



National Science Foundation
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Dear Colleague Letter - NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW)

December 5, 2012

The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter is to announce the GRFP's Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW). Through GROW, NSF Graduate Fellows are provided an international travel allowance to engage in research collaborations with investigators in partner countries located outside the United States.

With GROW, NSF Graduate Fellows can benefit from partnerships developed by NSF with funding organizations in other countries to develop international research collaborations. For the last four years, GRFP has offered a pilot international research opportunity in cooperation with counterpart funding organizations in Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden, known as the Nordic Research Opportunity. GROW continues the Nordic opportunity with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and introduces new partnership opportunities to NSF Graduate Research Fellows in France, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

Details for each partner country differ and are available through links to their websites, grouped by geographic region, and accessed at: <http://www.nsf.gov/grow>. As additional countries develop GROW partnerships with NSF, information for those countries will be added to the website to facilitate future planning.

ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

Eligible NSF Graduate Research Fellows must have completed at least one year of their graduate program at the time of application. They must be enrolled at U.S. institutions, making satisfactory progress towards their degrees, and have fulfilled all GRFP reporting requirements. The competition is open to MS - and PhD-seeking Fellows.

GROW travel allowances to the Fellows are awarded based on an annual competition. The anticipated maximum number of Fellows to be supported by GROW is 400 in fiscal year 2013. All GROW awards are subject to the availability of funds, merit review, and acceptance by the National Science Foundation and NSF's counterpart funding organization in the host country.

GRFP GROW TRAVEL AAWARD INFORMATION AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

Graduate Research Fellows "on tenure"* selected for the GROW will continue to receive their NSF stipend through their home U.S. institution. GROW Fellows will receive an international travel allowance of \$5,000 to cover travel and research costs associated with the international research collaboration. See the Budget and Budget Justification section below for restrictions on use of NSF funds. The support provided by the host country differs by country. For further information, see the country's GROW website.

The NSF stipend remains subject to U.S. tax laws. Fellows "on reserve"* for any or all of the research experience period will not receive the NSF stipend while "on reserve," but will be eligible to receive the NSF GRFP GROW support.

The GROW funding is an allowance to the Fellow for the subsequent fellowship year (e.g., award announced April 2013, for use in the 2013-2014 Fellowship Year, no later than September 30, 2014). Extensions are subject to the approval of the Fellow's GRFP institution. The funds may not be transferred to another Fellow at the institution.

* Fellowship Tenure status is the period of time during which Fellows actively utilize the fellowship award. A Fellow on Reserve status postpones the NSF fellowship support while remaining a full-time student at the affiliated institution.

GROW REQUEST SCHEDULE AND CONSIDERATION

- **December 2012.** GROW is announced to Fellows and GRFP Institutions.
- **December 5, 2012 - February 1, 2013.** Fellows may submit GROW travel requests through the GRFP FastLane module, adhering to the NSF submission guidelines specified in this Dear Colleague Letter. GRFP Coordinating Officials must approve the Fellow requests in the GRFP FastLane module by February 1, 2013; university approvals for these submissions are provided in the signed Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) Certification form submitted with the application. GRFP Coordinating Officials must approve the submissions before NSF receives the applications. GROW requests that do not comply will be returned without review.
- **February 1 - March 1, 2013.** GROW requests are reviewed internally by NSF. Meritorious GROW applications are forwarded to the GROW contact person at each partner country for review and approval by the counterpart funding organization.
- **Early April, 2013.** Announcement of GROW awards. GROW travel allowance(s) for GROW Fellows are provided to the GRFP institution as part of the summer funding increment in June 2013, for Fellows identified to receive the GRFP GROW following the annual competition. The GRFP PI and Financial Officer provide administrative and financial oversight of the GROW travel allowance(s) of GROW Fellows as part of the GRFP award to the institution.
- Successful applicants may commence their international research collaboration as early as **June 15, 2013**; the research visit must be initiated in the 2013-2014 Fellowship Year, with the expended travel allowance for each GROW Fellow reported once (\$5,000) on the GRFP Program Expense Report covering the time period of travel.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING GRFP GROW REQUESTS

