

Instructions for Writing Letters of Recommendation for Continuing Ph.D. Students' Fellowship Applications to the Duke Graduate School

Who needs to write a letter of recommendation?

Each student needs one letter from the director of graduate studies and one from the primary faculty adviser, **for a total of two letters per applicant**, for the competitive fellowships.

EXCEPTIONS:

[Summer Research Fellowship for 1st & 2nd Years](#) does not require letters of recommendation

[Sixth Year Tuition Scholarship](#) does not require letters of recommendation

[COVID Funding Extensions](#) for 6th and 7th year students require a **separate statement of support** from the faculty advisor attesting to applicant's circumstances and COVID impact on degree progress

How does the process work?

The student sends a request from within The Graduate School's fellowship application system, AwardSpring. The request goes to the recommender via an email from "Duke Graduate School" under the subject line "Letter of Recommendation Request". The email contains instructions, the student's name, a message from the student, and a link to a page to upload the letter.

Students are instructed to include in their message the names of the fellowships they are applying to, so that recommenders may tailor their letters as needed. **If you receive a request that does not include the fellowships a student is applying for, please contact the student for that information.** A list of all the fellowships and their criteria can be found at <https://gradschool.duke.edu/financial-support/apply-2023-2024-duke-graduate-school-fellowships/>.

How do I submit my letter?

The request email contains a link to a page for you to upload your letter. **Do not paste your letter into the text field on this page**, as it only accepts plain text and will remove all paragraph breaks. Instead, use the file-upload field to upload the letter as either a PDF or Word document.

What's the deadline for submitting letters?

November 18, 2022—one week after the application deadline of 11/11/2022.

How many letters do I need to write?

A recommender **should only write one letter** for each student for the competitive fellowships, regardless of how many fellowships the student applies for. Recommenders should include separate sections in their letter that speak to the criteria for specific fellowships for which the student is being nominated.

What information should my letter include?

For letters from primary faculty advisers:

The primary faculty adviser should write a standard recommendation letter in support of the student's application to the fellowships stated in the request message.

For letters from directors of graduate studies:

If a student is applying to one or more of the fellowships listed below, the DGS must include in his/her letter where the student ranks among the program's applicants for each of the fellowships (which have limits on how many applicants each program can nominate).

- Aleane Webb Dissertation Research Fellowship (limit 3 applicants per program)
- Anne Firor Scott Public Scholars Fellowship (2)
- Dissertation Research Travel Award – Domestic (2)
- Dissertation Research Travel Award – International (2)
- Evan Frankel Fellowship (2)
- Paul and Lauren Ghaffari (2)
- James B. Duke International Research Travel Fellowship (2)
- Jo Rae Wright Fellowship (1)
- Julian Price Graduate Fellowship (2)
- Katherine Goodman Stern Fellowship (2)
- Ottis Green Fellowship (2)
- Phillip Jackson Baugh Fellowship (2)

If a student applies for a Bass Instructional Fellowship, the DGS needs to verify these three things:

- 1) the applicant is making satisfactory research/dissertation progress;
- 2) the applicant has completed any teaching or TAing required by his/her department; and
- 3) the applicant's service as a Bass Instructor of Record, TA, or Online Apprentice would not interfere with his/her department's teaching or TA needs.

If a student is applying ONLY for the Bass Instructional Fellowships, then all the DGS letter needs to do is verify these three points.

For the Summer Research Fellowships for years 3 and up, if the DGS provides only confirmation of support, rather than a full recommendation, that is fine. The reviewers have agreed that the faculty advisor letter is sufficient for evaluation purposes for the competitive SRF only.

The application cycle for the 1st and 2nd year student SRFs does not open until spring semester, as will the application cycle for the Summer and Fall 2023 6th year scholarships and 6-7th year funding extensions.

Contact Caroline.Morris@duke.edu, The Graduate School Fellowship Coordinator, if you have any other questions or email grad-fellowships@duke.edu.