

**LETTER OF REFERENCE  
THE THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP**

*Please return this form to directly to the  
Fellowships Advising and Study Abroad Office  
by the deadline, not back to the student*

**Due by April 19, 2022, 5pm PST**

Email this form and your answers to the second page to FASA to: SAreferences@caltech.edu

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**\*THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT\***

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*This is a CONFIDENTIAL letter of reference. I hereby waive my access to this letter as per the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**\*THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY REFERENCE WRITER\***

Recommender Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*The student above is seeking a nomination for a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship that will enable him or her the freedom to engage in a year of independent study and travel abroad following graduation. In selecting Watson Fellows, we are most concerned with holistically identifying individuals who demonstrate strong ethical character, intelligence, imagination, vision, and leadership potential. Since these qualifications can only be measured over time by those who know the candidate well, your frank and confidential estimate of the candidate is essential to us*

***Please note:*** *This student is seeking a nomination for the Watson and has not yet been nominated.*

***Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet, sign it and return it to our office (address above) with this form. Each answer below is limited to 200 words.***

The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Program Mission: The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Program offers college graduates of "unusual promise" a year of independent, purposeful exploration and travel -- in international settings new to them -- to enhance their capacity for resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and leadership and to foster their humane and effective participation in the world community.

The following questions are especially relevant when selecting fellows for the significant, often challenging, year proposed by the Watson mission. Please answer each question as fully as possible, elaborating as necessary. You may also add additional comments at the end. We appreciate the effort required to write a thoughtful and personal recommendation. Thank you in advance for your candor and time.

1. How long have you known the nominee?
2. In what capacity have you known them?
3. The Watson Fellowship uses the term "Unusual Promise" to mean a collection of characteristics including resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and leadership. How is the nominee unusually promising in a field of exceptional nominees? Please use examples where possible. (200 word count limit)
4. What legacy or deep impression, if any, has this student left on you or your campus? (200 word count limit)
5. In what way do you believe the Watson Fellowship would be a transformative experience for the nominee? (200 word count limit)
6. What evidence can you provide of the nominee's investment in the proposed project beyond academic coursework? (200 word count limit)
7. The very premise of the nominee's project may be upended as they encounter it "on the ground". How does the nominee deal with difficult and changing conditions? Do you believe that they will adapt well, even thrive, under unexpected conditions? (200 word count limit)
8. What, if anything, gives you pause about sending the nominee on a year-long solo pursuit that will include moments of loneliness, failure and even illness? What are your reservations? (200 word count limit)
9. Please share any additional thoughts that you would like us to know or consider. (200 word count limit)