



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 16-050

Dear Colleague Letter: Change in Eligibility to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

March 7, 2016

Dear Colleague:

With this Dear Colleague Letter, NSF is providing advance notice of a change in the eligibility of prospective applicants to the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) to allow the community to plan accordingly. Effective as of the 2017 competition (Fall 2016 deadlines), NSF will limit graduate students to only one application to the GRFP, submitted either in the first year **or** in the second year of graduate school.¹ No change is made to the eligibility of undergraduates, of bachelor's degree holders without any graduate study, or of individuals who have had an interruption in graduate study of at least two consecutive years.² GRFP continues to identify and to inspire the diverse scientists and engineers of the future, and especially encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, persons with disabilities, and veterans to apply. This change in eligibility should result in more individuals applying as undergraduate students who have not yet made the commitment to go to graduate school. This is a more diverse population than admitted graduate students.

NSF's strong commitment to supporting graduate students through this program since 1952 has resulted in awarding close to 57,000 graduate fellowships to U.S. individuals pursuing graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and in STEM education. Through its Graduate Research Fellowship awards, NSF hopes to encourage outstanding individuals from across all groups to attend graduate school.

Please see [NSF 16-051](#), [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), for more information.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
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¹ First-year graduate students in Fall 2015 who applied to the 2016 GRFP competition will be allowed to apply a second time in Fall 2016, if they are otherwise eligible. All other graduate students are subject to the new eligibility requirements.

² http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf15597