



**INFORMATION FOR
EARTH SCIENCES
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS**

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National Science Foundation
Directorate for Geosciences
Division of Earth Sciences

IMPORTANT

This booklet outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation Earth Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship (EAR-PF) and provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your Fellowship. If you lose this booklet, we will send you another upon request.

Address all correspondence to:

Earth Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowships
Education and Human Resources Program
Division of Earth Sciences (EAR)
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22314

You may also contact the program via e-mail at earpf@nsf.gov. The telephone number for the Education and Human Resources Program in EAR is (703) 292-5047 and the FAX number is (703) 292-9025.

As a recipient of NSF funds, you are responsible for fulfilling the academic and fiscal obligations of your award.

Failure on the part of a Fellow to observe all the terms and conditions of a Fellowship award constitutes sufficient grounds for its revocation by the Foundation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Your National Science Foundation Earth Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship has been awarded by the National Science Foundation in recognition of your accomplishments to date, and with the hope that the experience you will obtain during the tenure of your Fellowship will enhance your development as a scientist and educator and contribute to the scientific and educational effort of the United States. Upon acceptance of an award under this program, the Foundation will issue a letter based on the information submitted in your Fellowship application.

2. HOST INSTITUTION(S)

A Fellow must, by law, affiliate with an appropriate institution as described in the Program Solicitation for the Earth Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships during the entire Fellowship tenure and is responsible for making all arrangements for such affiliation with the Fellowship Institution. A clear relationship should be established with the chosen institution before beginning tenure, thus assuring both the Fellow and the Foundation that it will be possible to carry out the program for which the Fellowship was awarded.

If it becomes necessary or desirable to seek affiliation with an institution other than the one listed in the application, the Fellow must request **in writing** permission from the Foundation, stating the reasons for the proposed change and explaining the appropriateness of the new institution for the proposed plan for research and education (**See Section 5 of this document for more details**). This must be done **before** final arrangements with the new institution are completed. A fellow may not enter on tenure until the Foundation approves all changes, including the new sponsoring scientist.

3. SPONSORING SCIENTIST(S)

Each Postdoctoral Fellow will arrange for a staff member at the Fellowship Institution to serve as sponsoring scientist. Usually this individual will be a professor or staff scientist with whom you will be working closely in your Fellowship program. It is hoped that this advisor will assist in the planning and initiation of your program of research and will advise you from time to time. The sponsoring scientist will be the institutional representative responsible for your activities during tenure.

Starting and Termination Certificates used in connection with the Fellowship should be signed by the sponsoring scientist, or if absent, by an appropriate official of the institution.

Interim Report Letter: Note that when the interim report is filed, a letter signed by both the Fellow and the sponsoring scientists stating goals of the project and plans to reach these should be attached to the interim report.

Any questions relating to your status at the Fellowship Institution which the sponsoring scientist cannot answer should be referred for resolution to other appropriate officials within the Fellowship Institution, such as a department chair, Dean of the Graduate school, or a designated institutional representative.

As with the host organization, a change in sponsoring scientist requires an e-mail request to and approval from the cognizant NSF program officer.

4. ENTRANCE UPON TENURE

A Postdoctoral Fellow must begin Fellowship activities within 12 months of receiving the award. A Fellow who is unable to begin tenure within this specified time period is expected to decline the Fellowship. This declination will not prejudice any future application.

Before a Fellow may enter upon tenure of a Postdoctoral Fellowship, the Foundation must have on record the date on which the Ph.D. was received. If the Ph.D. is not received prior to the starting date of tenure, the Fellow must submit evidence that all the requirements for the degree have been completed. A certification form for this purpose will be made available by the cognizant NSF Program Officer.

A set of starting materials, including a Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#), and Fellowship Termination Certificate, [NSF Form 453](#), will be made available to you after issuance of your award notice. Fellowship tenure starts on the date a Fellow begins Fellowship activities (the first day of the month; e.g., January 1) and terminates on the date Fellowship activities are completed at the Fellowship Institution, as indicated on the Starting and Termination Certificates, both of which must be signed by the sponsoring scientist or by an appropriate official of the institution. This is a requirement which the Foundation must ask Fellows to fulfill in order to comply with governmental accounting regulations. If a Fellow interrupts tenure or affiliates with more than one institution, Starting and Termination Certificates are required for each portion of tenure. **Stipend payments will not be authorized until a Starting Certificate has been received by the Foundation.** If the fellowship start is delayed beyond the effective date stated in the award notice, the NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the time frame of the delay and permit the full appointment period. You (as an individual registered in Fastlane) also must request a no-cost extension through [Research.gov](#). You also serve as the Authorized Organizational Representative for your award and must forward the request to NSF.

