



Graduate  
Education



**GRFP**  
GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDE

# NSF GRFP FELLOWS

NEW & CURRENT FELLOWS

2026

Policies, requirements, and resources for  
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program  
awardees at Georgia Tech.



## UNDERSTAND

Fellow status, eligibility,  
and responsibilities



## MANAGE

Stipend, tuition/fees,  
and funding policies



## SUCCEED

Reporting, leaves,  
and program resources



## IMPORTANT GEORGIA TECH CONTACTS

### Georgia Tech NSF GRFP Principal Investigator (PI)

Dr. Bonnie Ferri, Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education

### Georgia Tech NSF GRFP Coordinating Official (CO)

Camile E. Matthews, Graduate Fellowships Manager  
[fellowships@grad.gatech.edu](mailto:fellowships@grad.gatech.edu)

### Fellowships Accountant, Office of the Bursar

[fellowship.ask@gatech.edu](mailto:fellowship.ask@gatech.edu)

### Financial Analyst, Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid

[grad@finaid.gatech.edu](mailto:grad@finaid.gatech.edu)



### NSF Document Links and Information

- [GRFP Administrative Guide for Fellows \(NSF 25-033\)](#)
- [NSF Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [NSF Contact Information](#)
- [GRFP Module \(Research.gov\)](#)
- Grant number = DGE-2039655, valid from August 1, 2021, to July 31, 2026

### Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Key Updates from NSF 25-033.....	3
Fellowship Year Start and Status Declaration .....	3
Selecting Georgia Tech.....	3
Declaring Status .....	3
Eligibility to Receive NSF GRFP Funding.....	4
Your Major Field of Study.....	5
Misrepresentation .....	5
Maintaining Your Eligibility During Your Studies/Fellowship.....	5
Class Registration.....	5
On Tenure Status: Tuition/Fees, Stipend & Other Costs.....	6
Tuition/Fees .....	6

Health Insurance .....	7
Stipend .....	7
Payments .....	7
Taxes .....	8
Other Employment.....	8
One-Time Exception GA to Teach.....	8
Outside Funding .....	9
Internships On Tenure.....	9
Registering Your Internship with the Career Center .....	10
<b>On Reserve Status</b> .....	10
GRA/GTA Appointments .....	10
Internships on Reserve.....	10
<b>Medical &amp; Military Leave</b> .....	11
Medical Leave .....	11
Military Leave .....	11
<b>Yearly Reporting Requirements &amp; Declaring Next Year</b> .....	11
Graduating .....	11
<b>Resources</b> .....	11
Funds for Travel .....	11
Application Preparation .....	12
Publication Information .....	12
NSF INTERN .....	12

## INTRODUCTION

This document updates the November 2024 edition. It includes all policy updates from the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) [Administrative Guide](#) (NSF 25-033, effective April 2025). Fellows and programs should delete earlier versions and refer exclusively to this guidance.

## KEY UPDATES FROM NSF 25-033

- Summer-start option eliminated. Summer-start Fellows (cohorts  $\leq$  2024) may finish on their existing May 1 – April 30 cycle.
- The Annual Activities Report (AAR) now requires your advisor to certify that an Individual Development Plan (IDP) is established and reviewed each year.
- Paid medical leave: Fellows on tenure may take up to three months of paid leave within the three tenure years for qualified medical or dependent-care needs (must be pre-approved by the Coordinating Official).

## FELLOWSHIP YEAR START AND STATUS DECLARATION

### Selecting Georgia Tech

**On NSF Research.gov, choose 'Georgia Tech Research Corporation'.**

- Remember, during the first year of the Fellowship, Fellows must follow the Major Field of Study listed in the application's disciplinary degree program (for example, Chemistry).
  - After completing the first year, the Fellow may switch their Major Field of Study and/or the eligible STEM degree program.
- Consult the [NSF GRFP Solicitation](#) for a list of eligible degree programs, including all Major Fields of Study and related subfields.

