

YOUR GUIDE TO THE NSF GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Everything You Need to Apply as a Georgia Tech Student

From the Office of Graduate Education

Welcome!

Thinking about applying for the NSF GRFP? This guide walks you through what you need to know — from setting up your application to writing essays that stand out. Keep it open alongside the official NSF materials linked throughout, and to reach out to the people and resources mentioned here.

Step 1: Get Set Up

1. Head to www.nsfgrfp.org to find program information and start your application.

Heads Up: Pick the Right Institution Name

You won't find "Georgia Institute of Technology" in the dropdown menu. Look for "Georgia Tech Research Corporation" instead — that's the Institute's official NSF contracting entity, and it's the one you want.

2. Line up three letters of recommendation. Give your recommenders plenty of lead time, and share this resource so they know what NSF is looking for: [Writing Recommendation Letters Online](#).
3. Before you start drafting, read NSF's official [Tips for Applying](#) — it'll save you time.
4. Double-check you're eligible by reviewing the [NSF GRFP Eligibility Information](#) (NSF 19-590).
5. **Good news — you don't need GRE scores for this one.**

Step 2: Write Your Two Essays

You'll write two essays, and both need to hit the same two notes:

Essay	Must Address
Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement	Intellectual Merit & Broader Impact
Graduate Research Plan Statement	Intellectual Merit & Broader Impact

Tips to Help Your Essays Stand Out

- **Don't have your topic figured out yet? You're not alone — and that's okay.** NSF lets you change your topic after you receive the award — about 90% of fellows do. What reviewers really want to see is a strong proposal with a clear objective and methodology.
- **Make your personal essay memorable.** Skip the “When I was a child...” opener. Tell a story that's genuinely yours and let reviewers get to know who you are.
- **Worked with K–12 students or schools? Mention it.** STEM outreach with schools is a broader impact NSF values highly, so include it in your background if it applies to you.
- **When you write about past research, cover:** what the objective was, what your specific role was, how it contributes to knowledge, its broader impact on society, and whether you worked solo or as part of a team.

Step 3: Get Feedback (Don't Skip This!)

Start Early — Future You Will Thank You

The strongest applications go through several rounds of feedback. Give yourself enough time to revise more than once.

Here's who you can turn to for feedback on your essays:

- Your department's writing specialist (if you have one)
- The [Pre-Graduate and Pre-Professional Advising \(PGPP\) office](#) within C2D2
- Your faculty advisor
- The [Georgia Tech Communication Center](#)

More Resources to Bookmark

- [NSF GRFP FAQs \(NSF 19-081\)](#)

Didn't get it the first time? NSF gives you reviewer feedback — use it to come back stronger on a second application.

Another Place to Turn: Prestigious Fellowships Advising

Georgia Tech's [Prestigious Fellowships Advising](#) office, part of Academic Success & Advising, helps students pursue competitive, merit-based fellowships and can be a great complement to the support you're already getting from your department and the Office of Graduate Education.

Who This Office Serves

This office mainly works with undergraduates and recent graduates. As a current graduate student, your first stops for the NSF GRFP should still be your research advisor and the Office of Graduate Education — but it's worth knowing this office exists, especially if you're looking for writing advisement or editing assistance for your essay.

Contact	Details
Office Contact	Georgia Brunner — fellowshipsadvising@gatech.edu
Appointments	Schedule via Navigate360 — select “Non-Major Specific Advising”
Stay Informed	Sign up for the Fellowships Canvas page for opportunities, application, and writing resources

One Last Thing

The Process Is Worth It — Win or Not

Winning the GRFP would be huge, but don't underestimate the process itself. The essays you write here will become a strong foundation for future fellowship applications, papers, and your own professional growth. You've got this.

Questions? Contact the Graduate Fellowships Manager, fellowships@grad.gatech.edu