



NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

Guide for Fellows & GRFP Coordinating Officials

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION & HUMAN
RESOURCES
DIVISION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION**

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FOREWORD

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended ([42 USC 1861-75](#)). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

The NSF Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111. To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF web site at: <http://www.nsf.gov>.

The Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) is NSF's oldest program, dating to the Foundation's first fully funded year of 1952. Since then, the GRFP has supported over 44,000 U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents to pursue advanced degrees in science and engineering. Among its alumni are over 20 Nobel Laureates, thousands of science and engineering faculty, and many notable individuals in industry, government, and the non-profit sector.

This document outlines basic policies and procedures for Graduate Research Fellows and university administrators (GRFP Coordinating Officials). The Program uses a special module on FastLane to conduct most program operations: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp>

Inquiries regarding the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program should be directed to:

Graduate Research Fellowship Program
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard - Room 875
Arlington, Virginia 22230
(703) 292-8694
(703) 292-9048 (FAX)
grfp@nsf.gov (e-mail)

Additional information on the program may be found at:

<http://www.nsf.gov/grfp> and <http://www.nsfgrfp.org>

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SUMMARY CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED ACTIONS

For Fellows attending U.S. academic institutions, the institutional GRFP Coordinating Official (CO) at the institution is the first point of contact for questions. For Fellows attending foreign academic institutions, there is no CO and the NSF GRF Program Office is directly responsible for managing Fellows' requests and determinations.

All of the following actions are conducted by Fellows via FastLane:

New Fellows

- Upon award notification, new Fellows accept award and verify by May 1: Contact information, Academic institution, Field of study, and Start date (Summer/June 1 or Fall/September 1).

Continuing Fellows

- Submit Annual Activities Report prior to May 1 deadline for tenure declaration.

All Fellows:

- Submit tenure declaration for upcoming fellowship year by May 1 of current fellowship year.

Ongoing

- Ensure that personal contact information is up-to-date.
- Tenure status change (Field of Study, Institution, Fellowship status) or International Travel Award Request.

Fellows Abroad: Additional Actions for Each Year:

- *Annual Starting Certificate* (NSF Form 349, dated 6/2009) (90 days prior to fellowship start date)
- *National Science Foundation Faststart Direct Deposit Form* (NSF Form 1379, dated 6/2009)
- Bursar statement or certified paid receipt for Cost of Education Allowance reimbursement
- *Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report* (NSF Form 453, dated 6/2009) (90 days prior to fellowship year end date)

All of the following actions are conducted by Coordinating Officials via FastLane:

- Prepare and submit annual Expense Report for the ending fellowship year (target date of May 1; required prior to submission of the Grants Roster/Budget Request.)
- Prepare and submit Grants Roster/Budget Request for upcoming year (target date of June 1; additional submission later in the year is authorized if additional funds are required.)
- Review and act on Fellows requests for tenure status change; international travel award, and any general inquiries.

INTRODUCTION

Program Overview and Context

Initiated in 1952, the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) is a competitive fellowship program designed to ensure the vitality of the scientific and technological workforce in the United States and to reinforce its diversity. It recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students in relevant science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines who are pursuing research-based masters and doctoral degrees. NSF Fellows are expected to become knowledge experts who can contribute significantly to research, teaching, and innovations in science and engineering. These individuals will be crucial to maintaining and advancing the nation's technological infrastructure and national security as well as contributing to the economic well being of society at large.

The NSF Act of 1950 (42 U.S.C. 1861 et. seq), as amended, authorizes and establishes certain limitations concerning fellowships to be offered by the Foundation. The provisions pertaining to Graduate Fellows are as follows:

“Sec. 10. The Foundation is authorized to award, within the limits of funds made available specifically for such purpose pursuant to section 16, scholarships and graduate fellowships for study and research in the sciences or in engineering at appropriate, accredited nonprofit American or appropriate foreign institutions selected by the recipient of such aid, for stated periods of time. Persons shall be selected for such fellowships from among citizens, nationals, or lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens of the United States, and such selections shall be made solely on the basis of ability; but in any case in which two or more applicants for fellowships are deemed by the Foundation to be possessed of substantially equal ability, and there are not sufficient fellowships available to grant one to each of such applicants, the available fellowship or fellowships shall be awarded to the applicants in such manner as will tend to result in a wide distribution of fellowships throughout the United States. Nothing contained in this Act shall prohibit the Foundation from refusing or revoking a fellowship award, in whole or in part, in the case of any applicant or recipient, if the National Science Board is of the opinion that such award is not in the best interests of the United States.”

The GRFP provides opportunities for graduate education that prepare students for a broad range of careers through its strategic investment in intellectual capital. So that the nation can build upon the strength and creativity of a diverse society, the program embraces a philosophy of inclusiveness and invites applications from all qualified individuals, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and others traditionally underrepresented in the STEM workforce.

