



# The NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship (NESSF) Program Guide\*

REVISED April 2015

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\*This Guide is designed to **supplement** the NESSF document NASA Policies and Procedures for Administering Training Grants. (Revised April 2014)

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## I. **Accepting the Fellowship**

### How to Formally Accept the Fellowship

In response to the formal NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship (NESSF) Program offer, an E-mail accepting the award must be sent to the appropriate NESSF Program Administrator:

#### For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
Science Mission Directorate  
[claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

#### For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
Science Mission Directorate  
[hq-nessf-Space@nasa.gov](mailto:hq-nessf-Space@nasa.gov)

### Preparing a Revised Budget

If circumstances require changes to be made to the original proposal budget, a revised budget must be prepared and submitted. The revised budget must be signed by both the student and faculty advisor. As outlined in the NASA Policies and Procedures for Administering Training Grants, the basic stipend to each fellow is \$24,000 per calendar year. Maximum amounts for student and university allowances are \$3,000 each. The student allowance may be used for tuition; institutional fees; travel in support of the research investigation to conferences, symposia, or collaborative meetings; books; expendable laboratory supplies; page charges for journal articles; printing of a thesis; health insurance; and other similar expenses related to the proposed research investigation. The university allowance may be used for tuition or research expenses, if agreed upon by the student and faculty advisor; it may also support research-related travel for the advisor (i.e. to accompany the student to a scientific meeting, oversee the student's research, etc.); or by the student. Requested budget in these two allowance categories may be exchanged, as long as the total sum for the two combined allowance categories does not exceed \$6,000.

Please note that if the faculty advisor is not available to sign the revised budget, the Department chair (or similar official) may sign in his/her absence.

### Coordination With the University

It is important that acceptance of the NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship be coordinated with the student's university Office of Sponsored Research. The officials in these offices have the responsibility of administering the training grant throughout the term of the fellowship. It is recommended that the student coordinate with the university before sending any materials to NASA, **however, you must not miss any deadlines for response.**

In support of a NESSF fellowship, the university Office of Sponsored Research needs to receive copies of the formal NASA letter making the fellowship offer, the research investigation proposal, the E-mail acceptance, and revised budget, if applicable.

## **II. Funding of the Fellowship**

### Administering the Funds

Fellowship funds are administered through the university Office of Sponsored Research. Because each university administers training grants differently, it is recommended that you check with your faculty advisor or your university Office of Sponsored Research regarding details about how funds will be administered. Training grants are scheduled to start September 1, but funds do not always arrive by that date. You can check the status of grants at <https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/portal/site/customerservice/>, select the "Grants" tab at the top of the page, and then select "Grants Status Search." (Note: the principal investigator (PI) is the faculty advisor.)

### Carryover of Funds

Fellowships renewed for an additional year at the same university will automatically carry over the funds remaining from the previous year into the next grant year.

## **III. Restrictions on the Use of Fellowship Funds**

Funds may be used for stipend; tuition; institutional fees; travel in support of the research investigation to conferences, symposia, or collaborative meetings; books; expendable laboratory supplies; page charges for journal articles; printing of a thesis; health insurance; and other similar expenses related to the proposed research investigation.

THE USE OF FUNDS FROM A NESSF TRAINING GRANT FOR THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING COMPUTERS, IS NOT PERMITTED.

Expenditures under any NASA training grants are subject to inspection and audit during the period of the grant and for three (3) years thereafter. Records must be maintained in sufficient detail to evidence prudent management and to facilitate the preparation of the required reports for determining whether expenditures are being made for the purposes for which the funds were granted.

## **IV. Fellowship Renewal**

NESSF awards are made initially for one year and may be renewed for no more than two additional years, contingent upon satisfactory progress, as reflected in academic performance, research progress, recommendation by the faculty advisor, and the

availability of funds. The three-year period is the maximum length a student may receive support from the NESSF Program in pursuing a M.Sc. or Ph.D. degree. For example, a student supported by a NESSF award for three years prior to obtaining her/his M.Sc. degree cannot apply to the NESSF Program for an additional three years of Ph.D. support. However, a student in the second or third year of a M.Sc. program may use the three years of support to complete the M.Sc. and initiate Ph.D. research.

It should be noted: By NESSF policy, if tenure of less than 12 months is anticipated, prorated stipend and allowances are required for a renewal budget. Any individual accepting a NESSF may not concurrently hold any other Federal fellowship or traineeship. If the annual cost on campus is more than the amount of the NASA fellowship, the NESSF may be partially supplemented by other forms of employment other than by another Federal fellowship or traineeship. However, NASA may allow an applicant to receive supplements from other U.S. Federal agencies to cover expenses not covered by NASA's graduate fellowships; for example, the purchase of equipment, which is not permitted through a NASA fellowship.

