

Virginia Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship

eSeaGrant Instructions

OVERVIEW

Applications are due by November 16, 2018 at 5:00 pm Eastern Time. If you plan to apply, we strongly recommend notifying Virginia Sea Grant (VASG) and registering for eSeaGrant at least two weeks in advance of the deadline. Please review the fellowship announcement (<https://vaseagrant.org/>) and refer to these instructions as a guide to submit your application using eSeaGrant.

REGISTERING FOR ESEAGRANT

Applicants can register for eSeaGrant by visiting the website (<http://vaseagrant.ecsion.com>), selecting the “Register” tab, and completing the required information. If you do not receive a “welcome” email with login credentials shortly after registering, please contact Sam Lake (contact information below). Once you login, you can change your password. To do so, click your name in the upper-right corner of the screen, and select “My Profile.”

CREATING A FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

To start an application, or edit an existing application, click on “Current Tasks” on the banner head, and select “Add Fellowship Application” under “2019 VASG Graduate Research Fellowship.”

Once you have added the fellowship application to your Current Tasks, you must progress down through the sequence of application sections (“Start Here” through “Submission Preview”) listed on the left side of the window to submit your application. Guidance related to these sections follows, in sequence. Please note - some sections may require additional pop-up pages, please allow your browser to display pop-up windows and enable JavaScript.

eSeaGrant provides sections to upload your signed title page, resumes/CVs, career and professional development goal statement, professional mentor and outreach plan, professional mentor letter of commitment, undergraduate and graduate school transcripts, project narrative, and budget and budget justification. These documents must be converted to PDFs. To preserve confidentiality, letters of recommendations must be uploaded directly from the referees to VASG through eSeaGrant. Applicants must identify and submit requests to their referees through eSeaGrant, by entering their referees’ names and email addresses in the corresponding section. **Applicants must click the “Submit” button in the “Submission Preview” section to complete their application.**

All elements, including recommendation letters, must be submitted by the deadline. VASG will not accept late applications under any circumstances (e.g., internet delays), so please allow ample time to submit in advance of the deadline. Confirmation of the application and recommendation letters will be automatically generated and sent by eSeaGrant. If you do not receive confirmation shortly after submitting your application, please contact Sam Lake.

In Collaboration With



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For full details on the application guidelines, required elements, and review and selection process, please download the fellowship announcement. The information included below should not be considered a comprehensive guide. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review VASG's additional guidance documents and related templates available at: <https://vaseagrant.org/>

Signed Title Page (two-page maximum)

The title page must list the project title, identify and provide contact information for the prospective fellow, faculty advisor(s), and professional mentor. The proposed start and end date, and the total amount of VASG and matching funds being requested for each project year must also be listed. The title page should include a Research Abstract of up to 500 words, summarizing the research project you will be working on during the fellowship, including section headers for the *objectives*, *methodology*, and *rationale*. In addition, include a list of funders (agency, organizations, university programs, etc.) and funding amounts that are supporting the proposed research. Separate research funding is not a requirement or selection criteria for VASG fellowship support, although students will need to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing the proposed work. Please indicate if the funding program(s) peer-reviewed the associated proposal / research work plan. Required institutional signatures should be included on the title page; these are often provided by institutional sponsored program offices or equivalent to verify that the institution has reviewed the application. *A template can be found on the VASG website.*

Career and Professional Development Goal Statement (two-page maximum)

The statement should describe your educational/professional goals and ambitions, professional growth interests and objectives. Include how these goals relate to broader societal needs in the coastal and marine environment. The statement should emphasize how past experiences and competencies contribute toward your short- (1-5yr) and long-term (>5yr) goals and in particular, how this fellowship would contribute toward those goals. Speak to your leadership potential, communication ability, stakeholder engagement interests or experience, and include any pertinent information that provides insights into your past choices and future interests. Illustrate what motivates you today and moving forward with your research and its application. A section of the statement should include a timeline of activities you hope to achieve over the duration of the fellowship, i.e., the initial outline of an individualized professional development plan that will be fleshed out with the professional mentor. VASG encourages you to include what you hope to gain from your professional outreach or end-user mentor relationship, and how that contributes toward your long-term academic and professional goals.

Professional Mentor and Outreach Plan (one-page maximum)

The plan should be developed with your mentor to identify professional mentoring and outreach objectives/activities to be conducted during the fellowship. The plan should address many of the questions below and indicate who your target audience(s) is for your proposed activities. What do you hope to gain professionally and academically from the specific outreach activities proposed in the outreach plan? What are the connections between your research and the needs/interests of an end-user, and how will you make these connections happen? What deliverables will you produce once the research is completed, what deliverables may be planned after the fellowship, and why are these the best option for your target audience(s)? How will you and the mentor interact to achieve these goals (e.g., frequency, timeline, means of communication, topics, etc.)?

