

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS (OR FORMS) ARE IMPORTANT

Note: For ease of comprehension, we refer to recommendation letters, but this information also applies to the recommendation forms required by certain organizations.

Choose a referee who knows you well

A “good” referee is someone who knows you well enough to provide information concerning the following:

- Your level of knowledge;
- Your aptitudes and research potential (*as applicable: depending on the type of scholarship you are applying for, referees may not be asked about research, but rather about other aspects, such as your leadership abilities, etc.*);
- Your communication skills;
- Your leadership and interpersonal skills;
- Your strengths in terms of interacting with other students.

It is important to choose a **referee who knows you well enough** to provide you with a comprehensive letter of recommendation. If a referee is hesitant to provide you with a letter, it may be best to choose someone else. Normally, your current or proposed Thesis Supervisor is an excellent referee, but it is important to consult the rules for the competition to verify the organization’s requirements concerning the choice of referees. The referee’s letter is extremely important, because it may be the deciding factor between obtaining a scholarship or not, even for a good candidate.

It is important to ask your referees to do the following:

- Mention **facts and concrete examples** in the text.
- Draft the recommendation **in text form** and not list form.
- Consider the fact that **a recommendation that is too short is seen as a negative**, even if the comments it contains are positive.

It is important to provide your referees with information about you

If referees are required to comment on your academic file, research potential and experience, send them a **copy of your application for the scholarship (or your texts: research summary, experience, etc.)**. They can also provide additional information by including links to your experience or other elements mentioned in your application.

Provide your referees with a copy of your curriculum vitae to give them a better overview of your full profile and so that they can provide links in the recommendation letter, as applicable.

Remind your referees of the deadline for submitting the recommendation letter or form

You are responsible for ensuring that your referees are aware of the deadline for the competition so that they can send their letters or forms on time, in compliance with the organization’s rules. If the recommendation does not arrive before the competition deadline, your file will be considered incomplete. Depending on the competition, this may result in the organization rejecting your file or deeming it inadmissible.

Preparing an application for a scholarship at the graduate and post-graduate level

Provide your referees with all pertinent information related to the method of transmission requested by the organization (e.g.: by mail, online, electronic submission, etc.) and be sure to provide the proper addresses or hyperlinks, as applicable.

Reminder

Contact your referees at least one week in advance of the deadline to verify that all is progressing well and ensure that they will be able to submit the letter before the competition deadline.

Alternative suggestion: Take the time to watch the NSERC "[Tips](#)" video , which will help you to prepare your application for a scholarship. Pay particular attention to Chapter 3, entitled ***Choosing referees***.

For more information:

Contact the Dean of Studies Office at 514-396-8800, extension 7903, or infobourses@etsmtl.ca.