The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program
Identifies individuals with demonstrated potential for significant achievements in science and engineering research

A high priority is increasing the diversity of the science and engineering workforce, including geographic distribution and the participation of women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities.
GRFP Successes

- 46,500 Fellows to date (since 1952)
- 30 Nobel Laureates
- 440 members of the National Academy of Sciences
- Founders of corporations to authors of books
- Higher Ph.D. completion rates
- Enhanced diversity
GRFP Key Elements

- Five Year Award – $121,500
- Three years of support
  - $30,000 Stipend per year
  - $10,500 Educational allowance to institution
- International research opportunities
- Supercomputer access

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program
Information: www.nsf.gov/grfp or www.nsfgrfp.org
Apply at: www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/
GRFP General Eligibility

• U.S. citizens and permanent residents
• Early-career students
• Pursuing research-based MS and PhD
• Enrolled in accredited U.S. institution
• Chemistry
• Computer and Information Science and Engineering
• Engineering
• Geosciences
• Life Sciences
• Mathematical Sciences
• Physics and Astronomy
• Psychology
• Social Sciences
• Science Education*

GRFP Supported Disciplines

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Not Supported by NSF GRFP

- Clinical work
- Counseling
- Business administration & management
- Social work
- Practice-oriented professional degree programs
- Medical, dental, law, or public health programs
- Joint science-professional degree programs, e.g., MD/PhD, JD/PhD, etc.
- **Application**: Available online mid-August
- **Deadlines**: Mid-November (varies by field)
- **Awards**: Announced late March to early April
- **Best Time to Start Preparing**: Now
Complete Application

NSF FastLane

- Personal statement (2 pages)
- Previous research experience (2 pages)
- Proposed plan of research (2 pages)
- Transcripts
- Completed graduate study (Level 4)
- Three letters of reference
NSF GRFP Website (nsf.gov/grfp)

- Solicitation and links
- Online application, user guides, official announcements (fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp)
- Current and former fellows
- Phone and email
  866-NSF-GRFP (673-4737)
  info@nsfgradfellows.org
• Tips for applying
• Frequently asked questions
• Find GRFP resource people
• Other funding opportunities
• Panelist registration
Two National Science Board-approved criteria

- Intellectual Merit
- Broader Impacts
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
Intellectual Merit Assessment

- Academic performance
- Awards/honors
- Communication skills
- International experience
- Independence/creativity
- Publication/presentations
- Research plan
- Choice of institution
- References
- Research experience
Contributions that:

• Integrate research and education at all levels, infuse learning with discovery, and assure that the findings are communicated in a broad context and to a large audience

• Encourage diversity, broaden opportunities, and enable the participation of all citizens, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities – in science and research

• Enhance scientific and technical understanding

• Benefit society
Broader Impacts Assessment

- Prior accomplishments
- Future plans
- Individual experiences
- Integration of research and education
- Potential to reach diverse audiences
- Impact on society and connectivity
- Community outreach
- Leadership potential

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Preparing a competitive application

Personal Statement (2 Pages)

• Fascination with research area; address Intellectual Merit criterion
• Examples of leadership and unique characteristics brought to chosen field
• Personal experiences and individual strengths; address Broader Impacts criterion
• How the fellowship would contribute to career goals
Preparing a competitive application

Previous Research Experience Essay (2 Pages)

• Applicable experiences, relevant to research

• Key questions, methodology, findings, and conclusions

• Team and/or independent work

• Mention all publications, posters, presentations, awards, recognition, etc.

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Proposed Research Plan (2 Pages)

• Original inquiry – introduce general theory, importance, and motivation
• How you have prepared
• Perceived scope of work during graduate study and beyond
• Detailed plan, but avoiding being overly specific
• Demonstrate research’s Broader Impacts
Preparing a competitive application

**Reflection** of experiences and proposed research on the real world

**Discussion** with experts, mentors, family and peers

**Construction**; give to experts, mentors, family and peers to review

**Polish to create final draft**
Reference Letters

• Choose three appropriate 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
Preparing a competitive application

1. Start the process early
2. Read the solicitation carefully
3. Address the two review criteria in application materials
4. Ensure essays address all application questions
5. Check for spelling and grammatical errors
6. Verify essays upload correctly AND are in appropriate place
7. Press “Submit” button
8. Regularly check application status
Evaluation of applications

- Panelists are academic and research experts in general discipline, not necessarily in your research topic
- Panelists complete rating sheet
- NSF requests panelists to provide constructive comments (applicants may view)
- Application evaluated by 2-3 panelists
- Panels make recommendations to NSF
- NSF awards fellowships and honorable mentions
Besides feedback on your ideas from experts, the application is great preparation for:

– Graduate school applications
– Other award applications
– Job applications
– Writing publications
– Professional connections

...and you just might win the fellowship too!

2008
1,000 Awards
10,000 Applications
~ 10% Success

2010
2,000 Awards
12,000 Applications
~ 17% Success