

If I am currently enrolled in a Masters Program but will graduate in Summer 2024 and plan to begin a PhD program in Fall 2024, am I eligible to receive the Massachusetts Graduate Research Fellowship?

No. If you are enrolled in a Masters program at the time of application to the Massachusetts Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship (i.e. enrolled on October 1, 2023), with the exception of students enrolled in a Joint Bachelors/Masters program, you are not eligible to receive this Fellowship.

If I am a US citizen but have an undergraduate degree from a non-US institution, am I eligible to receive this fellowship?

Yes. All US Citizens and Permanent Residents are eligible to receive this fellowship, regardless of the undergraduate-degree granting institution.

If I am not a US citizen but have an undergraduate degree from a US institution, am I eligible to receive this fellowship?

Yes. The RFP states on page 2: "International students who are not US citizens or permanent residents must have received an undergraduate or previous graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. territories."

Do you have advice on how to prioritize what information gets included in the two-pages of the personal statement?

This information is up to you. Please review the RFP for the information that we would like to see in your personal statement. Focus on the activities or things that impacted your career choices. Share with us who you are and why you want to enter your field of study. Help us to understand how you think this fellowship will help you to achieve your career goals.

How many people will be receiving this fellowship?

We anticipate awarding **two** fellowships. In addition to notifying the top finalists, we will also notify secondary and alternate awardees in early January as well.

Should I already be accepted into a graduate program at this point?

No, you do not need to be accepted into a graduate program at this time. If you have been accepted into a graduate program but have not yet enrolled, you may also apply for this fellowship.

Should the research proposal focus on coastal research, or is marine research in general ok?

The research proposal should focus on research that addresses the National Sea Grant Focus Areas. The focus areas are quite broad.

Who will be reviewing the applications?

We anticipate reviewers will have expertise across the four Sea Grant focus areas, and will likely include experts in natural and social sciences, coastal management, marine policy, education, or other fields.

What if my proposal depends on additional funding or collaboration? Will my fellowship not be supported?

No. If the work that you are proposing in this application package depends on additional funding or collaboration, that will not be part of the decision-making process on who is awarded this fellowship. However, we do expect you to be working with a faculty advisor who will be able to provide some additional resources for you.

Can you elaborate on the non-federal 50% match in more detail?

Sea Grant programs are required by statute to receive 50% matching for all federal support that we award. **You will not be required to provide this matching support personally.** This match will most likely be coming from the university or institution that you'll be attending. Your university commonly provides matching funds for many types of projects and funding sources and we anticipate your potential faculty advisor will help you to secure this matching support. What you can use as matching funds often varies between institutions, so you will need to work with your future advisor/institution to determine what can be used as match.

Will the research proposals be reviewed as pure natural science proposals or is it OK to include social sciences in the Research Plan? Is there flexibility on how these proposals are organized?

Yes, it is perfectly fine to incorporate interdisciplinary research into your research plan. There are no requirements on formatting for your research plan aside from font size, margins, and page limits, so please organize your Research Plan in the way that best allows you to highlight your research interests for reviewers.

Where can I find the slides and email contact for if I have more questions?

The information session slides can be found on WHOISG's website (<https://seagrants.whoi.edu/fellowship-opportunities/grf/>). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out via email to seagrants-research@whoi.edu.

Are there specific formatting requirements for the RFP (font size, spacing, etc.)?

Yes, these requirements are in the RFP on page 6: "All documents should be single spaced, Times New Roman, and no smaller than 11 point font, with one-inch margins all around."

Are there specific formatting requirements for each section of the RFP?

While there is no specified organization for any sections of the RFP, there are details of what to include in the RFP and you are allowed to organize your research plan and other sections in any way that makes sense to you.

Some graduate programs do not send out acceptance letters until after the Sea Grant acceptance deadline. Can I accept the Fellowship if I haven't heard back from the program/institution I applied to?

The first thing to do is to contact us and let us know you are in this situation, then you should contact your prospective advisor and let them know you've been offered this fellowship because it could influence their decision.

How can I get my finished, polished proposal format reviewed?

Once your proposal is complete, you can have it format reviewed by sending an email request with your proposal attached to seagrants-research@whoi.edu. We cannot give advice on what you have written but

we can do a completeness check to ensure all of the components the RFP requires are present in your application.

If I enroll in a deferred enrollment program where I work for 2 years and start graduate school in 2 years, am I eligible for this fellowship?

You are not eligible for the 2024 Massachusetts Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship if you are not starting graduate school in September of 2024. However, if you were to do deferred enrollment, we encourage you to check back in 2 years when you are starting graduate school and see if you are eligible then.

If I am applying for the WHOI/MIT Joint Program for my PhD can I apply for the 2024 Massachusetts Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship?

Yes, the WHOI/MIT Joint Program is not a fellowship program, it is a PhD program. You can apply for the 2024 Massachusetts Sea Grant Graduate Research Fellowship to support you during your first 2 years of your Joint Program work. The only way you would be ineligible for this Fellowship would be if you were to receive another federal fellowship.

Is it best to make your research plan very specific?

It should be as specific as it needs to be. We want you to showcase your ability to come up with hypotheses, what hypothesis driven questions you plan to ask, and the methods you would use to address those research questions. Your research questions can be very specific and the methods you propose can be specific to address those questions. The key is to highlight what those hypotheses driven questions are and what methods you would use to address them.

What are the statistics for those that apply and receive the funding even though the funding is every 2 years?

In 2021, we had 18 applicants and funded 2 of them.

Is your prospective faculty advisor different from your Sea Grant Liaison?

Yes, your prospective faculty advisor is the person who's lab you would be joining and working with during your graduate program. That is separate from the WHOI and/or MIT Sea Grant Liaison we would be assigning to you if you were to get the fellowship.