



Graduate Fellowships How-To: Submitting Competitive Applications

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Eligibility Requirements: GEM Fellowship Program

In addition to meeting the National GEM Consortium's minimum [eligibility requirements](#), interested candidates must also meet [programmatic requirements](#) for LANL's Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Program

GEM M.S. Fellows:

- Must be a senior or graduate of an accredited engineering or computer science program at time of application
- Initially have and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent
- Must enroll in a minimum of six credit hours per semester, or its full-time equivalent
- Must commit to attending a master's program at an accredited [GEM Member University](#)
- Must contractually agree to intern for two summers with the sponsoring GEM Employer, beginning the summer after sponsorship

GEM Ph.D. Fellows:

- Must be a senior, master's student, or graduate of an accredited engineering or applied science program at time of application
- Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent
- Must enroll in a minimum of six credit hours per semester, or its full-time equivalent
- Must commit to attending a PhD program at an accredited [GEM Member University](#)
- Must contractually agree to intern with a GEM Employer the summer immediately after sponsorship

Application Requirements: GEM Fellowship Program

- Online application completed through [eGEM](#) portal
- Current Resume/CV, uploaded to online application
- Unofficial transcripts, uploaded to online application
- Statement of Purpose
 - One page outlining your academic, research, and/or career goals
- Three letters of recommendation
 - Requested and completed through eGEM portal
 - At least one letter of recommendation from faculty member familiar with your research background
- GRE scores are ***not*** required. Self-reported scores will be accepted as part of application, if candidates choose to report these

NOTE: Applicants must apply to a minimum of three GEM Member Universities, unless you are already enrolled in a graduate program at a GEM Member University

Eligibility Requirements: GFSD Fellowship Program

In addition to meeting the GFSD Consortium's minimum [eligibility requirements](#), interested candidates must also meet [programmatic requirements](#) for LANL's Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Program

- Can be at any stage of their graduate program at time of application
- Must be accepted and commit to attending a [GFSD Member University](#)
- Initially have and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent
- Enroll in a minimum of six credit hours per semester, or its full-time equivalent
- Must complete a one- to two-summer internship with the GFSD Employer. Internship assignments may be extended at the discretion of the Responsible Line Manager
- GFSD Fellows are expected to remain in good academic standing, and must provide transcripts to the Consortium annually

Application Requirements: GFSD Fellowship Program

- An online application through GFSD's [application portal](#)
 - Full education history for degree-granting programs
 - Employment history (max. of three)
 - Scholarships, honors, and awards
 - Publications, presentations, poster sessions, etc.
 - Use standard bibliography format
 - Research experience
- Personal statement and professional goals
 - Explain why you want to go to graduate school, what are your expectations regarding the GFSD and its mentoring support, what will be your graduate program, etc.
- Submission of unofficial transcripts
- Submission of official GRE score report (Code: 4417)
- Minimum of three letters of recommendation, but no more than five
 - Recommenders (faculty members, employers) should be familiar with your work in your discipline
 - At least one letter should be from individual who has observed or supervised your participation in research

Application Tips and Best Practices: Statements of Purpose

General Tips and Advice

- Start early. Map/outline your thoughts. Research the fellowship program. Why are you interested?
Read sample statements of purpose
- Be sure to comply with formatting requirements, page limits, word/character counts, and other guidelines
- Address each portion of the prompt and answer all questions
- Ensure your final draft is well written and grammatically correct
 - Review/proofread your statement of purpose two or three times before submission. Make any necessary edits/revisions during this phase
 - Ask another person to review your statement of purpose for clarity, flow, and grammar. Encourage them to make comments and request feedback. A second set of eyes will likely catch what you might have missed
 - Ask your university's career center to review your statement of purpose and other supporting documents
- Consider and write for your audience—
 - Avoid the use of highly-specified jargon
 - Don't assume every reader will know your field of study. Some evaluators may be from outside your discipline
 - Write for an intelligent non-specialist
- Be brief, concise, and to the point

Components of a Strong Statement of Purpose

Set yourself apart

Set realistic goals and expectations

Strike a balance

Highlight your accomplishments...

...But don't exaggerate or stretch the truth

Answer the hows and whys

Weave in personal anecdotes—when appropriate

Questions to Consider

- What motivated you to pursue this field of study?
- Why are you applying for a GEM or GFSD fellowship?
- How has your coursework and professional/research/extracurricular experience prepared you for advanced studies/graduate-level education?
- How have past experiences shaped you as a researcher? As a student? As a person?
- How will a graduate degree prepare you for your intended career path?
- How will an internship contribute to your thesis or dissertation research? Your professional development?
- How will an internship prepare you for your intended career path?
- How will you contribute to your internship provider?
- How will you promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within your field of study and intended career path?

