

Writing a Strong Recommendation for National/International Fellowships*

Thank you for your interest in writing recommendations for

frank, concrete details providing evidence of the qualities or capacities you discuss;

the criteria on which you base your judgments;

how the student meets your criteria; and

(very) brief information about you and your work as context for your comments.

Although it is the student's responsibility to select a good variety of recommenders, **you might ask the student who else is writing and what the other writers are likely to discuss**. This will ensure that you avoid repetition and provide a comprehensive picture of the student.

If you are called upon to write letters for two or more applicants for the same fellowship, please try to make your letters as distinct as possible. Two letters that are too alike are unlikely to help either student. *If you are writing for two students in a competition that relies on districts or regions (such as Rhodes or Marshall), the Fellowship Advisor can tell you whether the students will actually be in direct competition with one another.*

Recommendations that are requested in letter form should typ

To whom should I submit my recommendation?

The student should provide instructions on how, when, and to whom your recommendation should be submitted. Since many recommendations will be submitted electronically, you will often receive an email with invitation to complete your recommendation and instructions.

Because most electronic submission systems do not allow revision after a recommendation has been submitted, you may wish to provide a drafted version of your recommendation to the Fellowship Advisor for review. All of us are human and, more often than we would like to believe, recommendations are submitted with incorrect names, significant misspellings, or inappropriate 'cut and pasted' material. An attentive reading by another set of eyes can help avoid errors that may harm our students' applications.

For some of the elite awards requiring institutional nomination or endorsement (such as Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell and Truman), the Fellowship Advisor will request a drafted letter from you by a certain date - *in advance of the final deadline* - and the recommendations will be reviewed by the Fellowship Advisor and faculty on the Graduate Fellowship Committee. Our goal is to provide a group of letters that can best support the application and we may request greater emphasis or elaboration of certain points before the final letter is submitted.