Graduate fellowships are awarded annually as one means of assuring the continued growth and progress of science, mathematics, and engineering in the U.S., including the encouragement of women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and students with disabilities to continue their professional development. By underwriting the training of students with high potential for careers in science, mathematics, or engineering, these fellowships represent long-range investments for the future of society. For this reason, they are distinct from grants

designed to underwrite specific research or project development, and normally do not require that special services be rendered by the recipient.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE

The primary guidance documents for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program are the [Program Solicitation](#) (issued annually), the [Research Terms and Conditions](#) http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=rtc and associated NSF Agency Specific Requirements http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/rtc/nsf_109.pdf, and this Guide. The [GRFP module on FastLane](#) is the electronic tool used to handle transactions among NSF, the affiliated institution, and NSF Fellows. It is the official medium for submitting Fellow's requests for prior approval, for reporting, and for completing other administrative tasks. **Thus, all previous GRFP paper forms are obsolete.** Login to GRFP FastLane at: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/>.

The Graduate Research Fellowship Program office at NSF manages the program and serves as the main point of contact at NSF. The GRFP office is assisted at each U.S. institution by a university representative designated as the GRFP Coordinating Official (CO). A directory of all COs is available on the GRFP FastLane home page (www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp). Fellows should first refer to this guidance document and direct all questions to COs for clarification, if needed. Only after a CO has been consulted should a Fellow contact the GRFP office.

PROGRAM ANNUAL CYCLE

The Graduate Research Fellowship Program operates on an annual program cycle. The actual dates vary from year to year, but the general time frame remains constant. The principal steps in NSF's annual administrative cycle of graduate fellowships are as follows:

August	Program Solicitation Posted
November	Applications Due
February	Review Panels Convene
March-April	Continuing Fellows Submit Activities Report
March-April	Fellowships Announced
April	Fellows Accept/Decline Fellowship Offer
April	Continuing Fellows submit Annual Activities Report
April	New and Continuing Fellows Declare Tenure Plans
May	Program Expense Report available for submission
June	Grants Roster/Budget Request available for submission

GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW RESPONSIBILITIES

Fellowship Award Offer Acceptance

Acceptance of an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship constitutes a commitment to the pursuit of a graduate degree in the STEM field. It is therefore expected that a Fellow be enrolled full-time in a graduate program in the Fall term following announcement of the award. Only in cases of

Medical or Military Deferral (see below) will a new Fellow be allowed to postpone enrollment in a graduate program and defer their Graduate Research Fellowship for later use.

Fellowship Year

Each Fellowship year is comprised of a nine-month academic year and up to three months of an associated summer. The tenure status effective date of the fellowship is the date on which a Fellow actually begins the fellowship, and tenure is computed from that date. The fellowship start date does not necessarily coincide with the formal summer or fall academic session of the institution, and fellowship tenure status is not defined by the date on which a stipend check is issued. The exact starting date of graduate study is mutually determined by the Fellow and the CO at the affiliated institution.

New Fellows may begin their fellowship either during the Summer (default of June 1) or the Fall (default of September 1) immediately following the award announcement. No fellowship award may be used retroactively for academic work prior to the summer immediately following the announcement of the award.

All Fellows must declare their tenure intentions each spring for the subsequent fellowship year. This is accomplished on FastLane and may require Coordinating Official approval.

No Fellow will be permitted to receive more than the equivalent of 12 months GRF stipend support during a single fellowship year, and no Fellow will be eligible to receive more than 36 months of cumulative NSF Graduate Research Fellowship support. Only Fellows on tenure status are eligible to receive stipend payments.

AFFILIATED INSTITUTION

All Fellows, from the point of acceptance through completion or termination of the Fellowship, must be associated with an approved affiliated institution. This is the accredited, degree-granting institution that serves as administrative home for the Fellow. At the point of application to the GRF program, applicants indicate an intended institution for enrollment and, until a change is requested by the Fellow and approved by the CO at that institution, the NSF will assume continued association with that institution. It is the Fellow's responsibility to arrange for admission to the affiliated institution or, if need be, to inform the NSF through FastLane of a change in affiliated institution.

Association with an affiliated institution normally means full-time enrollment in an NSF-approved graduate degree program. In cases of Deferral (see below), active enrollment is not required but the affiliated institution must agree to keep the Fellow on their roster of Graduate Research Fellows. For Fellows on tenure or reserve status (see below) who are pursuing activities where enrollment is not required or permitted, the affiliated institution must agree to keep the Fellow on their roster and to approve the specific arrangement of non-enrollment status. Additionally, the NSF must approve any non-enrollment status for Fellows on tenure or reserve status. The affiliation of a Fellow for summer months will ordinarily remain at the academic-year Affiliated Institution with enrollment status as required by that institution.

In all cases, Fellows should remain in contact with their CO and the NSF GRFP office in the event a change or correction in affiliation is needed. Because stipend funding is made through a grant to the affiliated institution on record, Fellows with incorrect affiliations risk delay or forfeiture of stipend payments. It is particularly important for new Fellows to confirm that their GRF Program record properly reflects their affiliated institution.

Change of Institution

Before starting Tenure. If a new Fellow wishes to study at an institution other than the intended institution listed on their original Fellowship application, this change should be indicated via the FastLane GRFP module when the Fellowship award is accepted. This should be completed by May 1 following the award announcement.

