



Funding Announcement

2012–2014

Virginia Sea Grant

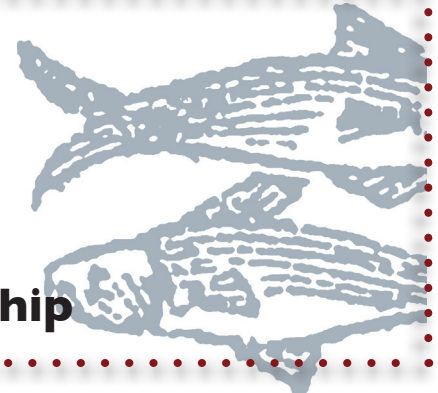
Graduate Research Fellowship

Proposal due date: January 20, 2012

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Deadline: January 20, 2012

Submit applications by email to: spark@vims.edu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virginia Sea Grant (VASG) is pleased to announce the availability of graduate research fellowships for the 2012–2014 academic years. The fellowship is open to Ph.D. students at any Virginia academic institution who are engaged in coastal and marine research relevant to Virginia and the VASG strategic plan. In addition to supporting the student’s academic expenses, the fellowship will provide additional professional development opportunities throughout its duration, focusing on science communication, science-to-management process, adoption of innovation, and other Sea Grant activities and mission priorities. VASG is accepting applications until January 20, 2012.

I. FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION

The mission of VASG is to enhance the ecological, economic, and social sustainability of coastal and ocean communities and the ecosystem services they depend upon through university-based research, extension, education, and communication that provide science-based information to decision makers. VASG serves the Commonwealth of Virginia, the region, and the nation.

The purpose of the VASG Graduate Research Fellowship is to support promising Ph.D. students who are engaged in research that furthers the goals of VASG. The fellowship also provides fellows with hands-on experience in translating research results to coastal and marine stakeholders. Fellows will be provided with training opportunities in core skills relevant to Sea Grant, including education, extension, and communications. In addition to their primary advisor, fellows will be expected to work with an outreach or end-user mentor (i.e., extension staff, educator, or end-user) to ensure that their research results are useful and used by resource managers, policy makers, educators, industry, NGOs, or other stakeholders, and that they develop practical skills in science communication, and in advancing the transfer of science to management.

The Fellows will be selected based on their academic achievements, the relevance of their proposed research to VASG goals, and their demonstrated interest in outreach activities. More information about VASG, including the strategic plan, can be found at <http://vaseagrant.vims.edu/>. While any Ph.D. student may apply and will be fairly considered, VASG is interested in leveraging the impact of its research support and workforce development activities, and thus students working on coastal and marine research projects funded by non-Sea Grant sources are particularly encouraged to apply.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Contingent upon available federal funding, fellowships are available for up to two-years. The anticipated start date is June 1, 2012. The fellowship provides an award of up to \$40,000 per year. VASG-funded projects require a 50% funding match (i.e., proposal budgets must show \$1 of match for every \$2 of Sea Grant funding requested). Only non-Federal funds may be committed as matching contribution.

Most university sponsored research programs will require that the award be made to a student's primary advisory and faculty member. While VASG will make all fellowship awards to the faculty member, we intend for students to have the primary leadership role in developing the fellowship proposal.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Students must be enrolled in or admitted to a full-time graduate or professional degree program at a Virginia academic institution at a Ph.D. or equivalent level. Students who have not yet enrolled should submit a letter of acceptance from their college or university with their application package. Students may be working toward a degree in any discipline as long as their research is coastal- or marine-related and relevant to the mission and strategic plan of VASG.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Graduate student fellows who are selected will be required to:

- provide academic progress reports to VASG on an annual basis, including a final report and copy of their thesis;
- select and work with a mentor who is an extension, education, communication staff person or an end-user of research results (e.g., resource manager, teacher) to ensure that research results are appropriately communicated and translated for end-users;
- participate in VASG-sponsored training activities, anticipated to be 2-3 activities per year;
- attend the 1-day VASG's Annual Project Participants' Symposium in Richmond (include travel in budget); and
- acknowledge the support of VASG in all relevant scientific presentations and publications.

At a minimum, outreach or end-user mentors are expected to periodically meet with the fellow to reflect upon their research design, activities, and plans and provide guidance on issues associated with communicating the information to non-experts, advancing the information to managers or policy makers, promoting adoption of the innovation or technology, or other application of results. In some situations, outreach or end-user mentors may serve on a student's academic committee. The exact role of the mentor is to be determined and defined by the applicants, in conjunction with their primary advisors and the mentor.

An outreach or end-user mentor could be from the public, private or non-profit sector. While they could be extension agents, educators, or communicators with Sea Grant or the Cooperative Extension program, they do not need to be. They should be individuals in a professional situation that requires the application of scientific information and research, particularly the information, data and findings coming from the applicant's research project. Virginia Sea Grant can provide assistance to prospective fellows in identifying potential mentors.

V. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Adherence to the format requirements is mandatory. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point and margins must be at least 1 inch on standard 8.5x11 inch paper throughout the document. Applications should include:

- A. Cover Sheet (1-page maximum): This should include detailed contact information for the applicant, their faculty advisor and the outreach or end-user mentor, funding level requested, degree being sought, field of study, title of proposed project, and any institutional signatures required by the home institution's sponsored research programs office or other similar office.
- B. Academic CV/Resume (2-page maximum)
- C. Undergraduate and graduate school transcripts (unofficial copies are acceptable).
- D. Three letters of recommendation: One letter of recommendation should come from your primary faculty advisor. A second letter should come from the outreach or end-user mentor indicating a commitment to mentor and including a description of the role that the mentor will play in the fellow's academic experience. If an applicant wants assistance identifying potential outreach or end-user mentors, or would like to talk further about this expectation, they are encouraged to contact VASG.
- E. Career Goal Statement (1-page maximum): The statement should describe the applicant's educational and professional goals, and how these goals fit into broader societal needs. The statement should emphasize how this fellowship would contribute to the applicant's goals.
- F. Project Description (4-page maximum, including figures, tables, and other graphics): The narrative should include the subsections listed below. It is intended to be a brief summary of the proposed thesis or the general intended area of study, but should include sufficient detail to evaluate the appropriateness and feasibility of the approach, and the alignment of the project with VASG's strategic plan.
 - a. Rationale. Provide the need for the research project, background information, and how the proposed project addresses a specific VASG mission and strategic plan focus (e.g., reference the strategic plan priority that the research will address). Consider what new scientific workforce capacity is needed in the field.
 - b. Objectives. List the objectives and/or hypotheses of the research project, including a brief statement of the context of the proposed project in relation to other related work or fields of related research. Be careful to state the purpose of the work as the objective rather than to list project activities or tasks.
 - c. Methods. Describe the methods, approaches, and techniques that will be used to meet the stated objectives.
 - d. Anticipated Benefits. Describe the results to be achieved by the project, how these results relate to current knowledge of the proposal topic, and of what use the results will be for specific audiences or end-users. A brief description of the outreach, education or dissemination strategies to be used should be included. This strategy should go beyond traditional

dissemination (e.g., presentations and peer-reviewed literature) to reach end-users directly (e.g., training workshops, development of appropriate outreach products for non-scientific audiences, work with K-12 students and teachers). Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their mentor to develop their outreach strategy.

- e. Partners and Research Team. Briefly describe the research team and their roles and responsibilities, including the role of the outreach or end-user mentor.

G. Literature Cited

H. Timeline and Tasks: The schedule should show, in table form by month, the milestones and tasks to be achieved (e.g., field work, data analysis, work with outreach mentor, development of outreach products) and the anticipated dates for achieving those tasks.

- I. Budget Form 90-4 and Budget Justification: Forms and sample justification can be found here: <http://vaseagrant.vims.edu/resources-for-full-proposal-submission/> Up to \$40,000 per year for up to two years can be requested for any reasonable and necessary research funds, including stipend, tuition, fringe benefits, travel, and equipment. The budget may include funds for equipment, supplies, and/or discretionary travel; however, the budget should include travel support for the fellow to attend the 1-day annual VASG Project Participants Symposium in Richmond (late January/early February timeframe, 10 am-5 pm followed by an evening reception). It is VASG policy to cap IDC rates at 5% for student fellowships. VASG-funded projects require a 50% funding match (i.e., proposal 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, waived overhead and tuition, and non-federal salaries are all examples of match. For currently enrolled students, VASG strongly encourages that students work with their home institutions sponsored research programs office to develop their budgets.
- J. Proof of acceptance (or provisional acceptance) and enrollment in a Ph.D. program in a relevant field of study.

VI. DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted via email to vsgproposals@vims.edu by 5:00pm EST on January 20, 2012 in Word or PDF format. Insert "VASG Graduate Fellowship" in the email subject line. Confirmation of application receipt will be sent by return email to the originating mailbox only. Please contact Susan Park (contact information below) if you do not receive confirmation shortly after submitting your proposal. Letters of recommendation may be mailed, faxed, or emailed to Susan Park directly. VASG will not accept late proposals under any circumstances (e.g., internet delays) so please allow ample time to submit your proposals before the deadline. If you do not have email access, please contact VASG at the phone number below. Applicants are reminded to follow submission policies of their home institutions (e.g., obtaining institutional review and signatures).

VII. REVIEW PROCESS

VASG will assemble a peer-review panel composed of the VASG director, faculty, and end-users (e.g., extension staff, resource managers, private and non-profit sectors, and/or additional stakeholders familiar with the coastal and ocean resource issues faced by Virginia, the region, and the nation). VASG follows strict conflict-of-interest policies. The Panel will review applications and select award recipients based on the following criteria:

1. Strength of academic performance and potential (30%)

2. Quality and extent of collaboration between student and outreach mentor, and quality of outreach plan (15%)
3. Quality and scientific merit of the research proposal (15%)
4. Three letters of recommendation (15%)
5. Relevance of research topic to VASG (10%)
6. Additional relevant experience, including extra-curricular activities, honors, and awards (10%)
7. Workforce development needs in the field (5%)

Notification of awards is expected in February, 2012. VASG expects to fund 2-4 fellowships for the 2012–2014 period.

VIII. CONTACT

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the VASG Assistant Director for Research, Susan Park, to discuss their proposal ideas.

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