

## Guidelines for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

### What is a Recommendation Letter?

As part of the application process to graduate programs at U.S. institutions, all candidates are required to submit three Letters of Recommendation (LOR). Recommendation letters provide further insight into a candidate's qualifications for graduate study and should include an overall assessment of the candidate's personal and academic characteristics, strengths, qualifications, and performance.

### Tips for Requesting Recommendation Letters:

- A request for a letter of recommendation should provide insight into what you are applying to and why you are applying to it. For a writer to create a recommendation letter that shows you are a competitive applicant, you will need to provide the following information prior to having them write the letter:
  - A current resume
  - Any notable achievements or accomplishments both educationally and professionally
  - Academic interest and goals
  - Copy of your personal and study objective/research statements
- A recommendation letter should be written by someone who knows you well and can speak at length about your educational and professional character, work ethic, and performance.
  - Focus on work contacts and/or academic contacts depending on what is weighed more significantly by the admissions committee. This will vary by your field of study. Work and academic contacts should be ones that are/were responsible for overseeing work i.e., job supervisors, professors, or research advisors.
  - Recommenders should not be work colleagues, classmates, or a friend.
  - Recommenders should not be related to the candidate. Recommendations cannot be from a parent, sibling, or other relative.
  - Recommenders should be chosen so that they say different things about you.
- Time is important. It takes time for your recommender to write a good letter. Please provide several weeks' advance notice. A rushed letter does not always provide a comprehensive overview of a candidate's qualifications.
- Only ask those who can write a positive recommendation letter. A negative recommendation letter could hurt your application.
- Recommendation letters are confidential. A candidate cannot upload recommendation letters on behalf of a recommender.
- All recommendations must be written in English. If the original recommendation letter is written in a language other than English, there must be an official English translation. Because the recommendation letter is confidential, the translation cannot be done by the applicant.
- IIE strongly recommends that candidates register their recommenders as part of the online application process. However, if a recommender cannot complete the online form and upload a letter, they can submit the letter directly to the candidate's home-country Fulbright office.