For Applicants to
the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
	nsf.gov/grfp

www.nsfgrfp.org
GRFP Goals

- To select, recognize, and financially support individuals early in their careers with the demonstrated potential to be high achieving scientists and engineers.

- To broaden participation in science and engineering of underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans.
GRFP Key Elements

Five Year Award – $132,000

• Three years of support
  – $32,000 Stipend per year
  – $12,000 Educational allowance to institution
• International research opportunity: GROW
• Supercomputer access: XSEDE
• Career Life Balance (family leave)
GRFP Unique Features

- Awarded to individual
- **Flexible**: choice of project, advisor & program
- **Unrestrictive**: No service requirement
- **Portable**: Any accredited U.S. institution
  - MS, MS and PhD, PhD

- **2010 - 2014**: 2,000 Fellowships each year
  - 2014: 14,000 Applications - ~14% success rate
GRFP Solicitation (NSF 14-590)

- Contains the following information:
  - Program Description
  - Award Information
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Application preparation
  - Submission instructions
  - Application Review Criteria
GRFP Eligibility

- U.S. citizens and permanent residents
- Early-career graduate students
- Pursuing research-based MS and PhD
- Science and engineering fields
- Enrolled in accredited institution in US by Fall

**Academic Levels**

1: Seniors/baccalaureates; no graduate study
2: First-year graduate students
3: Second-year grad students
   ≤ 12 months of graduate study by August
4: >12 months graduate study
   Interruption in graduate study of 2+ years
   (can have MS degree)
GRFP Fields of Study

- Chemistry
- Computer & Information Science/Engineering
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Life Sciences
- Materials Research
- Mathematical Sciences
- Physics and Astronomy
- Psychology
- Social Sciences
- STEM Education
GRFP Application Timeline

August
- Solicitation Posted

late Oct – early Nov
- Applications Due
- Reference Letters Due

Recipients Announced

March - April

Acceptance of Award and Declaration of Tenure/Reserve

May 1

Fellowship Year Begins

June 1 or Sept. 1
NSF FastLane

- Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
- Graduate Research Plan Statement (2 pages)
- Transcripts (uploaded electronically)
- Three letters of reference

DEADLINES: late Oct - early November
Two Statements

• **Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement**
  Describe your personal, educational and/or professional experiences that motivate your decision to pursue advanced study. Include examples of research and/or professional activities in which you have participated. Describe the contributions to *advancing knowledge* in STEM fields and the potential for *broader societal impacts*. Include future plans to contribute to broader impacts.

• **Graduate Research Plan Statement**
  Present an original research topic that you would like to pursue in graduate school. Describe the research idea, your general approach. Address the potential of the research to *advance knowledge* and understanding within science as well as the potential for *broader impacts* on society.
Application Review Process

• Applications are reviewed by panels of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientists and engineers

• Applications assigned to panels based on the applicant's chosen Primary Field(s) of Study and the discipline(s) represented

• Applicants are advised to select the Primary Field of Study that is most closely aligned with the proposed graduate program of study

• Holistic evaluation
NSF Review Criteria

- Two National Science Board-approved criteria
  - Intellectual Merit
  - Broader Impacts
• How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge within its own field or across different fields?

AND

• How well does the proposed activity benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes?

— Separate sections for Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
Intellectual Merit

- Demonstrated **intellectual ability** and other accepted requisites for **scholarly scientific study**, such as the **ability** to:
  - Plan and conduct research
  - Work as a member of a team as well as independently
  - Interpret and communicate research
Societal benefits include, but not limited to,

- Impact of project or individual student on society
- Increased participation of underrepresented groups, women/minority, students with disabilities, veterans
- Improved STEM education in schools and teacher development
- Impact on society: Increased public scientific literacy; increased public engagement with science and technology
- Community outreach: science clubs, radio, TV, newspaper,
- Potential to impact diverse audiences: museums, aquarium
- Development of a diverse, globally competitive workforce
- Increased partnerships between academia, industry and others
- Leadership potential

Plans to share your science with the broader community?
Intellectual Merit Assessment

- Academic performance; grades, curricula, awards, etc.
- Graduate Research plan
- Research/professional experience
- Reference letters