Between Fellowship years. A request to change the affiliated institution between Fellowship years is typically made when tenure plans for the upcoming Fellowship year are declared using the GRFP FastLane module. If a Fellow changes institutions after submitting the annual tenure declaration and before starting the new Fellowship year, a tenure change request must be submitted to NSF. Coordinating Officials at both the old and new institutions must approve the request on FastLane.

During a Fellowship year. If a Fellow wishes to transfer from one institution to another during a Fellowship year, they must submit a tenure change request to NSF. Coordinating Officials at both the old and the new affiliated institutions must approve the request and adjust Fellow financial records accordingly.

FELLOWSHIP STATUS OPTIONS

The Graduate Research Fellowship provides three years of stipend and a cost of education allowance to support Fellows for a maximum five-year Fellowship Period. During this period, Fellows must be in one of the following five fellowship statuses: Tenure, Reserve, Forfeit, Medical Deferral, or Military Deferral. A Fellow may alternate between these statuses from one year to the next but may change the fellowship year start (Summer or Fall) only when switching between statuses (e.g., Reserve to Tenure or vice versa).

Tenure Status

Fellowship **Tenure** status is the period of time during which Fellows actively utilize the Fellowship award to pursue an advanced degree in the science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields supported by the National Science Foundation. Tenure includes periods of full-time research and independent study, whether or not the academic institution is in session, as well as any normal, short vacation periods scheduled at the institution.

Fellowship tenure status is granted in 12 month increments corresponding to a fellowship year (starting in either Summer or Fall) and may not be broken into smaller units spread across more than one year except in cases of Medical or Military Deferral (see below). Except in these Deferral cases, a Fellow must forfeit the stipend for the months not on tenure status. A month for GRFP purposes is 14 or more days in a calendar month.

Fellows on active tenure normally are enrolled full-time in a graduate degree program at their affiliated institution. Full-time status is established by each institution and may include reduced course load requirements following admission to candidacy or equivalent status. In cases where a Fellow is on an approved study leave or other form of non-enrollment status during the academic year, the Fellow may retain stipend payments as long as the CO of the academic institution approves the leave as part of the student's graduate education program and normal degree progress. These leave periods may include field courses, non-paid internships, extended workshops, and other activities as deemed appropriate by the CO and NSF. For final NSF approval, additional input from the Fellow's thesis advisor, academic dean, and/or other appropriate official at the affiliated institution may be necessary to augment the CO endorsement of the arrangement. In all cases, however, the expectation is that the Fellow is engaged full-time working toward completion of their graduate degree.

Fellows at institutions outside the United States must submit an electronic *Fellowship Starting Certificate* (NSF Form 349,6/2009) to notify the Foundation of their beginning dates (see below). Proper fulfillment of the full-time graduate education obligation assumed by Fellows will be determined at each institution in accordance with NSF requirements.

Reserve Status

Fellows may go on **Reserve** status to postpone the NSF fellowship for up to two years during the five-year fellowship period to avail themselves of alternate means of support. This practice is in keeping with the NSF's objective of providing Fellows near the beginning of their graduate studies reasonable assurance of three years of Fellowship support, with some discretion as to the best use of tenure periods. While on Reserve, the fellowship stipend and cost of education support will be set aside for future use during the maximum five-year period. Reserve status is granted in year-long increments. Portions of a year of tenure cannot be reserved for later use.

Fellows should recognize that the intent of Reserve status is to offer flexibility in the use of other funding opportunities that allow for judicious use of financial resources needed to continue their graduate education. As such, a Fellow on reserve status must remain a full-time student at the affiliated institution (as defined by that institution) during the period of Reserve.

As with tenure status, reserve is issued in 12 month increments contained within one fellowship year (Summer or Fall start).

Forfeit Status

Fellows choosing to pursue other approved funding opportunities beyond the two-year reserve limit will **Forfeit** the remaining months. As such, any months of funding not utilized during a

year of tenure are forfeited. As is the case for Reserve status, a Fellow on Forfeit status must remain a full-time student at the affiliated institution (as defined by that institution) during the period of Forfeit.

Medical Deferral Status

Should serious illness or other medical condition occur for a Fellow or immediate family member (spouse, child, dependent, sibling, or parent) that prevents full-time Fellowship activity for an extended period, a Fellow may be granted a Medical Deferral for all or part of a tenure year, in monthly units, up to a maximum accumulation of two years. The Fellow may use at a later date the unused months of stipend and unused portion of the cost-of-education allowance for the period of the Medical Deferral.

To request a Medical Deferral, the Fellow should contact his/her Coordinating Official and must secure an approved medical leave from his/her academic institution based on the institution's graduate student medical leave policies. Using the GRF FastLane system, the Fellow must formally submit a request for a Medical Deferral. The request should provide an estimate of the length of time needed for the deferral, which will establish the time period of the recorded Deferral in months. The nature of the medical condition need not be disclosed to the NSF in any documentation provided to the agency. The Deferral request is endorsed by the Fellow's CO and the request is sent to the NSF for final review and approval. NSF assumes that the CO or appropriate university official retains relevant documentation from a qualified healthcare provider indicating that the condition warrants a Medical Leave. A Medical Deferral may be granted for psychological as well as physical health reasons. In cases of extended family medical conditions necessitating that a Fellow take leave from studies for a short period of time, a Medical Deferral may be requested if such a leave is consistent with the Fellow's academic institution's policies for family leave. Medical Deferral must be renewed if the Deferral extends into a new fellowship year. Failure to renew Deferral may result in Termination of the fellowship.