The renewal procedure, similar to the new application procedure, may be found at the NESSF solicitation page at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com>, select "Solicitations," then select "Open Solicitations," then select "NESSF." Succeeding year's solicitations will be posted at this location on or about November 1 each year. The renewal application submission deadline is on or about March 15 each year.

Proposals must be submitted electronically through NASA's NSPIRES system. The advisor has an active role in the electronic submission of the fellowship proposal. To use the NSPIRES system, the student, the advisor, and the university must all register. Once you are in the NSPIRES database system, you will be registered for all future NASA submissions. Extended instructions on how to submit an electronic proposal package are posted on the NESSF solicitation index page listed above. You can register in NSPIRES at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com>.

For further information contact:

Program Administrator for NESSF Earth Science Research – Claire Macaulay at 202/358-0151 or by E-mail at [claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov).

Program Administrator for NESSF Heliophysics Research, Planetary Science Research, and Astrophysics Research – Dolores Holland at 202/358-0734 or by E-mail at [hq-nessf-space@nasa.gov](mailto:hq-nessf-space@nasa.gov).

## **V. Domestic and Non-U.S. Travel**

Domestic and non-U.S. travel in support of a NESSF research investigation does not require approval if it is considered by the student's faculty advisor and institution as a reasonable expenditure of grant funds.

## **VI. Paying Taxes on the Fellowship**

Please refer to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 970 entitled "Tax Benefits for Education" for information about paying taxes on the NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship. To receive a free copy of this publication, call the IRS on their toll free number: 800/829-1040.

## **VII. Changes in Grant Conditions**

A NASA training grant is awarded to a university and not to an individual faculty advisor or student. Any change in faculty advisor, the institution at which the student is registered, or the student's graduate student status is significant. Please review the following information carefully.

### Changing the Faculty Advisor

To request a change of faculty advisor, a letter must be submitted to the NESSF Program Administrator describing the circumstances. A request from the university Office of Sponsored Research must include: a letter of support from the intended new advisor, as well as a letter from the current advisor expressing his/her support of the change. All correspondence must include the name of the student and the grant number. A request to change advisors must be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to the date when the change is expected to occur.

The NESSF Program Administrator and the NASA Grants Office will review the request and determine whether or not the change is acceptable, after which time the university will receive official notification from the NASA Grants Office. The request should be directed to:

#### For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3U85  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

#### For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3F20  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[dolores.holland@nasa.gov](mailto:dolores.holland@nasa.gov)

### Transferring to Another University

Transferring to another university is somewhat involved because the NASA Training Grant was awarded to the "old" university on behalf of the student. In order to transfer to another university and still maintain a NESSF fellowship, permission to transfer must be requested at least six (6) months before the beginning of the new funding cycle (September 1). It cannot be assumed that you can simply transfer and that a NESSF fellowship will follow you to the "new" university. When requesting permission to

transfer a NESSF fellowship to another university, the items listed below must be submitted and you must then wait for the request to be considered by NASA and for an official decision and notification. Note: All correspondence must include the NESSF grant number.

- 1) A letter endorsed by the current faculty advisor stating support of the student's transfer to another university.
- 2) A letter from the current university Office of Sponsored Research relinquishing the grant.
- 3) A letter from the "new" university Office of Sponsored Research to which the student is transferring stating that the student has been accepted as a M.Sc. or Ph.D. candidate.
- 4) A letter of support from the person the student would like to serve as their faculty advisor at the "new" university indicating acceptance of the advisor responsibility.
- 5) A budget and necessary certifications from the "new" university.

Due to the complicated nature of a transfer, materials must be submitted at least six (6) months in advance. It is also important to follow through by calling to see if the NESSF Program Administrator has received all the materials necessary to consider the request and make a decision. The request should be directed to:

For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3U85  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3F20  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[dolores.holland@nasa.gov](mailto:dolores.holland@nasa.gov)

Leaving the Ph.D. Program

If you must leave your Ph.D. program for some reason, you must notify the NESSF Program Administrator in writing. Once you leave the Ph.D. program, your fellowship is terminated at the end of that particular grant year (August 31).

