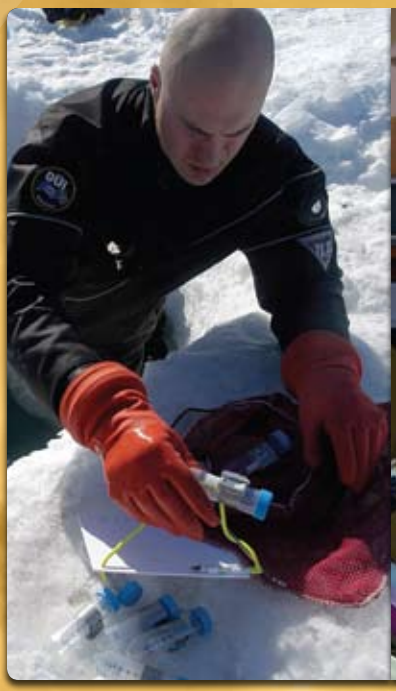
National Science Foundation

Graduate Research Fellowship Program



Program Overview

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowships are three-year fellowships for graduate study leading to research-based master's or doctoral degrees in the science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields.

The purpose of the NSF is to ensure the vitality of the human resource base of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the United States and to reinforce its diversity. Working towards that goal, each year the NSF awards approximately 1,000 new three-year graduate fellowships.

The NSF welcomes applications from all qualified students and strongly encourages women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to apply for this fellowship.

Fellowship Benefits and Conditions

This fellowship provides an annual $30,000 stipend and $10,500 cost-of-education allowance. Fellows may choose any appropriate, accredited, non-profit United States institution or relevant international institution offering advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Fellows are required to engage in full-time programs leading to research-based graduate degrees in disciplines supported by the NSF.

Application Process

For official information, go to
www.nsf.gov/grfp

For application assistance, go to
www.nsfgrfp.org

To apply, go to
www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/

WEB: www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/ **EMAIL: info@nsfgrfp.org** **PHONE: 1-866-NSF-GRFP**

Award Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by disciplinary and interdisciplinary panels of scientists, mathematicians, and engineers. In evaluating applications, panelists use NSF's Merit Review Criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. Applicants need to respond fully to both criteria.

(1) What is the intellectual merit of the applicant?

The intellectual merit criterion includes intellectual ability as well as the ability to work independently and as a team member, to plan and conduct research, and to interpret and communicate the findings.

In evaluating intellectual merit, panelists consider the strength of the applicant's academic record, proposed plan of research, personal statement, previous research experience, and, if available, Graduate Record Examinations ("GRE") General and Subject Tests Scores – submitting GRE scores is not required but is highly recommended. Panelists evaluate the choice of references and the extent to which the letters indicate merit. In addition, they consider the appropriateness of the proposed graduate institution to the proposed plan of research.

(2) What are the broader impacts of supporting the individual's graduate study?

The broader impacts criterion may include contributions to community, both social and scholarly, as well as unique characteristics of each applicant's background, including personal, professional, and educational experiences. As in all NSF programs, valuing diversity and the integration of research and education are also important elements of this criterion.

When evaluating the broader impact criterion, panelists review the quality of the applicant's personal statement, proposed plan of research, previous research experience essay, and references letters.

Eligibility

The NSF Graduate Fellowships are open only to individuals who, at the time of application, are citizens, nationals or permanent resident aliens of the United States. Applicants must be in the early stages of graduate study in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. The NSF supports an extensive number of research areas within these fields which are listed in the Program Announcement available at www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/.

Eligibility is limited to applicants who have completed no more than twelve months of post-baccalaureate, full-time graduate study at the time of their application. In most cases, an individual has three opportunities to apply: during the senior year of college, the first year of graduate school, and the beginning of the second year in graduate school.

Applying for an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

Determine Eligibility: U.S. citizens, nationals or permanent residents who are applying to graduate school or have completed no more than 12 months of graduate studies in an NSF-supported field.

June - August: Preparatory activities	1. Review previous year's *Program Announcement* 2. Conceptualize and draft your essays and proposed plan of research 3. Have friends, family, and faculty members critique your drafts
August: Program Announcement becomes available	1. Review new *Program Announcement* to understand all requirements 2. Ensure that you address all aspects of the essay questions and merit review criteria 3. Continue to have friends, family, and faculty critique your drafts
September – October: Continue writing the application	1. Have your referees write letters for you and provide them with your drafts and information about the GRFP 2. Have your schools send transcripts 3. Start completing the online application 4. Continue revising your essays 5. Check that your supporting materials, such as transcipts, have been received
November: Submit your completed application	1. Finalize your essays 2. Complete your application and submit by your field-specific deadline 3. Check that your application and all materials have been received 4. If needed, remind your referees about submitting their letters
Late March:	The NSF announces Awards and Honorable Mentions

Useful Tips for Writing and Submission of Your Application

- Develop a concept; then clarify ideas
- Conduct a literature search to learn about past research in your area
- Describe the research problem, methodology and techniques, anticipated findings, any projected problems/limitations, and anticipated conclusions
- Emphasize the significance of your work and how you will communicate your results to the greater scientific community
- Describe the link between your proposed plan of research and previous research experiences
- Have your mentors and friends read and critique your application essays
- Revise your proposed plan of research & application essays multiple times
- Proofread essays and proposed plan of research before final submission
- Check application completeness and receipt of supplemental materials