



Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for an applicant to the Churchill Scholarship. There are only fifteen Churchill Scholars selected each year from a limited number of Participating Institutions, each of which can nominate up to two candidates. Because the competition is so intense, brief letters or letters oriented toward graduate admission may weaken an otherwise strong application.

The Churchill Scholarship selects students on the basis of three criteria:

- (1) Academic achievement. The Committee looks at performance in STEM courses, especially in the major. There is no need to repeat information found on a transcript, but additional information or context may be useful.
- (2) Proven talent in research. The Committee looks for originality, creativity, and independence in research experience.
- (3) Outstanding personal qualities. Understanding the time commitment required by research, the Churchill Foundation does not seek so-called “well-rounded” applicants. Instead, it seeks applicants with what we call interesting “jagged edges.” The Committee takes into account interests and achievements outside of research, but it does not favor any particular kind of activity.

Please write your recommendation on the letterhead of your department or research facility. Your letter of recommendation will be read by the Selection Committee, which is composed of former Churchill Scholars, who are, for the most part, academic scientists in a variety of fields.

One final note: Because all nominees for the Scholarship are already among the very top students in their college or university, the Committee is accustomed to seeing high praise in recommendation letters. Your praise, therefore, may not distinguish your candidate from others. Rather, what tends to distinguish successful applications is detailed accounts of how that praise was earned.

Thank you for your assistance in the selection of Churchill Scholars.