

## **Background Information for Individuals Writing NSTRF17 Letters of Recommendation**

This guidelines document is provided to assist Letters of Recommendation writers. The text is extracted from the NSTRF17 solicitation and reproduced here, verbatim, for your convenience.

The solicitation is available by opening the NASA Research Opportunities homepage at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com>, selecting "Solicitations," then selecting "Open Solicitations," and, finally, selecting the solicitation number "NSTRF17."

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The Letters of Recommendation constitute a critical component of the application. They should come from individuals (professors, undergraduate/graduate advisors, mentors, internship or work supervisors, etc.) with detailed knowledge of the student applicant's abilities.

Each student applicant must arrange for the submittal, via e-mail and as per the instructions below, of three (3) current Letters of Recommendation. Failure to submit three Letters of Recommendation may negatively affect the evaluation of the application (see Section 10 of the solicitation).

If the student applicant has an advisor for his/her current graduate program, one of the Letters of Recommendation should come from that individual.

The student applicant is strongly advised to present the guidelines below to the individuals writing the recommendations. Letters should not be written by the student applicant.

Note: On October 28, 2016, prospective student applicants will be informed which Letter writers have submitted Letters on their behalf as of 6 PM ET on October 27, 2016. One e-mail will be sent for every letter received; a prospective student applicant will not receive notification if no Letters were submitted prior to 6 PM ET on October 27, 2016. It is the student applicant's responsibility to contact Letter writers who have not yet submitted Letters and make sure that Letters are submitted by the solicitation deadline. Updates (i.e., Letters submitted after 6 PM ET on October 27, 2016) will not be communicated to the student applicant. NASA may reject any Letters submitted after the solicitation deadline of 6 PM ET on November 3, 2016.

## Instructions for Writing NSTRF17 Letters of Recommendation

**Note: NASA civil servants and Jet Propulsion Laboratory employees submitting Letters of Recommendation should not presume that they would be assigned as the student's NSTRF research collaborator.**

- a. Letters of Recommendation are NOT intended to endorse the proposed space technology research. The Letter should be about the student applicant.
- b. The Letter should include details explaining the nature of the writer's relationship to the student.
- c. The Letter should provide insight into the student applicant's
  - scientific acumen and creativity
  - motivation for space technology-related study
  - potential for success, including in a research environment
  - leadership potential, including ability to collaborate
  - communication ability, including ability to disseminate research results and information
- d. The Letter must be written on official letterhead, when permitted, and must be submitted as a PDF attachment.
- e. The Letter may not exceed two pages in length.
- f. The Letter itself must include the student applicant's full name (as opposed to nicknames or shortened names) and application title (as entered by the student applicant in NSPIRES, as part of the Cover Page data); the student applicant should provide these to the Letter writer.
- g. Letters of Recommendation that appear to be mass produced do not generally lead to high rankings by the reviewers. It is always useful if the writer also conveys a sense of who the student applicant is as an individual, particularly the student applicant's maturity, responsibility, and integrity.

## Checklist for Submitting NSTRF17 Letters of Recommendation

### \_\_\_\_\_ Email Subject: **Applicant's First MI Last; Application Title**

- Student applicant's full name, a semicolon (;), one space, and the application title (as entered by the student applicant in NSPIRES). Long application titles should be truncated to the first 10 words.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Email Body: **Applicant's e-mail address**

- This is the only item in the body of the e-mail message itself. *This must be the same e-mail address that the student applicant will specify as part of his/her official application submission. (also used to notify student that you submitted a Letter on their behalf)*
- Please remove any signature blocks.

### \_\_\_\_\_ Email Attachment: **Letter of Recommendation in PDF**

- Each Letter must be submitted as a PDF as a PDF attachment to the email (do not use other file types such as Word or JPEG).

\_\_\_\_\_ Email submitted by Letter Writer to [hq-nstrf-lor@mail.nasa.gov](mailto:hq-nstrf-lor@mail.nasa.gov) by 6 PM ET, November 3, 2016. (solicitation closing)

- Only one attachment per email (if writing letters for multiple student applicants).