A Goldwater Campus Representative Checklist

Key reminders in the final stages of application preparation

Kerry Karukstis, Harvey Mudd College,
kerry_karukstis@hmc.edu

2026 Goldwater Competition

Responsibilities of the Campus Representative
at the Stage of Application Submission

ESSENTIAL TASKS

1. Uploading the nominees' transcripts
2. Uploading the letters of recommendation
3. Completing the CR statement (optional but HIGHLY recommended)
4. Submitting the nominees' applications (Deadline: January 30th, 5 p.m. CT)

OPTIONAL TASKS TO STRENGTHEN THE APPLICATION

1. Verify that the transcripts provide the necessary information and are readable
2. Confirm that recommenders' letters have adhered to the specified format
3. Check to see if recommenders have provided the requested information
4. Encourage your nominees to complete the optional question
5. Verify that both the nominee and research mentor have discussed the student's intellectual contributions to the research

TRANSCRIPTS

APPLICANT ROLE: It is the student's responsibility to provide the CR with their transcripts.

- The Goldwater application guidelines clearly inform students of their responsibilities with regard to transcripts.

"YOU are responsible for getting all transcripts to your CR in a timely fashion."
https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/steps-in-process/

The information that must appear on the transcript and the possible need to request transcripts from previous institutions are also spelled out to applicants.
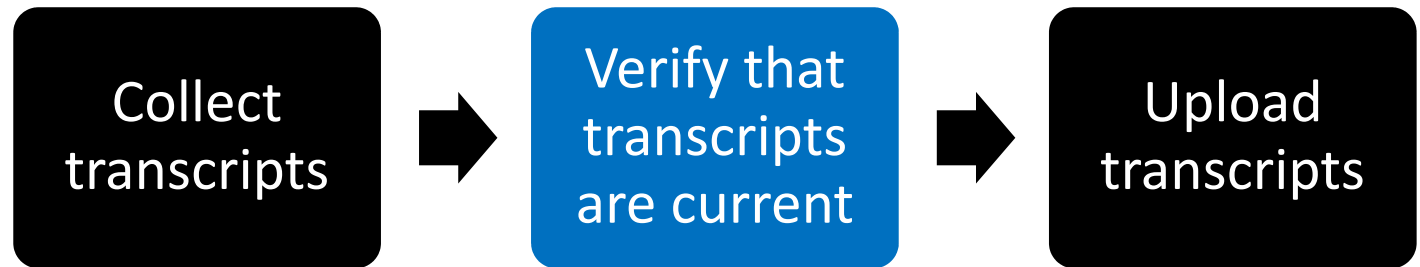
CR ROLE: Collect transcripts ➤ Upload transcripts

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

| Collect transcripts | ➤ | Verify that transcripts are current | ➤ | Upload transcripts |

- Be sure that the student's transcript is "**current**".
  - A "current transcript **lists all the courses** [the applicant has] taken at [their] current institution and any previous schools [they] have attended, **as well as the course grades**." [https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/steps-in-process/]

- The applicant should:
  - Request transcripts from previous institutions when information is not listed on the current transcript (many transcripts just report total credits earned)
  - Request transcripts at a time when courses and grades for the fall semester or quarter are available on the transcript
  - List fall study abroad courses in the appropriate section of the application when grades have not yet been received and note why the grades are missing

"Optional" CR Narrative Statement

"Your narrative statement might:

1) describe the institution's Goldwater Scholar selection process,
2) provide a reason/explanation as to why the specific student was nominated,
3) explain why, despite an identifiable weakness, the student was nominated,
4) compare the student to other students from your institution who have gone on to pursue research careers and advanced degrees, and
5) address issues raised in the letters of recommendation."

