

Notice of Change in Policy on the Submission of Reference Forms (Letters of Reference) for Kirschstein-NRSA Fellowship (F) Applications

Notice Number: NOT-OD-11-047

Key Dates

Release Date: February 24, 2011

Related Notices

[NOT-OD-11-036](#): Advanced Notice of Change in Policy on the Submission of Letters of Reference for Kirschstein-NRSA Fellowship (F) and Career Development (K) Applications

[NOT-OD-10-115](#): Enhancing Peer Review: New NIH Policy on Post-Submission Application Materials

Issued by

National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#))

Purpose

The following change in policy is effective for Individual Fellowship (F) applications intended for April 8, 2011 and subsequent due dates.

This Notice informs prospective applicants and referees for the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Fellowships that Reference Forms (Letters of Reference) are due by the application receipt due date. Prior to this policy change, there was a 5 business days grace period for the receipt of Reference Forms after the application receipt due date. The new policy eliminates this grace period.

Reference Forms may be submitted any time after the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) opens but not later than the application receipt due date. **Applications without all of the required references in the appropriate format will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. For additional information, see the following resources:**

- NIH Guide Notice NOT-OD-11-036, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-11-036.html>,
- [Letters of Reference FAQs](#), and
- [FAQs for the Post-Submission Materials Policy](#).

As always, Fellowship applicants are encouraged to request Reference Forms only from individuals who will be able to submit them on time. Consider any factor (e.g., illness or extended vacation) that might cause an inordinate delay and be sure to discuss these requirements with your referees well in advance of the application deadline date. Please see below for details on submitting Reference Forms.

For a list of Fellowship FOAs, see the [F Kiosk](#).

Instructions for Submitting Reference Forms (Letters of Reference)

Reference Forms (Letters of Reference) must be submitted electronically on the specified Fellowship Reference Form through the eRA Commons. Applicants and referees MUST follow instructions in [Individual Fellowship Application Guide SF424 \(R&R\)](#). Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- *The sponsor of a fellowship application cannot be counted as a reference. The sponsor's recommendations are included as part of the application (See Sponsor/Co-Sponsor Information).*
- For postdoctoral fellowship applications (F32), the doctoral dissertation advisor or chief of service should be a reference. If this is not possible, the Fellowship applicant must provide an explanation.

- Applicants MUST direct their referees to the Individual Fellowship Application Guide SF424 (R&R) at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>, specifically Section 5.4, Part B., Instructions for Referees.
- Referees MUST use the Fellowship Reference Form to evaluate the applicant. DO NOT submit a separate letter of reference as this will result in the deletion of the Reference Form.

Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to:

NIH Research Training Officer

Email: nihtrain@mail.nih.gov

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