

Lafayette Fellowship – Guidance for Recommenders

Overview

The French Embassy in the United States is pleased to renew the Lafayette Fellowship, a scholarship program designed by Villa Albertine, The French Institute for Culture and Education, and France Science, to support the next generation of young leaders with a strong interest in the transatlantic relationship.

Launched on the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence and celebrating French-American friendship, the Lafayette Fellowship funds one year of master's level study in France for up to 30 outstanding American students.

Open to both Francophone and non-Francophone candidates, the Fellowship partners with top French higher education institutions that offer programs across STEM, the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, either in French or entirely in English.

In addition to their academic studies, fellows take part in the French-American Leadership Program, a dynamic, year-long experience featuring lectures, masterclasses, site visits, and mentorship support, offering a 360-degree immersion into European innovation, culture, and policy.

This annual program aims to deepen academic and cultural exchange between France and the U.S. and nurture future leaders committed to strengthening the transatlantic relationship. It also strives to spread awareness about France's many internationally ranked universities and academic excellence programs taught in English.

The Lafayette Fellowship is open to students in STEM, the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, particularly those with a strong interest in contributing to global challenges such as sustainability, health and biotechnology, peace and security, social equity, and emerging technologies including artificial intelligence.

Fellows will participate in a program that combines rigorous academic study with cultural immersion, mentorship, and leadership development.

The Lafayette Fellowship provides selected students with:

- A €1,500 monthly stipend from July through the end of the academic year to cover living expenses

- One year of tuition at a partner French institution for eligible programs
- Application fee reimbursement for French academic institutions and master's programs
- Student visa fee waivers for one academic year
- A round-trip flight between the U.S. and France at the start and end of the program
- Coverage of travel costs and activities related to the French-American Leadership Program

Selection Criteria

Recommenders are asked to comment on candidates with reference to the following qualities:

- Academic excellence – evidence of outstanding performance in undergraduate study (minimum 3.7 GPA), intellectual curiosity, and readiness for success in demanding graduate programs in France.
- Leadership potential and commitment to service – capacity to inspire, guide, and work effectively with others; evidence of civic engagement or contribution to society.
- Dedication to the French-American relationship – a demonstrated interest in fostering cultural and intellectual exchange, and in addressing shared global challenges such as sustainability, biotechnology, security, social equity, and emerging technologies.

Writing Your Letter of Recommendation

- Please introduce yourself, your position, and the nature of your relationship to the applicant.
- The selection jury will have access to the candidate's academic record, CV, and cover letter. Your insights should complement and enrich this information.
- We ask that you provide an honest and balanced assessment, noting both strengths and areas where the candidate may continue to grow.

Academic Recommenders

If you are a professor or academic supervisor, please highlight the following qualities of the applicant in your assessment:

- Academic performance and contributions
- Intellectual independence, critical thinking, and research aptitude

- Readiness to undertake rigorous graduate-level study in an international environment
- Ability to contribute thoughtfully and productively in multicultural settings

Extracurricular/Character Recommenders

If you know the applicant in a professional, civic, or extracurricular context (e.g., through employment, community leadership, artistic or athletic pursuits, or mentoring), please focus on:

- Evidence of leadership, initiative, and teamwork.
- The candidate's maturity, resilience, and capacity for service to others.
- Potential to act as a cultural ambassador between France and the United States.

Submitting Your Letter of Recommendation

- Recommenders will receive an email link to the platform, where they will be directed to the letter of recommendation section.
- Letters must be written in English and submitted in PDF, DOC, or DOCX format.
- Letters should be on official letterhead where possible and signed. Please include your contact details.
- Letters should not exceed two pages (minimum 10-point font).
- Recommenders may be contacted directly by the selection jury for additional information.

The recommendation letters are to be uploaded directly into the admission platform by the recommender by December 1, 2026 11:59am (EST).

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us at lafayettefellowship@villa-albertine.org.