Important Information for ALL NSF GRFP Fellows (New and Current)

Please read this document thoroughly, ask any questions and bookmark for future use.

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NSF Document Links & Info:
- GRFP Administrative Guide for Fellows (NSF 22-067) (Updated March 2022)
- NSF Frequently Asked Questions
- NSF Contact Information
- Grant number = DGE-2039655, valid from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2026.

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DECLARING IN FASTLANE – CHOOSING GT; SUMMER OR FALL; TENURE OR RESERVE:

• In NSF FastLane choose ‘Georgia Tech Research Corporation’

Choosing Summer or Fall

• Before you start your NSF at GT, you will choose in NSF FastLane if you want to be a ‘summer’ or ‘fall’ starter. When your funding starts, will affect when it ends.
  o If you choose your first year to be a ‘summer starter’ you will always be a summer starter and your year will always be May 1 – April 30 every year.
    ▪ For example, 2022/2023 as a summer starter = Summer 22, Fall 22, Spring 23
  o If you choose your first year to be a ‘fall starter’ you will always be a fall starter and your year will always be August 1 – July 31 every year.
    ▪ For example, 2022/2023 as a fall starter = Fall 22, Spring 23, Summer 23

Declaring Tenure or Reserve

• Each year, you declare either ‘On Tenure’ or ‘On Reserve’ in NSF FastLane.
  a. Tenure means that you are receiving NSF stipend payments.
  b. Reserve means that you are not receiving any NSF funding, and can pursue a GRA, GTA, or other fellowship funding.
• You have five years in which to use three years of Tenure funding.
• You can declare Reserve status for only entire years of your fellowship, not parts of a year, unless you are seeking a medical or military deferral.

BEFORE YOU START AT GT:

• Register at your first available opportunity. See the Registrar’s website for the official calendar and for registration timelines: http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/calendar/index.php
• Enroll Full-time: For funds to be disbursed, you must be registered full-time, including summer semester. Full-time enrollment is 12 billable, graded hours (either letter grade or pass/fail). Thesis research hours (e.g. 8999, 9000) count as graded hours.
• All NSF GRFP Fellows are required to have health insurance. Georgia Tech offers a graduate student health insurance policy through United Health Care. Alternatively, if you have coverage under a pre-approved health insurance plan you may apply to receive a waiver. More information: http://www.bursar.gatech.edu/content/mandatory-student-insurance.

AT THE START OF YOUR FUNDING:

• Complete Responsible Conduct of Research Training (RCR): All NSF GRFP Fellows must complete two forms of RCR training. Online RCR training must be completed within 90 days of receiving funding. In-person RCR training must be completed within one year of receiving NSF GRFP funding. Information about the training at Georgia Tech that will satisfy this NSF requirement is listed at https://rcr.gatech.edu/nsf. Georgia Tech will not be able to certify adequate academic progress for students unless they have completed their RCR training.

ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE NSF GRFP FUNDING:

To be eligible to receive funding, all NSF GRFP fellows at GT must self-verify that they meet all of the following eligibility criteria by the application deadline:

• Be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident

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• 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 a Graduate Research 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 (i) returning to graduate study after an interruption of two or more consecutive years immediately preceding the application deadline, and; (ii) not enrolled in a graduate degree program at the application deadline
• Not be a current NSF employee

The following categories are always ineligible for the GRFP:
• Those who do not have US citizenship, US national status or permanent resident status by the application deadline
• Those who have earned any graduate or professional degree by fall, except 1) applicants who have completed a joint baccalaureate-master’s (BS/MS) program and have not completed any further graduate study outside the joint program or 2) applicants who have an interruption of at least two consecutive years prior to the application deadline (may have earned a Master’s degree) and have completed no additional graduate study by application deadline
• Those who were previously offered a fellowship from the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program and accepted it
• Those who declined the offer of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and who did not notify NSF by the published deadline for accepting the Fellowship
• Current NSF employees

More information, including an eligibility questionnaire on NSF’s website:
https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/applicant-eligibility/

MAINTAINING YOUR ELIGIBILITY DURING YOUR STUDIES/FELLOWSHIP:
• Maintain GPA 3.0 or above
• Maintain RCR requirements each year
• Submit your activities report each Spring: To continue funding, NSF requires you to submit your activities report and declare Tenure or Reserve by May 1. After you submit this report, Georgia Tech is asked to certify your academic progress.
• Take care of your taxes: Georgia Tech cannot provide tax, financial or legal advice but there is additional information in this document, under Resources. Additionally, please attend our annual Taxes 101 Workshop series for graduate students held in January/beginning of the Spring semester.

