



Graduate Research Fellowship

Objective

The objective of the Graduate Research Fellowship program is to encourage graduate students to pursue research and careers in STEM fields that support NASA's Mission Directorates.

Overview

Each year, NC Space Grant competitively awards Graduate Research Fellowships to students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields that support NASA's Mission Directorates.

The NC Space Grant Graduate Research Fellowship program provides support for graduate students to supplement and enhance basic and/or applied research. The program requires that students participate in an active, defined research activity in STEM fields that have NASA Mission Directorate applications, inclusive of commercial space or at the U.S. National Lab on the International Space Station (ISS).

The research should be supervised by a faculty mentor, and may be conducted virtually, on the home campus in accordance with university policies, and/or at an industrial or government facility.

The research activity will be conducted over the course of a 12-month period, commencing June 1, 2022 and ending no later than May 30, 2023.

Award Level

This is a competitive scholarship program. Awards are based on merit, recognizing high academic achievement and promise.

NC Space Grant will grant \$10,000 per award for up to 11 student awards. Funding for related travel should be considered within the total award package.

Awards are contingent upon receipt of NASA funding and the quality of submitted proposals.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be enrolled full-time in a program of study in STEM and have a specific research project with NASA, commercial space, or ISS relevance.



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NC Space Grant strongly encourages applications from graduate students from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority serving institutions (MSIs) and/or from historically underserved and underrepresented communities.

The Graduate Research Fellowship applicant must be:

- A United States citizen.
- Currently enrolled, or planning to be enrolled in fall 2022, in a full-time, advanced degree program of study in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) at any accredited university or college in the State of North Carolina. Students who drop below full-time status are no longer eligible to receive funding.
- Conducting a research project that has relevance to a NASA Mission Directorate, commercial space, and/or the ISS.
- In good academic standing with a GPA of 3.0 (out of 4.0).

Deadlines

- **Student applications due – 5 p.m. ET, Monday March 14, 2022. Late applications will not be accepted for any reason.**
- **Faculty Letter of Recommendation due – 5 p.m. ET, Wednesday, March 16, 2022.**
- Awards will be announced on or around April 25, 2022, contingent upon receipt of NASA funds.

Application Instructions

[Apply for the NC Space Grant Graduate Research Fellowship here.](#)

- *Applicants must click the new user registration button to begin the application.*

Interested students must complete an online application. All information must be complete – including a faculty letter of recommendation – or the application will not be reviewed.

Please read all program guidelines, including Eligibility Requirements, Proposal Review and Evaluation Criteria, and Awardee Requirements before preparing and submitting your application.

Awards are based on research merit and promise, adherence to the instructions of this request for proposals (RFPs), and availability of federal funds.

Students will respond in short essay format to four (4) key questions in the online application. Maximum word counts are provided for each essay, which is indicated after each question in the online application system. Students can also view word counts in advance of registering in the system in the [Sample Application](#) available on the application website page.



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- **Description of the Proposed Research Project:** Statements written by the student applicant should describe: 1) research goals; 2) key elements of the proposed research plan; 3) a description of the relevance or significance of the research, i.e., why the research is important to pursue; 4) relevance to NASA Mission Directorates, commercial space, and/or the ISS, as well as NC Space Grant's strategic objectives; and 5) an explanation of what new knowledge or skills the student will obtain that will serve as a springboard for future academic and/or career pursuits.

It is expected that research will be conducted over the full 12 month award period-of-performance. A timeline for research implementation is recommended to be included in the proposed research plan (tables may be included but not charts, graphs or photos). Deviations from a 12 month plan (e.g., early graduation or other circumstances) must be included in the online application essay, and discussed with the NC Space Grant point-of-contact listed at the end of the RFP in advance of award. Funds will be appropriately prorated for any semester the student is not enrolled full-time (i.e., not receive the full amount of the award).

- **Alignment of Research to NASA Mission Directorates and the NC Space Grant Strategic Plan:** Identify which NASA Mission Directorate(s) your research project aligns with and describe how your research will contribute to the mission of that Directorate, commercial space, and/or the ISS. Describe how your research project supports the NC Space Grant Mission and Strategic Plan.
 - NASA Mission Directorates: [Aeronautics Research](#), [Human Exploration and Operations](#), [Science](#) and [Space Technology](#)
 - [NC Space Grant Strategic Plan](#)
- **Faculty Letter of Recommendation:** Applicants should request that a faculty member write and submit a letter of recommendation that addresses knowledge of the student or level of confidence in the student's ability to carry out the proposed research or, alternatively, a plan to guide the student's STEM interests or research.

Applicants will provide the name and contact information for the faculty reference in their online application. NC Space Grant will contact the reference via email to request a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. The reference will be provided with a link to submit the recommendation. For the application to be complete, the letter of recommendation must be submitted by the due date stated under the Deadlines section. NC Space Grant suggests that students contact the reference listed to notify him/her an email requesting this information on the student's behalf is coming (from the address notices@spacegrant.net).

- **University Transcripts:** Unofficial transcripts from all institutions and from the current institution with grades through fall 2021 are required and can be submitted as a PDF in the online application. Applicants must submit one transcript from each institution of higher education attended, whether as



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an undergraduate or graduate student. If the applicant is selected to receive the award, official transcripts will be required at time of acceptance. If the applicant does not have a PDF conversion tool, links to free online PDF converters are provided within the application.

Proposal Review and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of academic and subject-matter professionals who are technically literate, but not necessarily experts in each proposed field of research. Applicants should present their research project in a way that will be understandable to a range of readers. Proposals will be evaluated and scored per the parameters below:

- Research Interests and Goals (30%)
- Research Plan (30%)
- Alignment of Research to [NASA Mission Directorates](#) and the [NC Space Grant Strategic Plan](#) (10%)
- Anticipated Impact to Academic and/or Career Pathways (20%)
- Letter of Recommendation (10%)

The selection of awarded proposals will reflect the full review process, available funding, and current program priorities. Applicants should be aware that not all highly rated projects will be funded. NC Space Grant does not have sufficient funding to cover all the outstanding applications we receive.

Awardee Requirements

The Graduate Research Fellow must meet the following requirements:

- Submit a final research report to NC Space Grant.
- Present a poster at the NC Space Grant Space Symposium in spring 2023. Funding for related travel should be considered within the total award package.
- Respond to academic and employment requests for information and/or surveys administered by NC Space Grant as required by NASA.
- Share their research experiences in public forums or educational settings. Presentations that encourage interest in STEM fields to high school students are of particular interest to NC Space Grant.
- Work with the NC Space Grant communications team to develop and implement a plan to share research and experience, including but not exclusively on social media, in print and on the NC Space Grant website.
- Make activity and results public via social media during and after their research, using accessible social media accounts and consistent hashtags.



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- Credit NC Space Grant for sponsoring the activity in all printed materials (e.g. use the NC Space Grant logo on posters, credit and tag on social media, etc.).
- Notify NC Space Grant if you drop below full-time status.
- Update your profile in Payment Works if any of your contact information changes.

Recent Research Scholars

Read about the 2021-2022 Undergraduate and Graduate Research Scholars [here](#).

Contact

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