5. PROGRAM CHANGES

Any major change in the program of research or education from that proposed at the time of application, and any change in tenure, or in the institution(s) with which a Fellow is associated, must receive the **prior** approval of the National Science Foundation. Before completion of the first year of Fellowship tenure, changes in the Fellowship Institution will be approved only under unusual circumstances. Since the likely impact of both the sponsoring scientist and the Fellowship Institution on the professional development of the Fellow was an important factor in the proposal evaluation process, the selection of these, especially for the first year of Fellowship tenure, will normally be viewed as a commitment on the part of the applicant to fulfill the plan for research and education as outlined in the original application. Although it is expected that each Fellow will carry out the program as approved at the time of application, **minor** changes may be made at the discretion of the Fellow and with concurrence by the Sponsoring Scientist. However, any **major** changes must be outlined and justified in full in writing so that a determination may be made by the Foundation as to whether the new program falls within the intent of the award.

6. STIPENDS

A. Amount

The stipend will be paid at a monthly rate which totals \$62,000 for each calendar year of the 2-year fellowship.

B. Payments

Stipend payments will be authorized after submission of a properly completed Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#) and a [NSF Form 1379](#), FastStart Direct Deposit Form. Stipend payments are processed in the Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$) of [Research.gov](#). You will make payment requests of your fellowship funds once per month. As administrator in ACM\$, you must review and manage user roles. If you are not able to successfully make a request of your fellowship funds by COB on the first day of the month, please contact your Program Specialist.

- 1) Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#). The fellow must complete and submit to the cognizant NSF Program Officer the Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#). This form will serve as the authority to begin your stipend payments and will provide the Fellow's statement of tenure information. The form is countersigned by your sponsoring scientist or other appropriate official at your Institution.
- 2) Stipend payments are made directly to you via electronic funds transfer to a U.S. account. The fellowship is an award to you as an individual and payment cannot be deposited directly into the Host Institution's account. To receive payments from the fellowship, you must complete the [NSF Form 1379](#), FastStart Direct Deposit Form. The form must be signed and submitted to the NSF Division of Financial Management (DFM) as shown on the form. Please note that this form should not be sent via regular mail but only via fax or secure email. See the form which provides instructions as to how this information should be provided. Be sure to check the "Fellow" box and name your cognizant NSF Program Director as the NSF Contact at the top of the form. Your home address must be provided; your financial institution must be located in the United States; and you must sign the form to certify the accuracy of the information contained on the form and that you have read the Privacy Act Statement.

No funds will be released to the fellow without submission of this information.

- 3) After the completed forms are received by NSF, you may begin making monthly requests of your stipend payments. Fellows are encouraged to make arrangements for accounts prior to the start of their fellowship tenure, so that initial processing may proceed without delay. In addition, Fellows are requested to use the same account for the entire period of their fellowship tenure, as any changes may involve significant delays in the processing of stipends.

- 4) Any changes or interruptions in stipend payment or any other miscellaneous actions should be requested and described on the Fellowship Action Form, NSF Form 383 (6/09), also made available with the starting materials.

C. Delayed or Lost Stipend Payment

If an anticipated stipend or other Fellowship payment is not received on time, the Fellow should notify the cognizant NSF Program Officer (earpf@nsf.gov) immediately. If the payment in question has posted for payment but was not received, inquiry should be made at the Fellow's bank to see if the payment can be traced. If it is still missing after a week, the Fellow should **write** the Foundation via electronic mail or at the address given on page one of this booklet requesting that the payment be stopped and that a replacement be processed. The Foundation will forward the appropriate fiscal information to the Treasury Department. In addition, an official of the bank should also write the Foundation stating that the bank did not receive the stipend payment. Such replacement payments usually require at least two months for processing. If the stipend is paid in the meantime, the Foundation should be notified immediately.

7. FELLOWSHIP ALLOWANCE

The annual fellowship allowance of \$25,000 is expendable at the discretion of the fellow, and is intended to cover costs such as:

- Expenses directly related to the conduct of the proposed research and broadening participation goals, including but not limited to materials and supplies, equipment, computing resources, access to databases, domestic and international travel, publication charges, and subscription fees;
- Expenses in support of the fellow, such as office space, general purpose supplies and use of equipment, facilities and other institutional resources; and
- Expenses in support of fringe benefits, which may include but are not limited to individual or family health insurance provided through a group or individual plan, dental and/or vision insurance, disability insurance, retirement savings, dependent care, and moving expenses.