https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/process-overview/

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Include CR statement

- **Remind recommenders that they were asked to address Item #4 in their letters.**
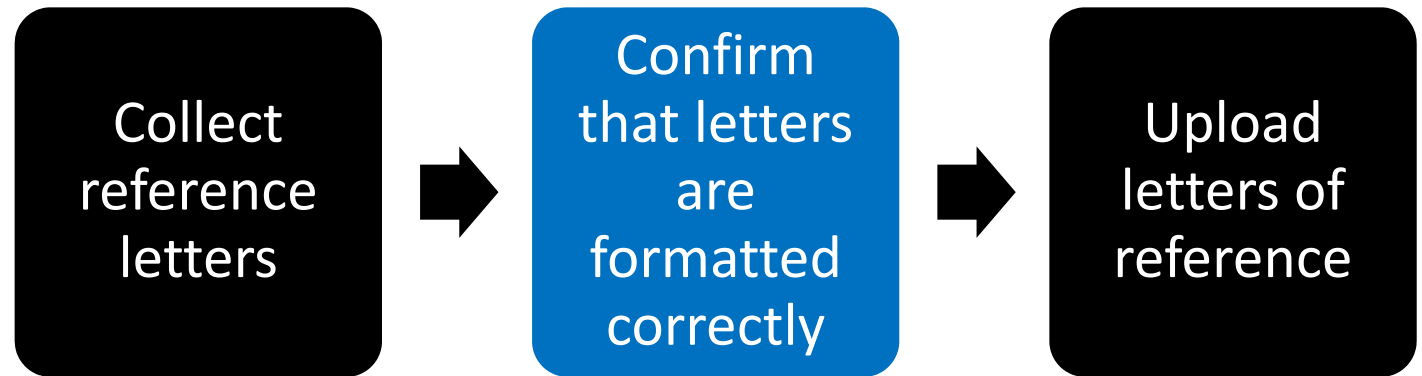- **Request recommenders expand on any issues raised in their letters.**

REFERENCE LETTERS

CR ROLE:

Collect reference letters ➡ Upload reference letters

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Collect reference letters → Confirm that letters are formatted correctly → Upload letters of reference

Formatting requirements can be found at:
https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/letter-format-and-submission-requirements/

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Collect reference letters → Confirm comparison to alumni in research → Upload letters of reference

Remind letter writers to compare applicants to students who have gone on to advanced degrees and research careers

https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/letter-writing-guidance-recommenders/

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

```
Collect reference letters  →  Confirm description of research access  →  Upload letters of reference
```

"For letter writers from a student's department or those who have relevant insights, it is helpful for the Foundation and its reviewers to understand:

- the extent to which research opportunities are available to the student,
- the nature of the research opportunities (academic year project, summer internship, course-based project, independent research, off-campus only through programs like NSF's Research Experiences for Undergraduates), and
- how the student's research performance represents exceptional research potential in relation to the available research opportunities."

https://goldwaterscholarship.gov/letter-writing-guidance-recommenders/

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Collect reference letters → Confirm publication status verification → Upload letters of reference

Confirm that the research mentor(s) has/have verified the status of any publication that the applicant notes.

Do you have Papers/Publications associated with this research project? ○ Yes ○ No

Do you have Presentations associated with this research project? -- Select One -- ▾

If answer 'Yes' to Papers/Publications

Do you have Papers/Publications associated with this research project? ● Yes ○ No

If yes, how many publications are associated with this work? -- Select One -- ▾

Citation

Note: The pipe character (|) may not be used in your response.

0 of 300 used

Status -- Select One -- ▾

How are you listed in the publication? -- Select One -- ▾

Type of Publication -- Select One -- ▾

- **Published**
- **Accepted (Press)**
- **Submitted**

STUDENT OPTIONAL QUESTION

Optional Question: Describe any social and/or economic impacts you have encountered that influenced your education—either positively or negatively—and how you have dealt with them.

CR ROLE:

None

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Check to see if applicant submitted a response ➡ Encourage the applicant to provide a response

See the "Hits and Misses in Goldwater Applications" presentation given on November 12, 2025 for suggestions of possible positive and negative influences.

RESEARCH ESSAY

CR ROLE:

None

OPTIONAL CR ROLE:

Check to see if applicant discussed intellectual contributions to the research

→

Check to see if research mentor discussed/confirmed student's intellectual contributions to the research

See the "Research Essay Q&A" presentation given on December 2, 2025 for examples of language describing student's contribution to the research project.

Questions?

**Reminder - Application Submission Deadline:
January 30th, 5 p.m. CT**