ON TENURE: TUITION/FEES, STIPEND & OTHER COSTS

Awards for tuition and fees are posted by Financial Aid during the week prior to the beginning of classes for any given semester. Financial Aid normally processes payments on the Thursday of the add/drop week, each term. Fall = ~third week of August | Spring = ~ mid-January | Summer = ~ mid-May

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If there are issues, start by ensuring you are registered full-time and then contact your **Coordinating Official** (see above for contact information); please do not contact the Bursar's Office nor the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid regarding disbursement or tuition and fee payment posting.

**Tuition/fees:** NSF provides Georgia Tech with a $12,000 cost of education (COE) allowance for each fellow to help cover tuition. Georgia Tech pays the rest of your tuition and your mandatory student fees. Also, nonresident of Georgia students automatically receive a “NRTW” or “non-resident” (aka Out of State) tuition waiver which covers the out-of-state portion of tuition.

**Stipend:** NSF awards GRFP fellows a stipend of $34,000 per year (12 months). Fellows will receive monthly stipends of $2,833 (the amount will be $2,834 on every third month due to rounding).

Depending on your situation, your paycheck may be less than the above-specified amount. This is because stipend funds will first be applied to any outstanding balance of charges for which you are responsible (e.g., housing, parking, student health insurance). The remainder of the stipend will be refunded to you. When you see a “refund” on your account, this refund is what is left after required payments have been made and is the amount that goes to you directly.

**Overpayment:** If you receive more than the $2,833 or $2,834 for your monthly stipend, **please alert your Coordinating Official directly** (not the Office of Financial Aid, nor the Bursar's Office) of the error immediately so that the proper adjustments can be made. If you fail to alert the CO that you have received overpayment, this can result in future scheduled stipends being rescinded.

**Taxes:** Georgia Tech does **not** withhold taxes because NSF GRFP fellows are not employees of Georgia Tech and W-2's cannot be provided. More information on Taxes below.

**Timeline:** While NSF FastLane may list different dates, At Georgia Tech, we utilize the following schedule:

- **Summer starters** = May 1-April 30; first payment late May
- **Fall starters** = August 1-July 31; first payment late August

Stipends are usually disbursed around the last Tuesday of each month. Please reference stipend pay dates here: [https://finaid.gatech.edu/award-process/receive-aid/stipend-dates](https://finaid.gatech.edu/award-process/receive-aid/stipend-dates)

Information about signing up for direct deposit can be found at [http://www.bursar.gatech.edu/content/direct-deposit](http://www.bursar.gatech.edu/content/direct-deposit).

**Other Costs (Health Insurance/Parking Permit):** You are responsible for the cost of your student health insurance (unless you have an approved waiver of health insurance), and the cost of your parking permit if you purchase one through GT Parking.

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ON TENURE: OTHER EMPLOYMENT & INTERNSHIPS

NSF GRFP Fellows may not be on Tenure and hold a GRA/GTA simultaneously. If you wish to pursue a GRA/GTA you must declare ‘Reserve’ in FastLane.

Other employment is possible if NSF GRFP guidelines are followed: “Fellows on tenure may have a paid teaching or research position if the activity focuses on the Fellow’s own education and training and not on service to the University,” and proper approval is obtained. It is your responsibility to keep your CO informed by sending all information/documents related to internships and other employment. Details to follow -

GA for no more than 10 hours/week:

Georgia Tech does not allow NSF GRFP Fellows to be employed as GRAs or GTAs while on Tenure. However, an NSF GRF Fellow may be hired as a GA for no more than 10 hours/week while on Tenure.

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 teach as a GA for one-semester only. It is very important that the Fellow is hired as a GA with hourly pay, and NOT as a GTA and that a waiver is not placed on the student record. 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 employment:

Outside employment is discouraged because the NSF GRFP Fellowship is meant to allow the Fellow ample time for research and studies.

To obtain permission, email the Coordinating Official the following information:

- PDF copy of employment offer letter, including the start and end dates and salary information
- Brief statement from the Fellow’s faculty advisor certifying that the position is in alignment with the Fellow’s research and will not adversely impact the program of study

The CO will coordinate approval from the VPGPE and must be given in advance.

Internships/CO-OP:

Unpaid (Summer) Internships: May be arranged by contacting the Coordinating Official for advance approval and by being enrolled full-time (e.g. 12 hours with at least 6 hours for credit). The NSF GRFP stipend will normally continue IF your advisor states that the work to be done contributes to your overall research experience.

Nominally Paying & Hourly Internships: Fellows with nominally paying internships (e.g., ~$10/hour) who are doing this internship for a nominal number of hours (e.g., 3-5 hours/week) may enroll in part-time graduate research or co-op course hours related to the number of hours worked each week. If the internship opportunity is either more than 5 hours/week, and/or more than ~$10/hour, then it is considered a ‘Salaried Internship’ and the stipend must be forfeited – see below.