### Declaring Status

Each year, you declare either 'On Tenure' or 'On Reserve' in NSF Research.gov. 'On Tenure' indicates that you are receiving NSF stipend payments. 'On Reserve' means that you are not receiving any NSF funding and can pursue a GRA, GTA, or other fellowship funding.

**You have five (5) years to use the three (3) years of Tenure funding.** Reserve status can only be declared for entire years of your fellowship, not parts of a year. The academic year runs from August 1 to July 31 annually.

**Medical deferral, military deferral, and forfeit status can be declared on a monthly basis.** Forfeit status is used while 'On Tenure' if you wish to perform an activity (GTA, GRA, internship, etc.) that is not permitted during Tenure.

Fellow Status	Fellowship Status	Stipend?	Description
Active	On Tenure	Yes	Fellow is enrolled full-time in an eligible degree granting program and receiving GRFP stipend.
	On Reserve	No	Fellow is enrolled full-time in an eligible degree granting program but is not receiving a GRFP stipend.
	Forfeited	No	Fellow is enrolled full-time in an eligible degree granting program but is not receiving a stipend during all or part of a Tenure year. Stipend not utilized is lost (forfeited).
Leave	On Medical Leave	Yes	Fellow is on a leave of absence from their graduate program due to medical or dependent-care situation. There is a limited paid medical leave option for up to three months.
	On Medical Leave	No	Fellow is on a leave of absence due to medical or dependent-care situation. Fellow is not receiving a stipend.
	On Military Leave	No	Fellow is on active duty in the U.S. military service.
Completion	Completed with Degree	No	Individual who graduated within the five-year Fellowship Period.
	Completed	No	Individual who completed the five-year Fellowship Period before graduating with a degree.
	Terminated	No	Individual Fellowship is terminated for cause (failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions of the Fellowship) or fellow voluntarily discontinues Fellowship during the five-year period.

## ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE NSF GRFP FUNDING

All NSF GRFP Fellows at Georgia Tech must self-verify that they meet all the following eligibility criteria by the application deadline.

- Be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident.
- Intend to enroll or be enrolled in a research-based master's or doctoral degree program in an eligible Field of Study in STEM or STEM education.
- Have never previously accepted an NSF GRFP Fellowship.
  - If previously offered a Graduate Research Fellowship, have declined by the acceptance deadline.
- Have never previously applied to GRFP while enrolled in a graduate degree program.
- Have never earned a doctoral or terminal degree in any field.

- Have never earned a master's or professional degree in any field, or completed more than one academic year in a graduate degree-granting program, unless:
  - returning to graduate study after an interruption of two or more consecutive years immediately preceding the application deadline,
  - not enrolled in a graduate degree program at the application deadline.
- Not be a current NSF employee.

### **Your Major Field of Study**

Fellows should select the Major Field of Study and the subfield that is closest to their research interests. If the subfield is not listed, it may not be eligible for NSF GRFP.

The Major Field of Study choice determines the disciplinary knowledge of the experts who will review your application.

- If you are offered a fellowship, it will be within this Major Field.
- Fellows cannot change their Major Field of Study in their first year.

### **Misrepresentation**

In cases where Fellows have misrepresented their eligibility or have failed to comply with the Fellowship Terms and Conditions, the Fellowship will be revoked, and the case may be referred to the Office of the Inspector General for investigation.

- This action may require the Fellow to repay Fellowship funds to the National Science Foundation.

### **Maintaining Your Eligibility During Your Studies/Fellowship**

Submit your Activities Report to Georgia Tech and declare your Status for the following fellowship year each Spring.

- Be sure to include your signed Faculty Advisor Form with your submission.
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above
- Enroll full-time by the end of your registration period
- Maintain RCR requirements

### **Class Registration**

Register at your first available opportunity. Refer to the [Registrar's website](#) for the official calendar and registration timelines.

According to [Georgia Tech policy](#), funds will only be disbursed if you are registered full-time, including during the summer semester.

- Full-time enrollment for graduate students is 12 hours every semester:
  - 9 of which must be taken for a letter grade or pass/fail credit during the fall and spring.
  - 6 of which must be taken for a letter grade or pass/fail credit during the summer.
    - Thesis research hours (e.g., 8999, 9000) count as graded hours.