Military Deferral status

The Military Deferral option is intended for Fellows who must interrupt their graduate studies because they are called to active duty. It is not intended for persons who *elect* to remain on active duty that was in effect at the point of award offer. Fellows must request Military Deferral via the GRF FastLane system and submit a copy of their duty orders to the NSF GRFP office. Military Deferral must be renewed each year and a new copy of duty orders submitted. Failure to renew Deferral may result in Termination of the fellowship award.

Within a given fellowship year, duly authorized military service or training is permitted with the approval of the CO and NSF without penalty to the Fellow, if the service does not compromise a student's enrollment status and degree progress. Pay received by a Fellow for occasional attendance at military reserve or National Guard functions may be received concurrently with support from NSF.

TENURE BEYOND DEGREE COMPLETION

If a Fellow attains the graduate degree before completion of the fellowship tenure year, the Fellow may either resign at the time of completion of the requirements for the doctoral degree or continue to engage in appropriate fellowship activities at the affiliated institution for a brief period not to exceed three months following graduation. This may include activities such as research, data analysis, preparing a manuscript for publication, or translation of research activities into other forms of outreach or broader impact. The Fellow should seek the advice of the CO or Scientific Adviser (for Fellows Abroad) for specific institutional policies.

FELLOWSHIP TERMINATION

The NSF fellowship expires upon completion of 36 months of stipend payments or five years after fellowship award, whichever comes first. In cases where a Fellow fails to comply with fellowship terms and conditions, fails to make satisfactory academic progress, fails to submit an activities report and declare status by the posted deadline, or who undertakes unapproved outside employment, NSF may elect to terminate a fellowship before the full 36 months have been completed.

Should a Fellow find it necessary to terminate their Fellowship before completion of the three years of support, the Fellow should notify their CO and the NSF GRFP office and submit a request to terminate the Fellowship via FastLane. NSF will not reinstate a terminated Fellowship.

If a Fellow terminates affiliation at an institution prior to the completion of a tenure period, the Fellow is entitled to stipend payments only for those months on tenure at the institution. The last month of tenure is defined for stipend payment purposes as that which contained 14 or more days of tenure.

No Fellowship award will be extended past the final academic year of graduate study. Under no circumstance is the continued support to be considered a Postdoctoral Fellowship or employment by the National Science Foundation.

GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP BENEFITS

Stipend

The annual GRFP stipend amount is specified each year in the *Solicitation*. At US fellowship institutions, arrangements for payment of fellowship stipends are handled by the affiliated institution through the CO. Fellows should confer with the CO to determine the exact disbursement procedures and schedules that will be in effect. NSF records stipend disbursements in monthly units regardless of the exact stipend payment schedule.,

No dependency allowance is provided and there is no travel allowance for the purpose of assisting Fellows in reaching the affiliated institution in the US or for any other domestic travel.

NSF reserves the right to withhold a Fellow's stipend if the Fellow does not conform to the standards of conduct of the academic institution and NSF.

Cost of Education Allowance

The NSF Fellowship award provides a fixed cost-of-education allowance to the academic institution for Fellows pursuing a graduate degree in the US. The Foundation makes available this fixed cost-of-education allowance without regard to the actual amount of tuition and fees involved. This policy is based on NSF's commitment to contribute approximately the same percentage of the actual costs of the graduate education of all Fellows, regardless of how various graduate institutions normally generate income from endowments, public funds, tuition or other sources. The actual use of the cost-of-education allowance is at the discretion of the affiliated institution.

While on fellowship tenure status, Fellows will be exempt from paying required tuition and fees normally charged to students of similar academic standing. However, Fellows may be required by the academic institution to pay any fees or deposits that are refundable in whole or in part, that are optional (including but not limited to non-required coursework, enrollment in summer sessions, or tuition at other institutions not considered part of the Fellow's primary program of study), and/or that were incurred prior to the actual start of fellowship tenure (e.g., an "Application for Admission" fee). The Fellow should confirm with the academic institution that the program of study being pursued is contained within this agreement. All living expenses are the responsibility of the Fellow.

The Cost of Education allowance is to the academic institution and not to the student. In cases where required tuition and fees are less than the COE, institutions may use their discretion to allocate any surplus funds to cover other costs associated with the education of the Fellow. Allowable expenses include workshop attendance, conference travel, laboratory supplies, books, laptop computers, or other equipment as needed for the education of the Fellow.

The academic institution is entitled to the annual (full) Cost of Education allowance for an individual Fellow if that Fellow is enrolled full-time and on tenure status for six months or more during a fellowship year. For Fellows on tenure for one to five months, the institution is entitled receive one-half of the Cost of Education allowance.

Veteran's Benefits

Under Section 178(a) of Title 38, U.S. Code, educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs may be received concurrently with NSF support. The receipt of educational benefits from the Veterans Administration is allowed by NSF as payment supplementary to support from the Foundation.

ROTC Training Allowance

Fellows enrolled for duly authorized ROTC training may accept the associated allowance. The receipt of the allowance is allowed by NSF as payment supplementary to support from the Foundation.