NSF considers it appropriate for the fellow's host organization, at the organization's discretion, to make facilities and benefits available. If costs are assessed to the fellow, funds from the fellowship allowance may be utilized for this purpose. In such cases, the fellow would pay the benefits to the host organization. NSF cannot pay the organization directly and is not responsible for any charges incurred by or on behalf of the fellow.

If a fellowship is terminated early, the fellow must return unused fellowship allowance funds to NSF. Generally, the fellow would return a prorated portion of the allowance. As an example, if the fellowship were terminated after 6 months, \$12,500 of the \$25,000 annual allowance would be returned. However, exceptions for such things as equipment purchases may be considered and should be discussed with the cognizant NSF program officer.

Fellows are not in any sense employees of the NSF. Therefore:

- No funds will be deducted from your stipend nor reported to the IRS
- No Social Security taxes will be paid by NSF; and,
- No W-2 or 1099 forms will be issued.

In addition, you must accept responsibility for the filing of any necessary estimated taxes due and for payment of all income taxes which may become due.

NSF is unable to supply information concerning the U.S. income tax or other tax provisions of any foreign country. Inquiries should be directed to the authorities in the appropriate countries. If you need a statement of funds received (including the fellowship allowance) send an email to the NSF Division of Financial Management at bfadfmils@nsf.gov.

8. PROJECT REPORTS

A. Interim Reports

Fellows are required to submit interim reports electronically via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) 3 months after the start of the fellowship. The purpose of these reports is to determine if the project is developing as proposed. This report must include a letter signed by the fellow and the sponsoring scientist on the expectations for the fellowship and the deliverables that must be produced at the end of the fellowship. Upload this letter as an attachment to the interim report. If significant changes in the project occur, formal notifications should be submitted via FastLane. See Section 5, Program Changes, for additional information.

B. Annual Reports

- 1) **Submission Requirement.** Fellows are required to submit annual project reports electronically via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- 2) **Content of Annual Project Reports.** The content requirements for annual project reports are specified in the [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) system and may be supplemented in the award document. Note that the questions at the end of the report provide specific information for NSF about the project results and providing information for these is important.
- 3) **Timing of Annual Project Reports.** Unless otherwise specified in the award, annual project reports shall be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the end of each 12-month award period. It should be noted that the final annual report serves as the project's final report and must be submitted in accordance with paragraph c below. Continued funding for the second year of the Fellowship will be contingent on the approval of annual project reports, and it is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure that annual reports are submitted in a timely fashion so that stipend payments are not interrupted.

C. Final Project Report

- 1) Submission Requirement. Unless otherwise specified in the award, the Fellow shall submit a Final Project Report no later than 90 days following the expiration date of the award via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- 2) Content of Final Project Report. Unless otherwise specified in the award, the Fellow shall submit a final report electronically via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- 3) In addition, at the end of the Fellowship tenure period, Fellows must submit (by fax or email) to the cognizant NSF Program Officer the Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report, [NSF Form 453](#).
- 4) The Foundation would be pleased to receive an account of the Fellow's progress at any time, especially if there are particularly significant developments during a given Fellowship year.

D. Project Outcomes Report for the General Public

No later than 90 days following expiration of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). The fellow's project outcomes report will be posted exactly as it is submitted and will be accompanied by the following disclaimer:

“This Project Outcomes Report for the General Public is displayed verbatim as submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) for this award. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Report are those of the PI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation; NSF has not approved or endorsed its content.”

Fellows are to ensure that the report does not contain any confidential, proprietary business information; unpublished conclusions or data that might compromise the ability to publish results in the research literature; or invention disclosures that might adversely affect the patent rights or those of the organization, in a subject invention under the award. Reports are not to contain any private personally identifiable information such as home contact information, individual demographic data or individually identifiable information collected from human research participants.

9. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

A change in postal and/or electronic mail address should be reported promptly to the Foundation via electronic mail or in writing at the address on the first page of this booklet. Fellows are also expected to maintain updated contact information in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov), both as the Principal Investigator and Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) on the fellowship award.

10. FOREIGN TRAVEL

For all foreign activities undertaken, the Fellow must follow the NSF regulations for International Activities as stated in the current Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide. (Note that the PAPPG is updated every January and the most recent Guidelines should be followed).

11. ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROVISIONS

A. Length of Tenure

The EAR Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded for periods of 2 years, subject to satisfactory progress on the research and educational programs proposed. The tenure of a Fellowship may be interrupted only with the approval of the Foundation. Interruptions may be approved with written justification for a period or periods of up to 12 months in total. It is expected that the Fellowship will be completed with a duration of 48 months.

The Fellowship is subject to termination if the Fellow discontinues his/her research and educational activities for any reason prior to the end of Fellowship tenure. If a Fellow does not conform to the administrative requirements of the Fellowship Institution, the Foundation reserves the right to withhold all stipend payments, pending a full explanation.

B. Paid Leave

Within the fellowship period, one month per year of fellowship duration may be used for paid leave, including parental or family leave. The paid leave cannot be used to increase the level of NSF support beyond the duration of the fellowship. NSF enables career-life balance through a variety of mechanisms. For more information, please see <https://www.nsf.gov/career-life-balance/>.

Furthermore, the NSF allows such paid leave to be cited as a justification to request a no-cost extension to extend the time for completion of award activities beyond the initial duration of twenty-four months. However, no additional funds will be allowed to supplement the Fellowship award beyond the total salary support of twenty-four months.

C. Extension of Tenure

Requests for extensions of tenure will not be granted. If, however, additional time beyond the established end date of the award is required by the Fellow to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work within the funds already made available, a formal request for a no cost extension must be submitted to NSF via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). The request must be submitted to NSF at least 45 days prior to the end date of the award. The request must explain the need for the extension and include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining and a plan for their use. The plan must adhere to the previously approved objectives of the project, and as noted above, it is expected that the Fellowship will be completed in 48 months. Before requesting a no cost extension, note that Fellows may not receive additional compensation while on active Fellowship tenure (see Section 11.k below).

D. Rights to Inventions or Writings

NSF claims no rights to any inventions or writings that may result from its fellowship awards. However, Fellows should be aware that NSF, other Federal agencies, or private parties may acquire such rights through other grant support. Fellows at foreign institutions should be aware that specific provisions regarding allocations of intellectual property rights apply to particular countries, and Fellows should be cognizant of any such provisions before commencing work.

E. Publications

Fellows are responsible for assuring that an acknowledgment of NSF support:

- 1) is made in any publication (including web pages) of any material based on or developed from the fellowship-supported research, in the following terms:

"This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Award No. (NSF award number)."

- 2) is orally acknowledged during all news media interviews, including popular media such as radio, television and news magazines.

Fellows are responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including web pages) based on or developed under this award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

Fellows are responsible for assuring that the cognizant NSF Program Officer is provided access to, either electronically or in paper form, a copy of every publication of material based on or developed under this award, clearly labeled with the award number and other appropriate identifying information, promptly after publication.

F. Liability

NSF cannot assume any liability for accidents, illnesses or claims arising out of any work supported by the Fellow's award or for unauthorized use of patented or copyrighted materials. The Fellow is advised to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to insure or protect themselves and their property.

G. Sharing of Findings, Data and Other Research Products

Fellows are expected to agree to complete and open sharing of data and material in an expeditious manner. Fellows are responsible for compliance with the following NSF guidelines on sharing of findings, data, and other research products:

NSF expects significant findings from research and education activities it supports to be promptly submitted for publication, with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. It expects Fellows to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of the work. It also encourages Fellows to share software and inventions or otherwise act to make the innovations they embody widely useful and usable. Fellows should adhere to the EAR **data policy document** (<https://www.nsf.gov/geo/geo-data-policies/ear/index.jsp>).

Adjustments and, where essential, exceptions may be allowed to safeguard the rights of individuals and subjects, the validity of results, or the integrity of collections or to accommodate legitimate interests of NSF-supported Fellows.

H. Government Permits and Activities Abroad

If any activities are undertaken abroad, the Fellow must follow the guidelines for international activities stated in the current Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG).

I. Referrals to the NSF Office of the Inspector General

The NSF Inspector General is responsible for investigating all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as allegations of research misconduct in connection with NSF programs and operations. The fellow shall promptly refer to the NSF Inspector General (oig@nsf.gov; <https://www.nsf.gov/oig/> or 1-800-428-2189) any allegations or credible evidence of research misconduct or criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to misappropriation, fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct involving NSF funds.

J. Income Taxes

No income tax will be withheld from any stipend. Provision therefore must be made by the Fellow for payment of any tax, domestic or foreign, when due. Final authority as to the taxability of awards rests with the Internal Revenue Service and the courts. Specific questions should be referred to the Internal Revenue Service.