Salaried Internships: Graduate internships can be approved for full-time positions related to your major. NSF requires that you forfeit your stipends for the months involved. It is important that you work with the employer to arrange contracts that span whole-month periods.

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For planning purposes, please align as close to possible to the NSF/GT calendar as follows:

- **Fall** 5 months--August 1 to December 31
- **Spring** 4 months-January 1 to April 30
- **Summer** 3 months--May 1 to July 31

Fellows must submit a Change Request via FastLane to change your status to Forfeit. And later, another Change Request to revert your status back to Tenure when the internship ends. Details and screenshots below.

Prior to registering an internship officially, approval must be obtained from the VPGPE via the CO, your academic department, and the Graduate Co-op/Internship Program Advisor. To obtain these approvals, there are two layers of approval for all internships:

1. **VPGPE /CO Approval:**
   To obtain permission, email the **Coordinating Official** the following information:
   - PDF copy of employment offer letter, including the start and end dates and salary information, including information about whether the funding source is federal or non-federal
   - Brief statement from the Fellow’s faculty advisor certifying that the position is in alignment with the Fellow’s research and will not adversely impact the program of study

2. **Graduate Co-op/Internship Advising Office Approval:**
   Next, email the Graduate Career Advisor (Christina Hall, christina.hall@gatech.edu) to receive a registration permit form. This form will need approval from your academic department/Graduate Coordinator.
   Then, you will enroll in 12 Co-op audit hours. COOP 6012 is a no-fee/no-tuition based audit course assigned to all grad co-op students working full-time. Financial Aid needs those hours reflected on your schedule to ensure your active NSF GRFP status. More information regarding Graduate Co-op/Internship here: [https://career.gatech.edu/graduate-students/co-op-internship](https://career.gatech.edu/graduate-students/co-op-internship)

3. **Forfeit in NSF FastLane**
   a. Log into FastLane and select “Request Fellowship Status Change”

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b. Choose the appropriate year (remember the 2021/2022 academic year = 2021 in NSF; and 2022/2023 = 22) and then select ‘request change’

c. 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 a date at the beginning of the month your internship begins (e.g. if you are actually interning May 13 – August 15 you will forfeit for all of May, June and July, so choose May 1 as your start date).

d. Once it’s all approved, it should look like this -

e. Before the end of your forfeit period you will go back into FastLane and choose ‘tenure’ as your new status.

4. Lastly, remember that all Fellows must maintain health insurance coverage.
ON RESERVE: GRA/GTA & INTERNSHIP APPROVAL

GRA/GTA: Fellows on Reserve status may hold GRA or GTA appointments anytime.

Internships: If you will be pursuing an internship while on Reserve status, you must also obtain approval through the Graduate Co-op/Internship office as noted above but no other action re: NSF funding needs to take place.

YEARLY REPORTING REQUIREMENT & DECLARING NEXT YEAR

- Each year, by May 1st, you are required to complete an activity report and declare either reserve or tenure for the following year in NSF FastLane.
- If you are graduating soon, please declare 'reserve' for the next year and then within 30 days of your graduation you may go back into FastLane and then choose '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. See contact information here: https://www.sga.gatech.edu/grad-exec/. You should also get in touch with your faculty supervisor and/or your major department to inquire if supplemental funding is available to support your travel.

Income taxes:

The NSF GRFP stipend is normally taxable, but Georgia Tech does not withhold taxes and W-2s cannot be provided because fellows are not employees of Georgia Tech, nor are you an employee by NSF's classification. Your status is fellowship-funded graduate student. Your NSF GRFP fellowship funding is not salary income.

For further information please utilize these resources:

- http://www.finaid.gatech.edu/taxes
- https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/how-fellows-should-prepare-tax-time-start-academic-year#.WcKnfA-P8mM.e.mail

Georgia Tech is unable to provide tax, financial or advice, and therefore all questions regarding taxes should be directed to a tax or financial advisor.

Publication information:

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

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"This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship under Grant No. DGE-2039655"

and containing the following disclaimer:

"Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

For further information, see the NSF GRFP Administrative Guide for Fellows (link at the top).

NSF Graduate Research Internship Program (GRIP):

NSF GRIP provides opportunities for Fellows to do 10-week paid internships with federal facilities and national laboratories. Students selected for this program may remain on Tenure status and receive their NSF GRFP funding plus the $5,000 for this internship program. Applications are submitted through FastLane; deadlines are in December (for summer), March (for fall), and June (for spring/winter) each year. More information here: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505127

Supercomputing:

One of your benefits as an NSF GRFP fellow is access to supercomputing through XSEDE. More information: https://www.xsede.org/home. For further information, see the NSF GRFP Administrative Guide for Fellows (link at the top).