**PLEASE NOTE:** All NSF GRFP fellowships are credited to student accounts in bulk. **ALL fellows who have declared on Tenure status must register for classes as soon as possible each semester to ensure that peer fellows receive their disbursements promptly.**

---

### **Start of Your Funding**

All NSF GRFP Fellows must complete two forms of [Responsible Conduct of Research Training](#).

- Online RCR training must be completed within 90 days of receiving funding.
- Discussion-based RCR training must be completed within one year of receiving NSF GRFP funding.

The [RCR Compliance Policy](#) is intended to meet the RCR training requirements of federal funding agencies and other sponsors.

The [RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students](#) and the [RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students](#) outline the RCR training requirements for specific categories of graduate students.

For more information about Georgia Tech's commitment to RCR, including its RCR policies and training, watch this short video on [RCR Awareness](#).

Georgia Tech will not be able to certify adequate academic progress for students unless they have completed their RCR training.

Please note that some programs may have additional RCR requirements; therefore, it is recommended that you check with your program directly.

Information about the training at Georgia Tech that fulfills this NSF requirement is listed at: <https://rcr.gatech.edu/nsf>.

For questions, contact the RCR Program at <https://rcr.gatech.edu/contact>.

## **ON TENURE STATUS: TUITION/FEES, STIPEND, & OTHER COSTS**

### **Tuition/Fees**

NSF provides Georgia Tech with a \$16,000 cost-of-education (COE) allowance per fellow. Fellows are fully funded, which includes tuition, mandatory fees, and a monthly stipend.

## Health Insurance

Through the Georgia Tech Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) subsidy, graduate students on full fellowships qualify for insurance coverage at a reduced rate.

- Students will see only the lower subsidized charge on their account (listed below).
- **NSF does NOT cover this charge.** It is the student's responsibility to pay if the insurance coverage is not waived.

	Fall Semester	Spring/Summer Semester
Full Fellowship Mandatory Student Plan (Subsidized Rate)	\$193.45	\$268.01

## Stipend

Stipend payments are processed by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) and deposited into the fellows' Banner accounts at the end of each month. NSF recently raised its stipend to \$37,000 for 12 months, with a monthly rate of \$3,083.

### [Georgia Tech Stipend Payment Dates](#)

Georgia Tech reimburses any difference between your department's standard stipend and the NSF stipend.

## Payments

[Direct deposits](#) processed via eRefund are sent directly to your bank account:

- Your bank must be a U.S. bank.
- Funds can be deposited into either your checking or savings account, but not both.
- Georgia Tech cannot make deposits into money market checking accounts.

**Sign up for direct deposit through your student payment portal.** To do so:

- Log in to the [Student Payment Portal](#) using your GT Account and password.
- Click the Refunds tab in the menu.
- Click the "Set Up Account" button.
- Fill in your bank account information (you will need a check in front of you to get the required routing and account numbers).
- Click the "Continue" button.

## Questions?

Contact the Bursar's Office if you have questions about the direct deposit process:

- Email – [bursar.ask@business.gatech.edu](mailto:bursar.ask@business.gatech.edu)
- Telephone – (404) 894-4618
- In-person – first floor Lyman Hall; Monday-Friday 9:00-4:00 PM

## Taxes

Funds from fellowship stipends used for qualified expenses are exempt from federal and state taxes. **Qualified expenses include tuition, fees, and other related costs that Georgia Tech explicitly requires to complete a degree.** Any stipend portions spent on personal items and living expenses, such as clothing, food, rent, and transportation, are subject to federal and state income taxes. Fellows do not need to fill out tax withholding forms. They should arrange for their stipend to be deposited directly into their bank account. Sign up for direct deposit through the student payment portal using your GT Account and Password.

## Other Employment

**NSF GRFP Fellows may not be On Tenure and hold a GRA/GTA appointment simultaneously.** If you wish to pursue a GRA/GTA, you must have declared On Reserve status before the start of a fellowship year or declare Forfeit status before the assistantship.

