

The Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program

Guide for Writing Recommendation Letters

Background:

The Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program is a distinguished transatlantic initiative that each year offers twenty accomplished young Americans the opportunity to complete a high-level professional development program in Germany.

Letters of recommendation are extremely important in the application review process for the Bosch Fellowship; up to 12 specialists may read the recommendations before a final decision is made regarding the applicant. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that recommenders keep the following guidelines in mind:

Recommenders should write the letter themselves. It is glaringly obvious when an applicant writes his/her own letter of recommendation and simply has a “recommender” sign off on it. If the recommender does not have the time, memory or interest to write a thoughtful recommendation, it would be better to decline the request.

Truly know the applicant. Make clear how long you have known the applicant, and in what context. Recommendation letters should be written by relatively recent professional supervisors or professors who have worked closely with the applicant.

Be familiar with the Bosch Fellowship. Information about the Bosch Fellowship can be found on CDS International’s website: www.cdsintl.org/bosch. The applicant might also choose to share his/her personal statement, which outlines his/her goals for the Fellowship year and beyond. With this knowledge, the recommender should be able to directly address why and how the applicant fits the criteria for the Bosch Fellowship.

Use vivid, concrete examples. Glowing adjectives do not suffice. Evidence of how the recommender has directly observed the strengths and accomplishments of the applicant is very helpful.

Mail the letter far in advance of the deadline. The application deadline is strict: October 15. Applications will be deemed incomplete and will not be considered if all materials are not received by that date.

Miscellaneous:

- Type the recommendation letter on company/university **letterhead**. If the recommender has since left the company/university where they knew the candidate, they should, if possible, use their new company/university’s letterhead.

- Reference the applicant’s **first and last name** at the top of the letter.

- Good recommendation letters are usually **between 1-2 pages** in length, however the quality of the text of course holds more significance than the number of pages.

- **Sign the letter.** Electronic signatures, copies or faxes thereof are invalid.

- If the letter will be given directly to the applicant to include in the application package, please **seal and sign the envelope**. Otherwise, mail the letter directly to CDS International, The Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program, 440 Park Ave. South, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10016.