



Office of Graduate Fellowships

NSF GRFP: Next Steps

So you want to apply to the GRFP this year? Here's what to do next:

- (1) Carefully review the information at www.nsfgrfp.org, including the current year's Program Solicitation. Carefully check the eligibility requirements and fields of study. If you have any doubts about eligibility, check with the Office of Graduate Fellowships and/or NSF.
- (2) Discuss your intentions with your faculty advisor / faculty mentors (past or present). If you are already a graduate student, your faculty advisor's support is very important. (Please note: Faculty mentors may direct you to the Office of Sponsored Programs. This is because faculty members applying for NSF grants are required to work with this office. The GRFP application does not require this step. Please check first with the Office of Graduate Fellowships.
- (3) Once you have completed #1 and #2, register for the GRFP application in FastLane (via the web site) and get started. Note your submission deadline, which varies by field. Also note the final deadline for letters of reference, which will be a few days after your deadline.
- (4) Begin working on your essays. Discuss the essays with your advisor, and in particular work with your advisor to strategize your Graduate Research Statement.
- (5) Line up your reference writers. If you are already a PhD student, one should be your doctoral advisor at Mason. You need a minimum of three, and may obtain up to five total. At least one "extra" letter is recommended in case one of your references fails to submit on time.
- (6) Obtain your transcripts from past and present institutions and upload them to the application. You need to submit a transcript from your current institution even if you do not have grades yet.
- (7) Get feedback on your essays from your advisor, faculty mentors, and the Director of Graduate Fellowships. Revise and rework the essays as many times as you can.
- (8) Upload the statements, double check that your application is complete, and plan to submit 1-2 days BEFORE your disciplinary deadline.
- (9) If the deadline is approaching and you still have reference writers who have not submitted their letters, it's a good idea to send a polite reminder.
- (10) You did it! Let the Office of Graduate Fellowships know that you have submitted your application, and don't forget to thank your references!