### **To Declare Forfeit Status:**

- Log in to Research.gov and select “Request Fellowship Status Change.”
- Choose the appropriate year (remember the 2025/2026 academic year = fellowship year 2025) and then select ‘request change.’
- On the next screen, your new status = ‘forfeit.’ Input the information, as requested, as it pertains to your situation. Re: the start date, please select the first date of your internship.
- Before the end of your forfeit period, you will go back into Research.gov and choose ‘tenure’ as your new status.

Georgia Tech allows NSF GRFP Fellows to work up to 10 hours per week while On Tenure.

- Work cannot be that of a GRA/GTA
- Work performed cannot relate to the Fellow’s research
- Work cannot be considered ‘in service’ of the Institute.
  - Examples of non-allowable work include serving as a grader, proctor, or lab assistant.
  - **Should you be considering any form of work while On Tenure at Georgia Tech, please email [fellowships@grad.gatech.edu](mailto:fellowships@grad.gatech.edu) to see if it is permissible before accepting the role.**
- Work performed cannot relate to the Fellow’s research.
- Outside employment is discouraged because the NSF GRFP Fellowship is intended to provide the Fellow with ample time for research and study.

## One-Time Exception GA to Teach

**Georgia Tech does not allow NSF GRFP Fellows to be employed as GRAs or GTAs while on Tenure.** However, a department may hire a Fellow to serve as a Graduate Assistant (GA) **for only one semester.** Fellows should be hired as Graduate Assistants (GAs) with a monthly stipend, and NOT as GTAs; a waiver should not be placed on the student record.

**Please note: These specific restrictions and instructions do not apply in cases where teaching or teaching assistant duties are part of degree requirements rather than for pay.**

**Outside Funding**

<b>Fellow Status</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>May you keep the GRFP stipend?</b>
On Tenure	Non-federal pay (e.g., industry internship)	Yes – if activity supports your training and ≤ 10 hours/week GA or a nominal summer internship.
On Tenure	Federal salary or fellowship	No – you must forfeit GRFP stipend for those months.

**Internships On Tenure**

<b>NON-FEDERAL VS FEDERALLY FUNDED INTERNSHIPS FOR NSF GRFP FELLOWS</b>			
<b>Type</b>	<b>What It Means</b>	<b>Impact on GRFP Status</b>	<b>Forfeiture</b>
Non-Federal Internship	Internship funded by a private company, university, or state/local government (NOT funded by a federal agency). Example: SpaceX, Google, state agencies.	Fellows can stay on Reserve or Tenure with advisor and CO approval. No NSF approval needed.	No forfeiture needed.
Federally Funded Internship	Internship where the support comes from a U.S. federal agency (NASA, DoE, NIH, DoD, NSF, etc.) or a federally funded program.	Fellows must forfeit GRFP stipend if also accepting federal salary/stipend during the same time. NSF does not allow dual federal support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are on Reserve, you can take a federal internship without any extra forfeiture.</li> <li>• If you are on Tenure, you must forfeit your GRFP stipend during the time you are paid by a federal agency.</li> <li>• Forfeited stipend months are lost and not recoverable.</li> </ul>

**You do not need prior approval from NSF for a standard external internship, provided you:**

- Remain enrolled full-time at Georgia Tech,
- Continue making satisfactory academic progress toward your Ph.D., and
- Complete your Annual Activities Report (AAR) as usual.

You will need to report the internship experience in your next AAR, particularly under research, professional development activities, or broader impacts sections. I've included guidance below on when an internship is permitted under the NSF GRFP guidelines (Section 2.6, p. 10).

**To approve your internship, the Coordinating Official (CO) will need a copy of your offer letter and a letter of support from your advisor (on GT letterhead).**

### **Registering Your Internship with the Career Center**

To ensure you maintain your student status and that your tuition and fees are appropriately managed during your time away from Georgia Tech, please follow the steps outlined below:

#### **1. Register Your Practicum with the Graduate Internship Program:**

Georgia Tech's Graduate Internship Program facilitates the registration of internships and practicums to help maintain student status during off-campus work assignments. By registering, **you will be enrolled in a tuition-free, non-credit audit course** that reflects your full-time engagement and preserves your full-time student status. Review this [online guidance](#) for steps to register for your internship.

