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

### Starting the Reference Letter Process

- Nominated 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 an **Invitation Code** required to access the Reference Letter Submission module in Research.gov.
- A confirmation email is sent to the GRFP Applicant after the reference letter request email is sent to the nominated writer. The GRFP Applicant can track reference letter submission status in the GRFP module.

#### Example System-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request Email

```
[EXTERNAL] - NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request for Yasmin Azimi - Due 10/27/2023

Invitation Code: 1QXX0KV74

Note: For security purposes, this invitation code is associated with your email address. Do not share it.
```

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

**Note: Skip to Step 2 on page 3 if you already have an NSF account in Research.gov.** Use the [NSF ID Lookup tool](https://research.gov) to check if you have an existing NSF account. If needed, contact the NSF Help Desk for account verification assistance at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM - 9:00 PM 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](https://research.gov) and [Register for a New NSF Account job aid](https://research.gov) for a detailed walk-through of steps with associated screenshots.

- Open 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 Primary Email Address Tips:

- Your NSF account primary email address will be used for NSF account notifications including password resets.
- 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 Help Desk assistance after registration.

- After previewing your account registration information, click Submit.
• 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.
  o One email will contain your new NSF ID for your NSF account.
  o The second email will have your temporary password so you can sign in to Research.gov. Follow instructions provided in the email to change your temporary password.

Step 2: Sign in to Research.gov and access the Reference Letter Submission module.

• Open Research.gov.
• Click Sign In located at the top of the screen to enter NSF account credentials.
• You will be on the Research.gov homepage after signing in.
• Click the Manage Reference Letters (Writers) link under Fellowships.
• You will be navigated to the Reference Letter Submission module.

Step 3: Enter Invitation Code to Add GRFP Applicant.

• Enter the Invitation code from your NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email to the Invitation Code field on the Manage Reference Letters page. Be sure not to add extra blank spaces at the end of the Invitation Code. The system will only validate 10 characters in the Invitation Code field.
• Click the Add Applicant button to continue.
• 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, you will enter the Invitation Code from the NSF Fellowship Reference Letter Request email corresponding to each Applicant).
A success message will display on the Manage Reference Letters page after a GRFP Applicant is added to the Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table.

The Reference Letter Status (Not Started, In Progress, or Submitted to NSF) column in the Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table will update as the status changes.

**Success message indicates reference letter nomination acceptance for the specified GRFP Applicant**

GRFP Applicant is added to Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table. Status is Not Started after an Applicant is initially added.

**Additional Verification 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 quick verification step is needed to add the GRFP Applicant to the Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table.
- If you have been nominated by more than one GRFP Applicant, this process would be repeated for each Applicant when the “To” email address on the system-generated GRFP Reference Letter Request email does not match your NSF account primary email address.

Enter the One-Time Password emailed to you
Step 4: Select GRFP Applicant to upload the reference letter.

- Click on the Applicant Name linked in the Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table to go to the Reference Letter Applicant Detail page to upload the reference letter.

- Reference Letter Applicant Detail page includes information about the Applicant, Fellowship, reference letter due date, and reference letter instructions.
- Reference letter must be uploaded as a PDF.
**Step 5**: Upload GRFP Applicant reference letter.

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

- A success message is generated after the PDF file is uploaded if no file compliance errors are detected (e.g., attempted file 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 the upload file is for the intended Applicant. Reference letters cannot be updated after submission to NSF.
  - Deleted by selecting the trash can icon.
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. **No changes can be made to the reference letter after it is submitted to NSF.**

- A success message is generated after reference letter submission.
- The reference letter status is changed to “Submitted to NSF” for the Applicant on the Applicants Requesting Reference Letters table.
- System-generated confirmation email is sent to the reference letter writer and to the GRFP Applicant to notify of the reference letter submission.

Questions?

- Questions about the GRFP reference writer process should be directed to the GRF Operations Center (website: [https://nsfgrfp.org](https://nsfgrfp.org)) at 1-866-NSF-GRFP (1-866-673-4737) or by email to info@nsfgrfp.org.
Signing in to Research.gov with Organization Credentials or Login.gov Credentials
Using Organization Credentials to Sign in to Research.gov

After registering for an NSF account in Research.gov, you can sign in to 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 participate/integrate with NSF.

• Only InCommon Federation participants can use their organization-issued credentials to sign in to Research.gov.
• If you are signing in with your organization-issued credentials, you will be prompted to link your credentials to your NSF account if they are not already linked.
• Please see the About the InCommon Integration at Research.gov page to learn more.
• If you have questions, please contact the NSF Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or via rgov@nsf.gov.
Using Login.gov Credentials to Sign in to Research.gov

After registering for an NSF account in Research.gov, you can sign in to Research.gov with your Login.gov credentials.

- **Login.gov** is a Federal shared service platform that provides multi-factor authentication for users to sign in to participating government agency systems.
- Accessing Research.gov through Login.gov enables Reference Writers 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 Reference Writer to provide a second factor such as a security key, authentication application, or a one-time security code the Reference Writer receives by phone or by text to complete the authentication. For more information, please see the Login.gov Help Center Authentication Options page.
- When signing in to Research.gov with Login.gov credentials the first time, the Reference Writer’s Login.gov account and NSF account will automatically be linked if the same primary email is used for both accounts. If Research.gov does not detect a primary email address match for both accounts, the Reference Writer will be prompted to complete a one-time process to link their Login.gov account to an existing NSF account.
- If you have questions, please contact the NSF Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or via rgov@nsf.gov.