



Office of Undergraduate Scholars and Fellows
Nationally Competitive Scholarships

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2021 Duke Truman Recommendations

Congratulations! You have been asked to recommend a student for a highly competitive national scholarship. This is both an honor in that you are mentoring an ambitious and promising student, and a responsibility in that you likely wish to write a letter that can help your student stand out from a pool of other highly promising young people.

Please note:

- ❖ You are *never* required to write for a student. Please only write for those students for whom you believe you can make a good case.
- ❖ All students have waived their rights to see your letters.
- ❖ It is against NCS-OUSF policy to accept letters originally authored by students.
- ❖ Your student should let you know which criteria you should speak to, and share drafts of their application with you.

At any time in this process, from brainstorming the first draft to finalizing your letters, we are delighted to help. Please contact ncs-ousf@duke.edu.

Truman Scholarship Recommendations Process

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Leadership Abilities and Potential This letter should confirm and give context to the leadership example the student writes about in their application (Question 7). ❖ Commitment to a Career in Public Service This letter should confirm and give context to the public service activity the student writes about in their application (Question 8) ❖ Intellect and Prospects for continuing Academic Success This letter (meaning that the student will succeed in the graduate program they are interested in. Overall GPA not a factor) <p>Truman is looking for “change agents” who will make a positive impact on the world.</p>		
Endorsement required?	Yes. This is a multi-stage process and Duke is allowed to nominate four students annually.		
Length	1.5-2 pages; Never more than 3 pages		
Number of Recommenders	3 one for each of the three criteria: Leadership; Public Service Commitment; and Academic Promise		
Application Stages	Stage	Description	Deadline
	On campus selection	NCS convenes a committee to decide which applications will go forward in a given year. We do not need a full letter, but please send a 2-3 paragraph email detailing their strengths to ncs-ousf@duke.edu .	Nov. 29, 2021
	National Foundation Submission	Once endorsed, your student will let you know their status and you will send a polished letter to ncs-ousf@duke.edu to be submitted with the application .	Jan. 25, 2022
	Scholars Named		Early April

FAQs

Where do I submit?

For the Endorsement Stage: Please send a 2-3 paragraph email or full letter to ncs-ousf@duke.edu.

For the Foundation Stage: Please send a signed PDF on letterhead to ncs-ousf@duke.edu. NCS is required to upload the letter for you.

To whom should I address the letter?

For the Endorsement Stage: NCS/Duke Endorsement Committee

For the Foundation Stage: Dr. Terry Babcock-Lumish, Executive Secretary and Truman Selection Committee Members

What is the difference between an Endorsement stage recommendation and my letter for the foundation?

The email or letter to the Duke committee is essentially a draft of the final letter for Truman. It should be *explicit* about how this student stands out at Duke, directly addressing the criteria the student has asked you to write about. The aim of the letter is to tell us why we should support this student's application for the Truman nomination. How do you see their fit? Can you compare them to other great Duke students—undergrads, alumni or grad?

The final letter to the Foundation is signed and on letterhead, and should not include comparisons to other Duke students, but should give context about Duke if necessary. (For example, when speaking about Duke specific opportunities—FOCUS, DukeEngage, or Bass Connections a sentence about what they are should be included. A Resident Assistant position does not need context).

How will I know whether a student is endorsed?

Students will be instructed to let you know if they have been endorsed.

Things to keep in mind?

Always remember the adage, "Show don't Tell."

Readers at the national level have many letters to read in a short period of time; be sure to highlight your key points early in the letter, if you can.

What should the letters contain?

- ❖ Tell the story of the candidate from YOUR point of view.
- ❖ How do you know the student?
- ❖ How do they meet the Truman Criteria?
- ❖ Could you tell us a story about a time the student impressed you?
- ❖ How does their study plan fit into their future ambitions?
- ❖ How does this student compare to other students you know? For instance, is the student in the top 10% of students you have taught, or are even the best in your teaching career?

Further Resources

On Truman Recommendations from [Penn State](#).

Stronger Recommendations from Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/stronger-letters>