Professional Mentor Letter of Commitment

The letter should indicate a commitment to mentor the student, and include a description of the mentor's role in the fellow's academic and professional experience. Only a single letter should be sent (i.e., mentor teams must write and submit a single joint letter). The proposed mentor may submit the letter either to the student to include with their materials, or submit separately through eSeaGrant (see *Letters of Recommendation* section below). The letter must be



submitted before the deadline. There is no page limit, but VASG recommends that they not exceed two pages, and not include attachments.

Resumes/CVs (two-page maximum per Resume/CV)

A brief CV or resume should be included for the student, primary advisor(s), and professional mentor. Do not include the CVs of committee members, other associated project participants, or others.

Undergraduate and Graduate School Transcripts

Unofficial copies are acceptable but should clearly indicate name of institution, degree program, courses taken, and GPAs. Transcripts should be included in reverse chronological order (i.e., newest transcripts first).

Project Narrative (three-page maximum, including figures, tables, and other graphics but excluding literature cited and data management plan)

Project title and name of student must be included in the header. The narrative is intended to be a brief summary of the proposed thesis or area of study. It should include sufficient detail to evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of the research and outreach approach, and how the project aligns with the VASG Strategic Plan. The narrative should include the following subsections: Introduction, Research Plan, Outreach Rational and Tasks, Outcomes and Broader Societal Impacts, Research Team and Coordination, Literature Cited, and Data Management Plan. Refer to the fellowship announcement for detailed guidance on each of these subsections.

Budget and Budget Justification

Up to \$40,000 per year for up to two years for M.S. and Ph.D. students can be requested for reasonable and necessary research fellowship funds, including stipend, tuition, fringe benefits, travel, and supplies. While the majority of the budget is likely to be stipend, tuition, or other enrollment fees, it is expected that the budget will include funds for discretionary travel for conferences, professional development, research-related events, equipment, and/or supplies. Ideally the budget would include, at a minimum, travel support for the fellow to attend one to two VASG meetings per year around Virginia (e.g., VASG's Graduate Symposium in Richmond, fellowship orientation, VASG professional development workshops), and attendance at one professional conference.

Facilities & Administrative (F&A) costs, also known as indirect or overhead, are NOT allowable on Sea Grant fellowships per federal regulation (15 C.F.R. § 917.11). VASG-funded projects require a 50% funding match (i.e., budgets must show \$1 of match for every \$2 of Sea Grant funding requested). Only non-Federal funds may be committed as matching contribution. In-kind contributions, unrecovered F&A and tuition, and non-federal salaries are all examples of match. Budgets should be developed in the 90-4 budget worksheet (available on the VASG website). The budget justification must be a detailed description of each cost item in the 90-4 budget; additional guidance is available on the VASG website. VASG strongly encourages students to work with their institution's research administration or sponsored programs office to develop their budgets.

Letters of Recommendation

Two letters of recommendation should be submitted in support of the student. To maintain confidentiality, VASG requires that letters are NOT submitted with the student's application. Recommendation letters must be requested and uploaded through eSeaGrant. There is no page limit for letters, but VASG recommends that letters not exceed two pages and not include attachments.

The student's primary faculty advisor or appropriate faculty member (who is the PI on the research award the applicant will be working on during the fellowship) must provide one letter of recommendation. Co-advisors may submit a joint letter, or they may submit separate letters. However, each student is limited to a total of two recommendation letters.



For the second letter of recommendation, VASG encourages applicants to consider someone who might know you from a different perspective (e.g., former employer, mentor from a previous relevant internship, someone you worked with on an outreach or policy project). It is most important to select someone who will write a strong letter for you, but an “outside” perspective helps to demonstrate your diversity and will likely highlight different strengths and experiences.

IMPORTANT – To maintain confidentiality, letters of recommendation should be submitted directly from the referee to VASG through eSeaGrant and must be submitted by the application deadline to be considered. Please address letters to Dr. Troy Hartley, Director Virginia Sea Grant. Candidates are encouraged to work with referees to meet the deadline.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions regarding use of eSeaGrant, please contact Sam Lake, VASG Fellowship and Research Program Coordinator (804-684-7436 or sjlake@vims.edu).

All Virginia university students applying for the VASG Graduate Research Fellowship must have their fellowship applications approved by their home institution’s sponsored programs/research office prior to submitting to VASG. Each institution may handle this differently, although all will have an internal deadline for submitting applications to their sponsored programs/research office for their review and approval prior to VASG’s deadline.