If a student concludes their degree program in the NESSF prior to August 31 and there are funds remaining on the fellowship grant, the institution may request that a M. Sc. or Ph.D. candidate pursuing similar research be named to expend the balance of funding remaining in that grant year only. A request from the university Office of Sponsored Research must include: a letter from the original student indicating the date and reason for their departure (i.e., completion of degree requirements), a letter that briefly describes the candidate substitute student's research investigation, along with their educational background, a transcript, and confirmation of the substitute student's status as a M.Sc. or Ph.D. candidate. The request must be sent to the NESSF Program Administrator. The



university Office of Sponsored Research must also endorse the request. It should be noted that a substitute student may utilize the balance of funding for the current grant year only and does NOT have the opportunity to submit a renewal application for subsequent years of support. The substitute student may, however, submit a new proposal to subsequent NESSF solicitation competition cycles.

It is NASA policy to provide maximum possible continuity in funding grant-supported research and education activities. Therefore, prior to the grant termination, a request may be made by the university Office of Sponsored Research to no-cost extend a grant for an additional period of time when necessary to complete work that was part of the original award. The request must include a brief justification for the request, the grant number, the names of the student and the faculty advisor, an estimate of the funds remaining, and the length of the extension requested (three, six, nine, or twelve months). After review and concurrence by the appropriate NESSF Program Administrator, the request will be transmitted to the NASA Grants Office, which issues the official extension. The request should be directed to:

For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3U85  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3F20  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[dolores.holland@nasa.gov](mailto:dolores.holland@nasa.gov)

Graduating

Upon graduation, the student and faculty advisor must submit a report to close out the NESSF fellowship. A NESSF fellowship will end upon graduation or upon completion of degree requirements, whichever occurs first. See section IX. entitled Submitting the Final Report for additional requirements.

Also see the second paragraph under Leaving Your Ph.D. Program, above, which also applies upon the completion of the degree program.

## **VIII. Acknowledgement**

An acknowledgement must be included in all publications resulting from NESSF fellowship support, as follows:

“This work was supported by NASA Headquarters under the NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship Program - Grant “NNX.....”



## IX. Final Reports

The following reports are required:

### 1. Administrative Report

A report on the student's research and academic progress must be submitted upon completion of the research, but no later than 90 days after the termination date of the grant. The report must include a brief synopsis of the research investigation undertaken and its conclusions; a publication list (including Ph.D. thesis title); notable accomplishments, meetings attended, or honors/awards; the degree granted and date received (or anticipated date); employment or postdoctoral plans; and any other pertinent information.

The student and faculty advisor must submit the final Administrative Report to close out the NESSF fellowship grant. A NESSF fellowship will end upon completion of degree requirements or graduation, whichever occurs first.

### 2. Financial Report

The university must submit a final financial report on Standard Form 425, Federal Cash Transactions Report. This report sets forth the disposition of grant funds.

Copies of the above reports will be submitted to the following:

#### Number of Copies

#### Address

1

#### For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3U85  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

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#### For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
Science Mission Directorate  
Mail Suite 3F20  
NASA Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
[dolores.holland@nasa.gov](mailto:dolores.holland@nasa.gov)

NASA Grants Office:

Procurement – SP  
 NASA Shared Services Center  
 Stennis Space Center, MS 39529  
[NSSC-Closeout@mail.nasa.gov](mailto:NSSC-Closeout@mail.nasa.gov)

**X. NASA Postdoctoral Program**

Upon receipt of your Ph.D., you may want to consider applying to the NASA Postdoctoral Program (NPP). The NPP offers unique research opportunities to highly talented national and international individuals to engage in ongoing NASA research programs at a NASA Center. These one- to three-year fellowship appointments are competitive and are designed to advance NASA's missions. The NPP is administered for NASA by Oak Ridge Associated Universities. You may visit the NPP website at <http://nasa.orau.org/postdoc/>.

If you are in Earth science disciplines, you are also encouraged to propose to the New Investigator Program in Earth Science, which solicits proposals every two years in the Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (see ROSES at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com>).

**XI. Points of Contact at NASA**

For further information contact:

For Earth Science:

Claire Macaulay  
 Science Mission Directorate  
 Mail Suite 3U85  
 NASA Headquarters  
 Washington, DC 20546-0001  
 Phone: 202/358-0151  
 Fax: 202/358-2770  
 E-mail: [claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov](mailto:claire.i.macaulay@nasa.gov)

For Heliophysics, Planetary Science, Astrophysics:

Dolores Holland  
 Science Mission Directorate  
 Mail Suite 3F20  
 NASA Headquarters  
 Washington, DC 20546-0001  
 Phone: 202/358-0734  
 Fax: 202/358-3094  
 E-mail: [hq-nessf-Space@nasa.gov](mailto:hq-nessf-Space@nasa.gov)