1. Applications for GROW are submitted by the Fellow through the "Request Travel Allowance" task in the GRFP FastLane module, submitted as one uploaded PDF file. The AOR certifies the GROW application through use of the AOR Certification form which is submitted with the application, and by the Coordinating Official approval of the GROW travel requests in the GRFP FastLane module. The GRFP Institution nominates the Fellow for GROW funding by approving their requests in the GRFP module.
2. GROW applications must include the following elements:
 - a. Name of Graduate Research Fellow, Fellow ID, Project Title, Proposed international research collaborator(s), and Proposed Dates and Duration of Visit(s). The international collaborators and organizations must be identified.
 - b. **Project summary.** A one-page summary addressing the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts of the proposed international research activities.
 - c. **Project Description.** Limit: 5 pages. A concise, substantive summary of the proposed plan for research and general interaction between the Fellow and the proposed international research partners, including justification for the length of time proposed for the international research visit, and the expected mutual scientific/engineering benefits to be derived from the project. References are not included in the page limit.

The Project Description must describe how the Fellow will:

- i. Benefit from specialized expertise, equipment, facilities, field sites, data, and/or other resources located outside the U.S.
 - ii. Build international collaborations that will enhance and contribute to the Fellow's professional network.
 - iii. Integrate the proposed international research activities into the Fellow's graduate degree program and future career goals.
- d. **Budget and Budget Justification.** The budget should consist of a \$5,000 international travel allowance request. The Budget Justification should include a reference to airfare (estimated) and other relocation and project costs (the remainder of the amount requested) for the project. Support is provided as a travel allowance to the Fellow, primarily for the Fellow's costs incurred as a result of the international cooperation. Support for Fellow stipends, major pieces of equipment, and large amounts for materials and supplies are not allowed. Travel to specific conferences and workshops may be included, but relevance to the international research collaboration must be justified. Applications may not consist primarily of conference or workshop travel; international research engagement is required. Participants are responsible for preparing for their own travel, as well as for obtaining health insurance, passports, visas, and any other required travel documents. International air travel must adhere to federal requirements to use U.S. Flag air carriers (see NSF Award and Administration Guide, Chapter VI, Subsection G, 1 (b-c)).
- e. **Supplementary Documents:**
- i. The biographical sketch of the Fellow. Limit: 2 pages.
 - ii. A letter of endorsement from the Fellow's faculty research advisor, describing the anticipated research benefits of the international collaboration for the Fellow's graduate program and the anticipated impact on his/her career. The letter must also indicate that the Fellow is making satisfactory progress in his or her graduate degree program. Limit: 2 pages.
 - iii. International Host/Sponsoring Scientist Letter(s) of collaboration. The letter(s) must support the proposed interaction and summarize the objectives to be achieved between the applicant's research plan and ongoing research efforts at the foreign site. The letter should demonstrate the interest and commitment to hosting the Fellow, and indicate how the collaboration with the Fellow will engage the expertise and specialized skills, facilities, and/or resources of the international host.
 - iv. The biographical sketch of the international Host/Sponsoring Scientist(s). Limit: 2 pages.
 - v. A signed Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) Certification form.

GROW APPLICATION REVIEW

Funding requests for the GRFP Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide will be reviewed using the National Science Board approved merit review criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. In addition, the following criteria will be used in evaluating the requests:

- The potential for true intellectual collaboration with the international research partner, engaging the expertise and specialized skills, facilities, and/or resources of the international collaborator; and
- The potential opportunities for effective research and career development for the Graduate Research Fellow applicant.

NSF program officers will review the GROW applications. Approval by the NSF and the partner funding organization in the respective host county is required before GROW awards are made.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Fellows who receive GROW awards are expected to submit an Annual Activity Report through the GRFP FastLane Module that details the experience and accomplishments of the international research activities. They should highlight publications or presentations completed as a result of the GROW activities.