International Research Travel Award

Fellows who plan to study or conduct research at a foreign site may request a one-time \$1,000 International Research Travel Award to offset travel costs to and from the foreign site. Such sites may include universities, government laboratories, field stations, and non-academic research centers. The activities proposed must contribute to the Fellow's advanced degree objectives and must include active participation in research or research-related activities. These activities may include field or lab work, participation in a workshop, or attendance at a conference if the Fellow is actively participating through presentation of a poster, delivery of a talk, or chairing a session. The period abroad may include any combination of tenure and reserve years otherwise permitted under the program guidelines. The allowance may be used at any appropriate time once fellowship tenure has begun, but within the five year period of tenure (3 yrs) plus reserve (2 yrs). Fellows abroad may request the International Travel Award to cover expenses in traveling to their overseas institution. All countries, excluding Mexico and Canada, are acceptable destinations for the International Travel Award.

Fellows must request this award via FastLane, and the CO must approve the request before it is forwarded to the GRF program office. Each request must describe the proposed research activities, as well as the proposed schedule. Once approved by the GRF program office, the travel allowance funds may be expended from the current GRFP award at the Fellow's academic institution or requested from NSF by the institution via GRFP FastLane. Fellows should consult their CO for specific guidance regarding university travel policies and procedures. Use of US flag air carriers by international travel allowance recipients is required by the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 known as the "Fly America Act."

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED)

Fellows who have disabilities may apply for funding through the Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) program for special assistance or equipment. Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II.D.3 contains guidelines applicable to the FASSED program.

The CO will be responsible for submitting the proposal to the NSF as a supplemental request to the existing institutional GRFP award. The CO is responsible for requesting continuation of the award based on the Fellow's progress, if multi-year funding is requested. Once awarded, Fellows will be required to submit a separate progress report specifically for the FASSED grant.

Fellows should discuss the need with their CO and prepare a proposal including any ancillary documents such as an advisor's letter of support. The proposal should include an overview of current research and a detailed budget (annual and cumulative), including amount contributed by

the university and a budget justification. The affiliated institution submits the proposal as a supplemental request to the existing GRFP financial award.

FASED proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the GRFP office.

Cyberinfrastructure Resource Allocations

Fellows, as well as recipients of Honorable Mention, may request an allocation of Cyberinfrastructure Resources on the TeraGrid. The Centers will consider requests for supercomputer use in support of the research project that is or will be part of the graduate student's full-time advanced degree work. Requests must be submitted within five years from announcement of Honorable Mention or from the date of the start of the fellowship period for Fellows. More information on the application process is available online at: <https://pops-submit.teragrid.org/>.

Future Employment

The offer and acceptance of this fellowship does not obligate the Fellow, the Foundation or the US Government in any way with regard to future employment or service of any kind.

FELLOWS ABROAD¹

Foreign Affiliation

Fellows electing to affiliate with a foreign institution must submit to NSF, as soon as possible, evidence of acceptance from that institution for study in a graduate degree program in one of the fields supported by NSF (unless such evidence was submitted with the Fellowship application materials). Post-graduate degree programs of study leading to an Honors degree at the baccalaureate level are not acceptable. Fellows are responsible for all arrangements for affiliation with the foreign institution and provision for living quarters. Fellows also are responsible for making all arrangements for securing any necessary passport or visas.

It is the responsibility of the Fellow to assure that any academic and research activities carried on outside the US comply with the laws or regulations of the US and of the foreign country in which the research is to be conducted. These include appropriate human subjects, animal welfare, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other laws as appropriate. All research activities should be coordinated with the appropriate US and foreign government authorities, and necessary licenses, permits, or approvals should be obtained prior to undertaking the proposed activities.

Science Advisor

The Science Advisor is the principal professor under whose guidance Fellows Abroad are pursuing Fellowship activities. These are the individuals whom the NSF will contact to verify

¹ The Fellow's responsibilities regarding conducting research activities abroad are applicable to all Fellows.

satisfactory academic progress and tenure change requests and to respond to questions and issues that may arise concerning the Fellow.

Stipend Payments

Fellows affiliated with foreign institutions must submit a *Fellowship Starting Certificate* (NSF Form 349) via FastLane as soon as possible after beginning tenure. In addition, the *National Science Foundation Faststart Direct Deposit Form* (NSF Form 1379), must be completed and submitted on the GRFP FastLane module. Regular monthly stipend payments will not be authorized until these forms are properly submitted to NSF. Since it may require four to six weeks to process these forms (particularly the first year as a Fellow Abroad), a Fellow should make provisions for support during this period.

Special Fellowship Processing

In addition to fellowship award acceptance and tenure declaration, Fellows Abroad must submit a *Fellowship Starting Certificate* on FastLane before beginning each fellowship year and a *Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report* (NSF Form 453) at the end of each fellowship year. These options are available up to 90 days prior to the fellowship start date for each fellow (June 1 for Summer starts, September 1 for Fall starts). Additionally, Fellows Abroad must submit the *National Science Foundation Faststart Direct Deposit Form* each year to ensure timely deposits of stipend payments.

