

REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

STEP 1: CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

- Discuss your options with the office of national and international fellowships.
- Some fellowships state a preference for letters from professors, employers, or internship supervisors; refer to the fellowship website for guidelines.
- Choose individuals who know you well and can speak to your qualifications in detail.
- Consider the individuals who can best speak to your abilities *as they relate to the qualifications for the fellowship*.

STEP 2: MAKE YOUR REQUESTS

- Approach your recommendation writers at least 4 to 6 weeks before the internal application deadline.
- Avoid making your request in passing. If possible, set up an appointment to meet in person to describe what you are applying for and to make your request.
- If you cannot meet in person, write a formal email describing the fellowship and requesting a letter of recommendation

STEP 3: COMPILE INFORMATION FOR YOUR RECOMMENDATION WRITERS

- Be organized. Give your recommendation letter writers everything they need in one packet that includes the following materials:
 - Resume (tailored for the fellowship)
 - Academic transcript (unofficial is fine)
 - A paragraph about how they know you (i.e., what courses you have taken, the work you did that stood out to them, etc.)
 - Information about the fellowship and why you are applying
 - The qualifications and accomplishments you would like them to emphasize (doing so can help tailor your letters so that each one has a unique focus)
- Detail the process of how they will submit their letters. Make them aware of the **internal and external deadlines for submitting letters of recommendation**. If the application requires them to mail their letters, be sure to provide a stamped and addressed envelope. Sometimes our office handles this mailing, so check with us first if your fellowship requires letters of recommendation to be submitted via post.

STEP 4: FOLLOW-UP WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATION WRITERS

- Follow up a week after asking to ensure that they have received the necessary information (e.g., an email triggered via an online application).
- Share your application materials with them (if you do not have your drafts ready, provide a written summary of your motivations and qualifications for pursuing the fellowship).
- Send them a friendly reminder a few days before the deadline.
- **Say thank you!** Handwritten notes are best, but email is also appropriate.
- Keep your recommendation writers informed of the outcome – whether or not you win!