Fellows are not in any sense employees of the National Science Foundation. Therefore, no funds will be deducted from the stipends; no Social Security taxes will be paid by the Foundation; no W-2 forms will be issued; and provision must be made by the Fellow for the filing of any necessary estimate of taxes due and for payment of all income taxes which may become due. A statement of funds received (including special allowance) will be issued by the Division of Financial Management of the Foundation upon written request of the Fellow.

The Foundation is unable to supply information concerning the income tax or other tax provisions of any foreign country. Inquiries should be directed to the authorities in the appropriate countries.

K. Supplementary Activities

During the tenure of the Fellowship the Fellows are expected to devote full time to the program of scientific research and educational activities outlined in their proposal, for which the award was granted. A Fellow may not engage in activities for compensation (except for brief military obligations) or receive another Fellowship or similar award while pursuing Fellowship activities without **prior** approval of the Foundation. Such approval may be granted only under exceptional circumstances.

L. Federal and/or Armed Forces Employees

If, during any part of a Fellowship tenure a Fellow will be a member of the Armed Forces or on leave from a position in the Federal Service, a statement must be filed from a cognizant official of the Government organization involved specifying (1) the funds, if any, that will be made available to the Fellow during tenure and the purpose for which they will be provided, and (2) the funds, if any, that will be made available to the Fellowship Institution on the Fellow's behalf. The Foundation and the Fellow's organization must reach a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding the Fellow's support during tenure before any funds can be provided under the Fellowship.

M. Medical Insurance

No medical or hospitalization program for use in the event of illness or accident involving a Fellow (or dependents) during tenure is provided by the National Science Foundation. Medical or hospital fees may be paid from the annual fellowship allowance.

In the absence of medical and hospital insurance by the institution, it is recommended the Fellows continue during tenure any medical insurance programs with which they are affiliated, or if they are not members of any such program, make arrangements to join a medical program which gives a reasonable amount of protection.

N. Future Employment

The award and acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellowship does not obligate a Fellow, the National Science Foundation, or the United States Government with regard to future employment or future service of any kind.

O. Military Status

Brief interruption of a Fellowship for duly authorized military service or training will be permitted with prior Foundation approval. Requests for such interruptions of tenure should be directed to the Foundation in writing as soon as plans are final. Interruptions of less than 4 days need no approval.

In the case of a longer interruption resulting from active military service or from certain activities in lieu of service with the regular U.S. Armed Forces, provision can be made for reservations of a Fellowship (or the balance of it), and reinstatement of the unused portion at a later date. In such cases Fellows should notify the Foundation immediately in writing of their plans and request further instructions.

P. Veterans' Benefits

In accordance with P.L. 91-219, educational benefits payments from the Veterans Administration may be received concurrently with and supplementary to Fellowship payments from the National Science Foundation.

Q. Special Considerations

A number of situations frequently encountered in the conduct of research require special information and supporting documentation before starting tenure. Among these are the following, some mandated by Federal law:

- 1) research which has an actual and/or potential impact on the environment;
- 2) research at a registered historic or cultural property;
- 3) research involving the use of in vitro generated recombinant DNA molecules;
- 4) research involving the use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals, or endangered species.

Fellows must provide information on the status of any special permissions, clearances or provision related to the above items before beginning tenure. Assessment of environmental impact will be required when appropriate. Specific guidance on the need for such additional documentation may be obtained from the Fellowship Institution's Sponsored Projects Office or the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide.

12. TERMINATION OF FELLOWSHIP

A Fellowship Termination Certificate, [NSF Form 453](#), will be made available in the materials sent with the award notice. This certificate must be signed by an appropriate official at the Fellowship Institution and should show the date the Fellow actually completed Fellowship activities; the Fellowship will be considered to have terminated as of that date. When a Fellow affiliates with more than one institution, a Termination Certificate is required from each institution. Submission of this certificate is necessary to comply with governmental accounting procedures. In the event the certificate is not submitted the Fellow may be requested to return to the Foundation all Fellowship funds which were received during Fellowship tenure.

13. ASSOCIATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents will be sent with this booklet and are referred to in this document. These forms should be submitted to NSF at the appropriate time in the tenure of the Fellowship, as described above.

- Certification of PhD Receipt
- [NSF Form 349, Fellowship Starting Certificate](#) (6/09)
- [NSF Form 383, Fellowship Action Form](#) (6/09)
- [NSF Form 453, Fellowship Termination Certificate](#) (6/09)
- [NSF Form 1379, FastStart Direct Deposit Form](#) (6/09)