Payment of Tuition and Fees

Upon submission to NSF of either an invoice or bill from the university bursar regarding tuition and fees that are due or a certified paid receipt for eligible charges from the affiliated foreign institution, NSF will pay to the Fellow the annual cost-of-education allowance in the same manner as the stipend is paid. Fellows abroad are responsible for all expenses incurred in excess of the specified annual (fellowship year) cost-of-education allowance during any tenure year. These costs will not be paid by NSF.

International Research Travel Award

Once Fellowship tenure begins, a Fellow affiliated with a foreign institution may request the one-time \$1000 International Research Travel Award to offset travel costs to the institution.

SUPPLEMENTATION TO STIPEND

Affiliated Institution Supplements

The affiliated institution may augment NSF Fellows' stipends from institutional funds in such amounts as are in accordance with the supplement policies of the affiliated institution. COs and Fellows abroad should contact the NSF GRF Program Office with any questions. In the context of these guidelines, funds that the institution has obtained from external sources may be considered institutional funds. These include research grants from NSF to support research

assistants.

Other Fellowships or Scholarships

Fellows generally may not receive funds concurrently from any other fellowship, scholarship, or similar award that is intended as the primary or sole source of support as determined by the Fellow's academic institution. Additional awards that are intended as supplemental or partial funding may be acceptable, if the policy of the affiliated institution permits concurrent support. This may include off-campus activities that provide compensation to cover travel, relocation, and local cost of living expenses. The NSF exempts gifts or loans of any kind.

Research Support Funding

Fellows are permitted to solicit and accept support from any appropriate sources for research expenses connected with fellowship activities such as laboratory supplies, travel, conference fees, subscriptions or field station usage fees. This may include living expense support for workshops, internships, or other off-campus locales for periods of less than a year.

Concurrent Federal Government Awards

Additional, direct US Government awards to a Graduate Research Fellow that provide a stipend or otherwise duplicate financial support provisions of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship may not be held concurrently by a Fellow while on active tenure. Fellows may use one or both years of reserve status or forfeit status while accepting another Federal Government fellowship. These awards include other fellowships such as the Department of Defense NDSEG or SMART fellowships, or traineeships such as the NSF IGERT or GK-12 traineeships. Research assistantships, even if funded by NSF, are considered employment by the Affiliated Institution and are allowable within the limits outlined above.

Additional Allowances

The Fellowship award does not provide direct, additional allowances for special student needs such as research expenses, travel to scientific conferences, computers, books and publications, fieldwork expenses, special study, etc. However, NSF awards grants in support of doctoral dissertation research in some disciplines (e.g., the Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant in the Division of Environmental Biology). Support for projects involving research abroad may be sought through the Office of International Science and Engineering. A thesis advisor or other faculty member submits a proposal on behalf of the Fellow. Further information may be obtained from the relevant NSF program offices.

Outside Employment

During the fellowship period, whether on tenure or reserve status, Fellows are expected to be enrolled as full time students in an advanced degree program. Employment at an on- or off-campus site that does not jeopardize a Fellow's graduate degree progress and is consistent with the affiliated institution's policy is usually permitted. In no case should outside employment

impede satisfactory progress toward degree completion or otherwise interfere with the research and education plan for which the Fellow was funded. NSF may disapprove any arrangement in which expected Fellowship activities are compromised. All arrangements must be consistent with the affiliated institution's policies.

Teaching

Each Fellow is expected to devote full time to advanced scientific study or work during tenure. However, because it is generally accepted that teaching or similar activity constitutes a valuable part of the education and training of many graduate students, a Fellow may undertake a reasonable amount of such teaching, without NSF approval, at the affiliated institution. It is expected that furtherance of the Fellow's educational objectives and the gain of substantive teaching experience, not service to the institution as such, will govern such assignments. Compensation for such activities is permitted based on the affiliated institution's policies and the general employment policies outlined in this document.

Income Tax

Specific questions regarding taxation of fellowship funding should be referred to the US Internal Revenue Service. The affiliated institution's policies regarding withholding of taxes from stipend payments vary, and Fellows must bear the responsibility of paying any tax, domestic or foreign, when due.

Fellows are not in any sense salaried employees of the NSF or of their affiliated institution. Therefore, no funds will be deducted from the stipend; no Social Security taxes will be paid by the Foundation; no W-2 or 1099 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 that may become due.

Fellows may request a statement of earnings from their affiliated institution.

Fellows may find it helpful to consult Internal Revenue Service Publications No. 520, *Scholarships and Fellowships*, No. 920, and, if abroad, No. 54, *Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad*, and also. These are available at <http://www.irs.gov>

FELLOW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Continuing Fellows are required to submit two reports via FastLane each Spring: an Annual Activities Report and (unless in the final year of tenure) an upcoming fellowship year tenure declaration. New Fellows must make a formal acceptance of the award offer followed by a tenure declaration.

Annual Activities Report

All active Fellows are required to submit an Annual Activities Report in the Spring (by May 1). This report should normally be brief and informative. Detailed descriptions of

research protocols are not necessary. Major highlights such as publications, awards, patents, or discoveries are particularly useful. NSF is always interested in receiving captioned photographs and learning of any noteworthy accomplishments that merit public attention. These may be submitted to NSF via email to: grfp@nsf.gov.

