Faculty Advisors

Work with your student to craft the Graduate Research Statement. Help your student develop a detailed, novel, and feasible two page statement.

In your reference letter, speak specifically about the work the student will undertake in your lab:

- How does this work complement and/or expand work already underway in your lab? Be sure to leverage any current NSF-funded research!
- How is the student’s work novel?
- Why is this student the perfect fit for this work?
- What specific support will you provide for the student?

This student is working to fund his or herself to conduct research in your lab - help him or her to achieve this noteworthy accomplishment!

**NSF guidance to student applicants on the Graduate Research Statement:** Present an original research topic that you would like to pursue in graduate school. Describe the research idea, your general approach, and any unique resources that may be needed for accomplishing the research goal (e.g., access to national facilities or collections, collaborations, overseas work, etc.). You may choose to include important literature citations. Address the potential of the research to advance scientific knowledge and understanding as well as the potential for BI on society.

**YOU CAN SERVE AS A PANELIST**

Serving as an NSF GRFP Panelist is an excellent way to gain insight into the research of young U.S. scientists. Additionally, it can help you become a better and more informed advisor to your students applying for the GRFP. NSF will compensate you for your time. The review process is now conducted entirely online, eliminating the need to travel to Washington.

For more information:

- [http://www.nsfgrfp.org/for_panelists](http://www.nsfgrfp.org/for_panelists)
- email: panelists@asee.org
- phone: (866) 673-4737
What is the NSF GRFP?
The NSF GRFP is a fellowship program for high achieving STEM seniors and graduate students who have completed no more than one year of study. Successful applicants receive up to three years of support, including a $34,000 annual stipend and a $12,000 cost-of-education allowance to the institution. Applications require three reference letters. Reference letters are essential to a NSF GRFP application’s success.

NSF Intellectual Merit (IM) and Broader Impacts (BI) Merit Review Criteria MUST BE ADDRESSED in the Reference Letter.

What is the IM of the proposed activity?
- How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
- How well qualified is the proposer to conduct the project?
- To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
- How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity?
- Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the BI of the proposed activity?
- How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning?
- How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups?
- To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships?
- Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding?
- What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

What other information should referees include in the two page (maximum) reference letter?
Indicate how long you have known the applicant, and in what capacity. On the basis of your knowledge of the applicant's past and current research experience and activities, comment on his or her potential to do the following:

- Succeed in graduate school, noting academic potential and prior research experiences
- Conduct original research
- Communicate effectively
- Work cooperatively with peers and supervisors
- Make unique contributions to his/her chosen discipline and to society in general
- Contribute to a globally-engaged US science and engineering workforce

If you have known or supervised other NSF Graduate Research Fellows, compare this applicant with them. Otherwise, compare this applicant with other successful graduate students or senior undergraduates you have known at UNH or through your interactions with other institutions.

The more specific a letter you can provide, the better it is for the applicant. If you are the applicant’s faculty advisor (see Faculty Advisor panel), comment on the originality of his or her application, and communicate what role you played in assisting the student with the application and what support you will continue to offer.

Some details...
- Use departmental letterhead and include: your name, title, department, and UNH address.
- Referees must submit their letters through the FastLane GRFP Application Module (www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp).
- Referees must provide their email address for the applicant to enter in FastLane. This is critical: FastLane matches referees to applicants by email address.
- Encourage the applicant to provide you with an advanced copy of their application essay. Ideally, faculty advisors will work with the applicants throughout the drafting process.

Need help?
The UNH Office of Research Development can provide guidance and editing assistance to faculty referees, as well as examples of reference letters from previous successful NSF GRFP applications. Send inquiries to Michael Thompson:
michael.thompson@unh.edu

We are working with your students to help them develop successful applications!

Deadline for submitting NSF GRFP Reference Letters is 8 PM EST, 11/5/15!