



National Science Foundation
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NSF 14-005

Dear Colleague Letter: NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) - Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW)

November 5, 2013

The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter is to announce the continuation of 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. Building on the experience of the former Nordic Research Opportunity, GROW offers research opportunities of 3-12 months in duration in the following partner countries: Australia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland.

This year, GROW is offering an additional track to provide opportunities to NSF Graduate Fellows to conduct research in developing countries. This track, developed through a partnership between NSF and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), includes the following developing countries: Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Senegal and South Africa. NSF Graduate Fellows will have the opportunity to conduct research to help solve important development issues in these countries. Specific information regarding this track will be posted on the website (see below).

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

ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

GROW is open to active awardees of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Active NSF Graduate Fellows are those fellows who are within their five-year fellowship term, "on tenure" or "on reserve." NSF Graduate Fellows that have completed 3 years of tenure must request to be on reserve for 1-2 additional years to be eligible for GROW.

NSF Graduate Fellows are encouraged to consult the GRFP Administrative Guide and FAQs for questions related to their fellowship. These are accessed through the following links:

- http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf13085
- http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf13084

Eligible NSF Graduate 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 2014. All GROW awards are subject to the availability of funds, merit review, and acceptance by the National Science Foundation and NSF's partner organizations.

Only 1 application per year per Fellow will be accepted. Former GROW recipients will be eligible as long as they meet the general eligibility requirements.

GRFP GROW INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ALLOWANCE INFORMATION AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

NSF Graduate Fellows "on tenure" selected for GROW will continue to receive their NSF stipend through their home U.S. institution. NSF Graduate Fellows will receive an international travel allowance of \$5,000 to cover travel and research costs associated with the international research collaboration through their home U.S. institution. 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 GROW website (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504876) and the partner organization'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 international travel allowance and the support from partner countries.

The GROW funding is an allowance to the Fellow for the subsequent fellowship year (e.g., award announced April 2014, for use in the 2014-2015 Fellowship Year, no later than August 31, 2015). Extensions are subject to the approval of the Fellow's GRFP institution. GROW funds may not be transferred to another Fellow at the institution.

GROW REQUEST SCHEDULE AND CONSIDERATION

- **October 29, 2013.** GROW is announced to NSF Graduate Fellows and GRFP Institutions.
- **October 29, 2013 – January 8, 2014.** NSF Graduate Fellows may submit GROW travel requests through the GRFP FastLane module, adhering to the NSF submission guidelines specified in this Dear Colleague Letter. A signed Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) Certification form must be submitted with the application by the NSF Graduate Fellow. GRFP Coordinating Officials must approve the Fellow requests in the GRFP FastLane module by **January 8, 2014**; GRFP Coordinating Officials must approve the submissions before NSF receives the applications. GROW requests that do not comply will be returned without review.
- **January 8, 2014 – March 31, 2014.** 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.
- **April – May 2014.** Announcement of GROW recipients. Travel allowance(s) for NSF Graduate Fellows selected for GROW are provided to the GRFP institution as part of the summer funding increment in June 2014, for Fellows identified to receive the GRFP GROW travel allowance following the annual competition. The GRFP PI (Graduate Dean) and Financial Officer provide administrative and financial oversight of the GROW travel allowance(s) of NSF Graduate Fellows selected for GROW as part of the GRFP award to the institution.
- Successful applicants may commence their international research collaboration as early as **June 1, 2014**; research visits must be initiated in the 2014-2015 Fellowship Year, with the expended travel allowance for each NSF Graduate Fellow reported once (\$5,000) on the GRFP Program Expense Report covering the time period of travel. NSF Graduate Fellows must complete their GROW experience before their GRFP Fellowship ends.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING GROW APPLICATIONS

1. Applications for GROW are submitted by NSF Graduate Fellows through the “GRFP Additional Funding Opportunities” link in the GRFP FastLane module, submitted as one uploaded PDF file. Use the NSF standard format requirements (e.g. single spaced pages) to prepare the application. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) certifies the GROW application through use of the AOR Certification form which is submitted with the application. The GRFP Coordinating Official approves 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 NSF Graduate 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 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 NSF Graduate 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 NSF Graduate 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 NSF Graduate 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. NSF Graduate Fellows are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, 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 NSF Graduate Fellow. Limit: 2 pages.

- ii. A letter of endorsement from the NSF Graduate 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 NSF Graduate 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

GROW applications 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 applications:

- 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 NSF Graduate Fellow applicant.

NSF program officers will review GROW applications. Approval by the NSF and the partner funding organization in the respective host country is required before GROW travel allowances are awarded.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

NSF Graduate Fellows who receive GROW travel allowances are expected to submit a Report through the GRFP FastLane Module that details the experience and accomplishments of the GROW research activities. They should highlight publications or presentations completed as a result of the GROW activities.