Fellowship Tenure Declaration

Each Spring, all Fellows must declare their fellowship tenure intentions for the following year. Failure to declare the intent at this time may result in delays in stipend payments or termination of the fellowship altogether. Fellows are encouraged to confer with the COs early to coordinate records and fellowship management details.

Change in Field of Study or Research Plan

Minor changes in a Fellow's graduate program or research may be made subject to the approval of the CO at the academic institution. A major change in a program -- one that alters the program to the extent that it is significantly different from that originally submitted with the Fellowship application (e.g., a change in major field of study) -- requires the prior approval of the CO and NSF. The Fellow must submit a tenure change request via the GRFP Fastlane module including a revised proposed plan of study or research. Additional information may be requested by NSF as appropriate.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic institutions in the United States hosting Graduate Research Fellows receive funding from NSF to support Fellows on tenure, advise Fellows on their fellowship management, and provide reports to NSF on Fellow and financial activity. The primary academic institution representatives are the GRFP Coordinating Official (CO) and the financial award Principal Investigator (PI).

Coordinating Officials

Coordinating Officials (COs) are designated by the academic institution to serve as the principal point of contact for Graduate Research Fellows and the NSF GRFP office. Typically, the CO is the graduate dean or other academic official who oversees graduate education. The CO normally is teamed with representatives from the sponsored projects office and/or grants accounting offices, who act as alternate COs and assist with financial reporting requirements. Official appointment of a CO is accomplished by the academic institution modifying the prospective CO's FastLane user profile to include GRFP Coordinating Official or Alternate GRFP Coordinating Official privileges. Once the user profile is updated, the CO or Alternate CO may access the GRFP portion of FastLane at: www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp.

Coordinating Officials perform the following:

- Advise Fellows on NSF GRFP policies and procedures and interpret these policies in the context of their institutional procedures (e.g., stipend payment schedules, enrollment requirements, etc.).
- Review Fellow requests on FastLane and provide academic institution approval or denial of such requests as appropriate.
- Review information on new and continuing Fellows for their institution during the new award announcement and tenure declaration periods each Spring.
- Submit to NSF via FastLane an accounting of funds expended for the ending fellowship year (the GRFP Expense Report) in late Spring or Summer.
- Confirm accuracy of the Fellows listed and their status for the upcoming fellowship year and submit via FastLane a request for funds to support these Fellows (the Grants Roster/Budget Request) each Summer.

Principal Investigator

Each academic institution should designate a Principal Investigator (PI) for the NSF award. The PI also is encouraged to serve as a co-Coordinating Official.

FELLOWSHIP GRANTS

Procedures

Funds for all Fellows attending an affiliated US institution are made available through issuance of a continuing grant to the institution. In addition, the following documents also are incorporated into each grant by reference:

- [*Graduate Research Fellowship Program Solicitation*](#);
- [*Research Terms and Conditions*](#), and, [*NSF Agency Specific Requirements*](#);
- [*Guide for Fellows and GRFP Coordinating Officials*](#); and, if applicable,
- [*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act \(ARRA\) Terms and Conditions*](#).

Each grant will be identified by the fiscal year from which funds are obligated and the fellowship year for which the funds are initially intended. Funds thereafter will be provided to the institution by grants and amendments if required. In late Spring, the Foundation will furnish via GRFP FastLane the Grant Roster of Fellows who have chosen to affiliate with the grantee institution. The new, annual obligation per Fellow will be based on the stipend and allowance levels specified in the program *Solicitation* and summarized on the GRFP FastLane Grants Roster available to all GRFP Coordinating Officials at the grantee institution.

Annual Cycle

The principal steps in NSF's annual administrative cycle of graduate fellowships are as

follows:

In early Spring, each institution will review the Expense Report for the ending fellowship year and edit as necessary and submit to NSF with a target date of June 1. As some fellows may not complete the fellowship year until August 31, an estimate of expenses may be submitted with an updated expense report submitted at the end of the fellowship year (in September) if corrections are needed. Any balances will be applied in the following year to the support of any affiliated Fellows.

Continuing Fellows must submit Annual Activities Reports by May 1 each year. COs may track the status of Fellows at their institution and are encouraged to remind Fellows of this obligation.

Successful applicants for new fellowships are notified of their awards after mid-March and are asked to indicate formal acceptance or declination by May 1.

All new and returning Fellows are asked to declare their fellowship tenure intentions for the upcoming fellowship year by May 1. Continuing Fellows may not declare tenure intentions until the current year's Annual Activities Report is submitted. New Fellows may not declare tenure intentions until the award offer is formally accepted.

After all fellowship acceptances and tenure declarations are received, each affiliated institution selected by new or continuing Fellows will prepare and submit a Grants Roster/Budget Request on FastLane. This provides an estimate of the institution's fellowship support need for the following year. The Grants Roster/Budget Request for the upcoming fellowship year may not be submitted until the ending year's Expense Report is submitted. If an estimated Expense Report is submitted, COs must submit an updated Expense Report at the end of the fellowship year (September 1) if actual expenses are different.