#### **2. Maintain Full-Time Enrollment Status:**

By registering your internship, you will be enrolled in the appropriate INTN course based on your work hours (e.g., INTN 6012 for full-time, 36–40 hours/week). This enrollment maintains your full-time student status, which is crucial for loan deferment and other considerations.

#### **3. Deadlines and Important Dates:**

Timeline and Deadlines for each semester are available on the [Career Center webpage](#). Ensure you complete the registration process before the relevant deadlines to avoid any complications.

#### **4. Tuition and Fees:**

Registering for the INTN audit course does not incur tuition fees. However, standard tuition rates will apply if you choose to enroll in additional classes concurrently.

## **ON RESERVE STATUS**

### **GRA/GTA Appointments**

Fellows on Reserve status may hold GRA/GTA appointments at any time.

### **Internships on Reserve**

If you plan to pursue an internship while on Reserve status, no action with the NSF is required.

## MEDICAL & MILITARY LEAVE

### Medical Leave

Medical Leave must be requested in monthly increments, up to a maximum of 24 months. NSF support provides up to three months of paid medical leave ([Section 2.4, p. 7](#)).

- The unused, deferred months of Tenure or Reserve are available for use later, extending beyond the standard five-year limit.
- Fellows in Medical Leave Status must submit an AAR (stating they are on medical leave), and the Medical Leave must be renewed if the Medical Leave extends into a new Fellowship year.

### Military Leave

Military Leave is intended for Fellows who must interrupt their graduate studies for active duty in the U.S. military service. While on Military Leave, a Fellow's fellowship clock stops (i.e., the remaining time available for Tenure or Reserve periods is not affected).

- Fellows must request Military Leaves via the GRFP Online Module and submit a copy of their duty orders to the CO at the awardee IHE.
- Fellows in Military Leave Status must submit an AAR (stating they are on Military Leave) and declare Fellowship status annually.
- The Military Leave Status must be renewed if it extends into a new Fellowship year.

## YEARLY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & DECLARING NEXT YEAR

### Graduating

Fellows who are graduating should wait until they are within 30 days of graduating to log into NSF Research.gov and update the fellowship status for the current fellowship year to 'complete with degree.'

## RESOURCES

### Funds for Travel

Unfortunately, NSF does not provide travel support funding for GRFP fellows to attend conferences. One possible resource is [SGA's Graduate Conference Fund](#).

You should also contact your faculty supervisor and/or your major department to ask if supplemental funding is available to support your travel.

## **Application Preparation**

The [Georgia Tech Naugle Writing and Communication Center](#) provides programs for the broader Georgia Tech community, including undergraduate and graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and staff, such as individual consultations, workshops, and writing programs. They offer free, one-on-one assistance with oral and written work, including presentations, fellowship applications, research papers, and theses.

For the quickest response, please email [wcc@gatech.edu](mailto:wcc@gatech.edu) with questions about services, to reserve presentation rehearsal rooms, or to request assistance with booking an appointment. As a reminder, their services are completely free for all Georgia Tech members, including enrolled students, staff, postdocs, and faculty.

## **Publication Information**

All publications, presentations, and creative works based on activities conducted during the Fellowship must acknowledge NSF GRFP support using the following statement:

*"This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program under Grant No. DGE-2039655. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."*

For more information, see the [NSF GRFP Administrative Guide](#).

## **NSF INTERN**

Non-Academic Research Internships for Graduate Students (INTERN) Supplemental Funding Opportunity

NSF will consider requests for up to 6 months of additional support for graduate students on active NSF grants. To qualify:

- Graduate students must have completed at least one academic year in their graduate programs (master's or doctoral) and be making satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

The PI of the NSF GRFP award may request supplemental funding for one or more graduate students to help them acquire knowledge, skills, and experiences that will enhance their preparation for a successful long-term career through an internship in a non-academic setting.