

NSF Graduate Fellowship Eligibility Criteria 2016

Categories of applicants that are ineligible:

- Those who do not hold United States citizenship, national, or permanent resident status by the application deadline.
- Those who were previously awarded a Fellowship from the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program and accepted it.
- Those who did not accept the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and failed to notify NSF by the published deadline for accepting the Fellowship.
- Those who have completed the requirements for any graduate or professional degree by August 1, 2015, except 1) applicants who have completed a joint baccalaureate-master's (BS/MS) program and have not completed any further graduate study outside the joint program unless the graduate coursework was required to establish or maintain credentials in a profession such as teaching; or 2) applicants that have had an interruption in graduate study of at least two consecutive years prior to November 1, 2015 and have completed no additional graduate study as of August 1, 2015.
- Current NSF employees.

Eligibility criteria:

1. Citizenship

Applicants must be United States citizens, nationals, or permanent residents of the United States by the application deadline.

The term "national" designates a native resident of a commonwealth or territory of the United States, such as American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands. It does not refer to a citizen of another country who has applied for United States citizenship.

2. Degree Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply who are: 1) not enrolled in graduate school and will have adequate preparation to attend graduate school in fall 2016; or 2) have not completed more than 12 months of a graduate program in a supported field of study (see Appendix).

a) Not Currently Enrolled in Graduate School:

- No prior graduate school enrollment
 - Undergraduate students typically apply prior to starting a graduate program which is usually in the fall of their senior year or the fall of the academic year that they anticipate receiving a bachelor's degree.
 - At the time of application, undergraduate student applicants are expected to be on track to receive a bachelor's degree in a science or engineering field prior to fall 2016 to demonstrate adequate preparation to begin graduate study and research by fall 2016.
- Bachelor's degree holders without any graduate study can apply any time after earning their degree.

b) With prior graduate school enrollment

- As a general rule, applicants must not have completed more than 12 months of full-time graduate study or its equivalent as defined by the universities attended as of August 1, 2015.
- All graduate, post-baccalaureate and professional study is counted towards the allowed 12 months of graduate study, including all full-time and part-time master's and doctoral degree programs, and non-degree graduate-level and professional coursework. The one exception is for graduate coursework required to establish or maintain credentials in a profession such as teaching; such coursework is not included in the 12-month limit.
- Applicants who have completed more than twelve months of graduate study or have earned a previous graduate or professional degree are eligible only if they have had an interruption in graduate study of at least two consecutive years prior to November 1, 2015. To be eligible, applicants must have completed no additional graduate study by August 1, 2015. Applicants must address the reasons for the interruption in graduate study in the Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement.
- Applicants in joint BS/MS programs are eligible to apply prior to completion of any further graduate study. Joint baccalaureate-master's programs are those where an institution offers students admission to both an undergraduate and graduate degree program concurrently. Pursuing separate undergraduate and master's degrees at the same institution does not constitute a joint baccalaureate-master's program. Completion of any graduate study outside of the joint program disqualifies an applicant unless the graduate coursework is required to establish or maintain credentials in a profession such as teaching; such coursework is not included in the 12-month limit.
- In four-year joint programs, applicants may apply in the fourth year or after completion of the program.
- In five-year joint programs, applicants may apply in the fourth or fifth year of the program or after completion of the program.

c) Currently Enrolled in Graduate School:

- Part time:
 - Graduate students who are enrolled in part-time graduate study (or a combination of part-time and full-time graduate study) can apply before completing 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours or their equivalent.
- Full time:
 - Applicants must not have completed more than 12 months of full-time graduate, post-baccalaureate graduate, and professional study by August 1, 2015. Pre-graduate participation in summer activities (e.g., bridge programs, field studies, lab rotations) offered by a graduate program prior to the start of the fall graduate program are not included in this total.
 - There is no credit hour limit for students who have completed only full-time graduate study; eligibility for full-time students is based on the length of time enrolled in the graduate program.
 - All graduate, post-baccalaureate and professional study is counted towards the allowed 12 months of graduate study, including all full-time and part-time master's and doctoral degree programs, and non-degree graduate-level and professional coursework. The one exception is for graduate coursework required to establish or maintain credentials in a profession such as teaching; such coursework is not included in the 12-month limit.

Definition of Extenuating Circumstance

Applicants who have completed more than twelve months of graduate study or have earned a previous graduate or professional degree are eligible only if they have had an interruption in graduate study of at least two consecutive years prior to November 1, 2015. To be eligible, applicants must have completed no additional graduate study by August 1, 2015. Applicants must address the reasons for the interruption in graduate study in the Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement. Other situations, such as changing fields or programs of study, are not considered extenuating circumstances for the 2016 GRFP.

3. Field of Study

Applicants must self-certify that they plan to or are pursuing a graduate degree in a supported field of study and that they meet all eligibility criteria for GRFP. Fellowships are awarded for graduate study leading to research-based master's and doctoral degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) or in STEM education. An individual's proposed research and graduate study must both be in STEM or in STEM education. Fellows must enroll in a graduate degree program consistent with the relevant field of study proposed in their application and to undertake a course of study leading to a research-based MS or PhD. The guidelines below should be used to assess eligibility according to the field of study. Applicants are encouraged to read carefully the exceptions as applications ruled ineligible will be returned without review.

The following programs, areas of graduate study, and research are ineligible for Fellowship support:

- Individuals are not eligible to apply if they will be enrolled in a practice-oriented professional degree program such as medical, dental, law, and public health at the start of the fellowship. Examples of typically ineligible degree programs include MBA, MPH, MSW, JD, MD, and DDS. Joint or combined professional degree-science programs (e.g., MD/PhD or JD/PhD) and dual professional degree-science programs are also not eligible. Applicants who will be enrolled in a graduate degree program while on a leave of absence from a professional degree program or professional degree-graduate degree joint program are not eligible for a Graduate Research Fellowship.
 - Individuals are not eligible to apply if they will be enrolled in an area of graduate study focused on clinical practice, for example, counseling, social work, as well as patient-oriented research, epidemiological and behavioral studies, outcomes research and health services research. For example, clinical study that is ineligible includes investigations to provide evidence leading to a scientific basis for consideration of a change in health policy or standard of care, and includes pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic, and behavioral interventions for disease prevention, prophylaxis, diagnosis, or therapy. Graduate study focused on community and other population-based medical intervention trials are also ineligible.
 - Individuals are not eligible to apply for support of biomedical research with disease-related goals, including etiology, diagnosis or treatment of physical or mental disease, abnormality, or malfunction in human beings and animals. Animal models of such conditions or the development or testing of drugs or other procedures for their treatment also are not eligible for support. There are areas of bioengineering research in biology and medicine that are eligible. These are research in bioengineering to aid persons with disabilities and research on diagnosis or treatment of human disease provided it applies engineering principles to problems in biology and medicine while primarily advancing engineering knowledge.
 - **The Graduate Research Fellowship Operations Center is responsible for responding to questions about the program. For questions concerning these guidelines, contact the Graduate Research Fellowship Operations Center, (866) 673-4737, international (202) 331-3542, or info@nsfgrfp.org.**

For more answered questions on eligibility, get the NSF GRFP FAQ:

- <http://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/faqs>