

###### About Reference Letter Submission (RLS)

###### Content Instructions

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##### Uploaded File

 Reference Letter #1 PDF.pdf

## Questions?

IT system-related and technical questions may be directed to the IT Service Desk - [Create Request](#) or via [rgov@nsf.gov](mailto:rgov@nsf.gov); service hours 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET, Monday - Friday except federal holidays.