Broader Impacts Assessment

- Prior accomplishments and future plans
- Individual experiences
- Potential benefit(s) to society
- Community outreach
- Reference letters
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<th><strong>PAST</strong></th>
<th><strong>FUTURE</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual merit</strong></td>
<td>What is the evidence you have already demonstrated intellectual merit?</td>
<td>Show that you will continue to demonstrate intellectual merit. (through a good and reasonable research plan)</td>
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<td>[If your GPA isn’t the greatest, then use other things to show your merit]</td>
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<td><strong>Broader impacts</strong></td>
<td>What broader impacts have you already made?</td>
<td>How are you going to leverage the NSF resources that you receive to generate broader impacts in the future? [technological/scientific and non-technological/scientific. How will you help the NSF meet its goals? What will you do at your school? And beyond?]</td>
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<td>[Doesn’t have to always be in research; include community outreach, etc.]</td>
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Advice

- Start early
- Read Solicitation, and read it again
- Read NSF GRFP websites

- Select and confirm reference letter writers
- Pay attention to merit review criteria
- Share your application materials and the merit review criteria with reference writers
- Monitor receipt of reference letters (3 required for review)
Reference writers

• Select your reference writers carefully, as they will provide important information about your potential as a leader, researcher, and educator – **familiarity with you as a person is important**

• Your selected reference writers will submit their own references; provide them all necessary information well in advance of deadline

• You may request up to 5 references. It is your responsibility to ensure three letters of references are submitted by the published deadline in order for your application to be complete and reviewed
GRFP Resources

• NSF GRFP Website (nsf.gov/grfp)
  – Solicitation and links
• NSF GRFP FastLane Website (fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp)
  – Application, guides, announcements
• GRFP Website (nsfgrfp.org)
• Current & former Fellows
• Phone & e-mail
  – 866-NSF-GRFP (673-4737)
  – info@nsfgrfp.org
Jennifer Wang, PhD

NSF Graduate Fellowship Advice (Last Updated: 9/26/2014)

This page is meant to be a resource for students applying for the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF GRFP). I received the NSF Fellowship in 2008 and an Honorable Mention in 2007.

I have recently updated the links to include only the most current information. Please mail me if you know of other sites that could be included!

General Advice and Information

NSF GRFP Homepage. The official homepage for rules and eligibility of the NSF fellowship. Also, visit NSF's LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook pages.

University of Missouri Graduate School's National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships. A must-visit: includes a helpful task checklist and detailed essay guides.

Auburn University Libraries' NSF/PPA Fellowship Applicants. Includes examples of personal statements, advice from previous winners, and additional information.

University of Cincinnati NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Up to date deadlines and includes sample essays.

Association for Psychological Science Observer's Ten Tips for Applying to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program.

Jan Allen's Preparing Your NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

Advice from Past Award and HM Recipients

Alex Lang's NSF Fellowship Advice. Well organized site featuring example essays.

Rachel C. Smith's National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Page. Includes actual example essays and ratings.

Reid A. Berdanier's National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Resources.

Dylan Hale's The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship: Some Advice.

Matt Grobin's NSF-GRFP.
GRFP Essay Insights
Application Resources for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program

GRFP Overview

The basics

The GRFP is a prestigious, nationally competitive fellowship offered by the National Science Foundation. It provides three years of financial support for beginning graduate study leading to a research-based degree in the STEM disciplines.

Financial support

The fellowship includes a $32,000-per-year stipend for three years. Additionally, each Fellow receives a tuition waiver via a cost-of-education allowance that is awarded to the graduate institution. After one year of graduate study, Fellows become eligible to apply for international research funding support through Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW).

Eligibility requirements*

*Always refer to the current NSF GRFP Solicitation for official eligibility information.

1. Citizenship: Must be a United States citizen, US national, or a permanent US resident by the application deadline. Refer to the GRFP solicitation.

2. Degree requirement: Individuals are typically eligible to apply
   - during the senior year of college; or after earning a baccalaureate, but no graduate study;
   - first year graduate students;
   - during a gap year after undergraduate study and prior to starting graduate studies.

LinkedIn Group: NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
Twitter: @NSFGRFP
Facebook: NSFGRFP
TheGradCafe: NSF GRFP 2014-15 not yet available

Advice from Fellows

NSF GRFP funds translate to increased creative potential and hence potential for success and happiness.

Roberto Nigro
'09 Fellow, Engineering
University of Michigan

About this site

Permissions, Background & References
University of Washington contacts:

• **Current graduate students:**
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    Graduate School
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• **Current undergraduate students:**
  • Robin Chang
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