Upon approval by NSF, the institution will be awarded a grant, or an amendment to a continuing grant, that will provide sufficient funds to support those Fellows for the upcoming fellowship year, taking into consideration any available funds remaining in prior-year grants. A running balance of all GRFP award accounts to an institution is available on the GRFP FastLane Financial Summary.

In the event of changes in the number of Fellows on tenure during a fellowship year due to transfers from other institutions, Fellows returning from Deferral status, or corrections to submitted Grants Rosters, amendments will be issued as appropriate to cover additional expenses. Institutions may submit an amended Grants Roster/Budget Request via FastLane to request additional funds.

Additional Features

In the case of institutions with very few (usually one) Fellows, arrangements will be made at the direction of NSF, when necessary, to reassign funds associated with any Fellow who changes to another institution. In situations where a fellow's resignation will leave an

institution without any Fellows, the institution must return the excess funds to NSF when the grant is closed out.

Any fellow attending (or planning to attend) a foreign institution will receive an individual grant each year funding the costs, not to exceed the maximum allowable, of their fellowship for that year. In the case of a subsequent transfer to a U.S. institution, support will be provided through the appropriate institutional Fellowship Support Grant.

FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT AGREEMENT

The following is the text for the Fellowship Support Agreement between the National Science Foundation (the "Foundation") and each fellowship institution (the "Institution"). It will be incorporated by reference into the Fellowship Support Grant that funds NSF Graduate Research Fellows at that institution. (See above for additional information on the elements that comprise the Fellowship Grant.)

Under section 10 of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1869), the Foundation awards fellowships in the sciences and engineering at appropriate, accredited nonprofit United States institutions or appropriate foreign institutions selected by the recipients of such aid. One or more NSF Fellows must have enrolled in the Institution and others may do so in the future. The Foundation and the Institution agree as follows:

- (1a) NSF will award Fellowship Grants to the Institution providing funds for NSF Fellows on GRFP tenure status. The Foundation also will furnish updated lists of Fellows who have chosen to enroll in the Institution.
 - (1b) The Institution will accept such grants, including any amendments to them (except that an amendment need not be accepted which adds NSF Fellows unless a corresponding increase in the amount of funds is provided or which reduces the amount of funds unless a corresponding reduction in the number of NSF Fellows is made), and administer them in accordance with the terms of this Agreement or any mutually agreed to amendments to it.
 - (1c) Grant funds may be expended for any NSF Fellows who are in compliance with applicable program guidelines. Funds from both current and prior year awards may be used to support any NSF Fellow duly enrolled at the Institution for an advanced degree in a field supported by NSF. The Foundation will periodically identify NSF Fellows known to be enrolled or planning to enroll at the Institution and will, on request, verify their fellowship status.
- (2) The fellowship year for any NSF Fellow will begin in either the Summer or Fall term.
 - (3) Except to the extent that an NSF Fellow is receiving similar payments from another source, the Institution will use grant funds for the payment of stipends in accordance with the provisions of the latest *NSF Guide for Graduate Research Fellows and GRFP Coordinating Officials* (NSF insert new number , or as subsequently revised, the "Guide") to those NSF Fellows actually enrolled at the Institution in a full- time program leading to an advanced

degree in an eligible field and in compliance with the eligibility requirements of the Guide. Acting for the Foundation, fellowship institutions in the United States will pay stipends directly to NSF Fellows.

(4) The Institution may charge to any available Graduate Research Fellowship Grant, a cost-of-education allowance (COE) for each NSF Fellow on tenure status for each fellowship year in which the NSF Fellow is actually enrolled in a full-time program. During tenure, NSF Fellows will be exempt from paying tuition and fees normally charged to students of similar academic standing, unless such charges are optional or are refundable. The amount of the allowance is specified in the annual *Solicitation* or in official correspondence from the NSF.

(5) Based on information submitted via the Institution's GRFP FastLane Expense Reports, the Foundation will provide estimates of the funds that will remain available in the active grants on the GRFP FastLane Financial Summary.

(6) The amount of each Fellowship Grant (and any amendment) will be the Foundation's estimate of the maximum amount required to support the NSF Fellows during the funding period. It will be based on the NSF Fellows' stipend for the fellowship year plus the associated cost-of-education allowances plus any appropriate allowances outlined in the *NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program Solicitation*, taking into account the estimates made under section (5) above.

(7) The Institution will accept funds from other educational institutions when NSF Fellows covered by such funds enroll at the Institution. Similarly, where one or more NSF Fellows expected to enroll at the Institution actually enroll at other institutions, the Institution will transfer appropriate sums to those other institutions when requested by the Foundation.

(8) Each Spring, the Institution will submit a GRFP FastLane Expense Report summarizing by Fellow's name and tenure period the expenses incurred by the Institution in support of the Fellow for that fellowship year.

(9) In addition, periodic reports of expenditures and acquisition of funds will be required in accordance with procedures prescribed in the *NSF Award and Administration Guide*, Chapter III.E.2.

(10) Institutions are reminded that by accepting the Fellowship Grant, they are obligated to follow all terms and conditions of the award. The Fellowship Grants section above identifies all of the components of a fellowship grant.

Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving 90 days written notice to the other, but active grants will remain in effect unless the Foundation elects to terminate them.