Application Tips and Best Practices: Letters of Recommendation

Letter of Recommendation Mechanics: GEM and GFSD

- Letters of recommendation for GEM and GFSD must be requested and submitted through each program's respective application portal. Letters of recommendation that are emailed or mailed by post will not be accepted
- Letters of recommendation must be received by each program's respective application deadline
- The GEM and GFSD application portals will generate an automatic email for your recommenders providing instructions on how to submit a letter of recommendation. Applicants will be required to enter the name, job title, and contact information for each recommender
 - GEM will generate automatic emails to recommenders once the online application is submitted
 - GFSD will generate automatic emails to recommenders once contact information is entered and saved
- Recommenders are encouraged to draft letters of recommendation in a word processor. The text can then be copied and pasted into each program's respective recommendation portal

How to Secure a Solid Recommendation

- Be sure to request letters of recommendation four to six weeks prior to the application deadline
- If possible, request letters of recommendation in person. If you are unable to do this, you may do so via email. Be sure to include background information on the fellowship program and describe why you are interested in applying
- Faculty members and previous/current employers are ideal recommenders
- Be selective. Choose recommenders who are familiar with your academic, research, and/or professional background. Be sure to approach individuals who you trust and ask if they can write a good/strong recommendation
- Supply your recommenders with a copy of your resume/CV, a brief description of the fellowship program you are applying to, and a narrative of your accomplishments
- Thank your recommenders and keep them posted on the status of your application

Components of a Strong Letter of Recommendation

- Letters of recommendation for STEM-based fellowship programs, like GEM and GFSD, should discuss your research experience and ability to succeed as a researcher and scholar
 - Faculty members who supervised or observed your participation in research
 - Manager, mentor, or principal investigator who oversaw a research project you were a part of
 - Technical staff members and postdocs who you collaborated with on research
- Letters of recommendation should provide evidence of past achievements/accomplishments, particularly within research
- Letters of recommendation should successfully argue why you would be an ideal candidate for the fellowship program of choice, how you exemplify the fellowship's criteria, and how you will contribute to the program
- Letters of recommendation should highlight the impacts the fellowship may have on your academic, research, and career goals

Application Tips and Best Practices: Resumes/CVs

Resume vs. CV

Resume

- Brief summary of an individual's education, experiences, and skills
- Normally one page, two pages max.
- Typically used when applying for positions in industry
- Emphasis on relevant experience and skills for a particular position

Curriculum Vitae

- Detailed, itemized history of an individual's academic credentials, research experiences, publications, presentations, and awards
- Normally two to four pages for entry-level positions in academia
- Typically used when applying for fellowships, grants, research/teaching assistantships, and positions in academia
- Emphasis on academic accomplishment

Resume/CV Requirements: GEM and GFSD

For GEM...

- Applicants are required to upload a copy of a resume
- Candidates will describe their research experience and awards within the application itself, so a CV is not required, but will be accepted in lieu of a resume

For GFSD...

- Information on employment history, research experience, presentations, publications, and awards is entered directly into the application. Resume/CV attachments are not required
- You will have an opportunity to describe each of the above-mentioned categories, so follow CV best practices when completing these sections of the application

Helpful Tips

- Provide succinct resumes and/or CVs, when requested
- Highlight your contributions to your discipline. Include presentations, publications, patents, inventions, etc.
- List awards and honors to show how you are being recognized for your early contributions
- Ensure all items listed, including job-related experience, are related to your field and future career goals
- Basic skills
 - Should only be listed on a resume if they are relevant to the position you are applying for
 - Should not be listed on a CV
- List service activities related to your studies

Application Tips and Best Practices: Transcripts

Transcripts Best Practices

- Current, unofficial transcripts are a required part of fellowship applications. Transcript requirements may include:
 - Transcript from current degree-granting program
 - Transcript from last degree-granting program (if in a postgraduate status)
 - Full educational history (transcripts for all degree-granting programs)
- Unofficial transcripts should include your full legal name, the name of your university, cumulative GPA, in-progress coursework, and full enrollment history
- Unofficial transcripts can be:
 - Obtained from your university's student portal
 - Requested from your university registrar's office
 - A scanned or downloaded copy of an official transcript
- Official transcripts are, usually, only required for selected candidates. If you are required to provide an official transcript, be sure to order one from your university registrar's office or a certified public clearinghouse in a timely manner. Comply with fellowship program guidelines for transcripts and be sure to meet deadlines

References and Resources

- University of California Davis Internship and Career Center: [Resume and Curriculum Vitae](#)
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Office of Graduate Studies: [What Makes a Competitive Fellowship Application](#)
- Yale Center for International and Professional Experience: [Writing a Fellowship Proposal](#)
 - *Geared towards research fellowships/current PhD students who have already begun their research, but their tips can apply to graduate fellowships as well*
- University Career Centers, Writing Centers, fellowship/grant offices
- LANL Student Programs Office staff

Questions? Contact:

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