The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program

**GRFP Unique Features**

- Flexible: choice of project, advisor & program
- Portable: Any accredited U.S. institution
- 2,000 Fellowships offered annually, ~17% success rate

**GRFP Key Elements**

- Five Year Award – $132,000
- Three years of financial support
  - $32,000 Stipend per year
  - $12,000 Educational allowance to institution per year
GRFP General Eligibility

- U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents
- Early-career students
- Pursuing research-based MS or PhD in NSF fields
- Enrolled in accredited U.S. institution by fall 2016
- Applicants must **self-certify in the application** that they meet the GRFP Eligibility criteria

GRFP Supported Disciplines

- Chemistry
- Computer and Information Science and Engineering
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Life Sciences
- Materials Research
- Mathematical Sciences
- Physics and Astronomy
- Psychology
- Social Sciences
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education (research-focused)

Not Supported

- Business administration or management
- Social work
- Medical, dental, law, or public health programs
- Joint science-professional degree programs, e.g., MD/PhD, JD/PhD, etc.
- Education (except research-focused STEM Education programs)
- **See Solicitation** (www.nsfgrfp.org)

GRFP Cycle

- **Application**: Available online August
- **Deadlines**: November (varies by field)
- **Awards**: Announced late March to early April
- Best Time to Start Preparing: **Now**
2015 NSF GRFP Deadlines
All deadlines are at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

October 26, 2015 (Monday)
Geosciences
Life Sciences

October 27, 2015 (Tuesday)
Computer and Information Science and Engineering
Engineering
Materials Research

October 29, 2015 (Thursday)
Psychology
Social Sciences
STEM Education and Learning

October 30, 2015 (Friday)
Chemistry
Mathematical Sciences
Physics and Astronomy

November 5, 2015 (Thursday)
All reference letters must be received by 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time Zone

NSF FastLane
- Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
- Graduate Research Statement (2 pages)
- Transcripts, uploaded into FastLane
- Three letters of reference required
- Additional information required for some candidates
See Solicitation for eligibility requirements available on www.nsfgrfp.org

Complete Application

Resources

NSF GRFP Website (nsf.gov/grfp)
- Solicitation
- FAQ and Guide links

Fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp
- Online application, user guides, official announcements

Phone and email
- 866-NSF-GRFP (673-4737)
  info@nsfgradfellows.org

Resources at nsfgrfp.org
- Tips for applying
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- Find GRFP contacts
- Important links for the GRFP
- Panelist registration
Two National Science Board-approved Review Criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit**: this criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge
- **Broader Impacts**: this criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
   - **Advance knowledge** and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
   - **Benefit society** or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?

2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?

4. **How well qualified** is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?

5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Panelists may consider the following with respect to the **Intellectual Merit** Criterion:

- the potential of the applicant to advance knowledge based on the totality of the content in the application, including the strength of the academic record, the proposed plan of research, the description of previous research experience or publication/presentations, and references

Panelists may consider the following with respect to the **Broader Impacts** Criterion:

- the potential of the applicant to engage the public in science, engineering principles, and research;
- the potential of the applicant to improve science and engineering education through the integration of education and research;
- the potential of the applicant to contribute to public understanding of science and engineering issues by sharing research findings or expertise in the broader community; and
- the potential of the applicant to contribute to the diversity of the nation's research and educational enterprise.
Panels may consider the following with respect to the Broader Impacts Criterion:

- the potential for future broader impacts as indicated by personal, professional, and educational experiences

How do you envision graduate school preparing you for a career that allows you to contribute to expanding scientific understanding as well as broadly benefit society?

- Describe your personal, educational and/or professional experiences that motivate your decision to pursue advanced study in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM).
- Include specific examples of any research and/or professional activities in which you have participated. Present a concise description of the activities, highlight the results and discuss how these activities have prepared you to seek a graduate degree. Specify your role in the activity including the extent to which you worked independently and/or as part of a team.
- Describe the contributions of your activity to advancing knowledge in STEM fields as well as the potential for broader societal impacts (See Solicitation, Section VI, for more information about Broader Impacts)

Present an original research topic that you would like to pursue in graduate school.

- Describe the research idea, your general approach, as well as any unique resources that may be needed for accomplishing the research goal (i.e., access to national facilities or collections, collaborations, overseas work, etc.) You may choose to include important literature citations.
- Address the potential of the research to advance knowledge and understanding within science as well as the potential for broader impacts on society. The research discussed must be in a field listed in the Solicitation (Section X, Fields of Study).

Choose at least three reference writers

- Give them ample time to prepare their letters
- They should know you as a scientist and personally
- Share your application materials and the merit review criteria (good letters address Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts)
- Track letter submission using FastLane; you must have 3 letters for a complete application
Preparing a competitive application

1. Read the Solicitation carefully
2. Address the two NSF Merit Review Criteria (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts) in each Statement
3. Check for spelling and grammatical errors
4. Verify statements and transcripts uploads
5. You must certify that this is your own original work
6. You must self-certify your eligibility according to the criteria in the Solicitation
7. Make sure you Press “Submit” button 😊
8. Regularly check application status for # of reference letters
9. Make sure you are enrolled in graduate school by Fall 2016

Evaluation of applications

• Panelists are academic and research experts in general discipline, not necessarily in your research topic
• Panelists rate your application using the two Merit Review Criteria, Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
• NSF requests panelists to provide constructive comments (applicants receive anonymous copies of the reviews)
• Panels make recommendations to NSF
• NSF awards fellowships and honorable mentions

EXAMPLES & TIPS

• SEE HANDOUT PACKET
  – Call for submissions (2014)
  – Research Statement Tips
  – Outline and Strategies (Hartman)
  – Dahl Personal Statement
  – Sample Research Proposals

You are encouraged to apply

Besides constructive feedback, the application is great preparation for:
  – Graduate school applications
  – Other award applications
  – Job applications
  – Writing publications
  – Professional connections

2014
~2,000 Awards
12,000+ Applications reviewed
~ 17% Success