

Ocean STEAM Powered Fellowship

This fellowship is open to students of all backgrounds and identities. The residential program will run in two gender-based cohorts. There is no cost to participate in this program. Housing, meals, and all program activities are fully covered.

Applications are due by March 20th, 2026 by 11:59 pm.

FELLOWSHIP DATES:

Week 1: August 2 - August 8, 2026*

Week 2: August 9 - August 15, 2026*

*When you apply make sure you are available for both weeks, as you will be assigned a week.

[Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution \(WHOI\) Sea Grant](#) is now accepting applications for the Ocean STEAM Powered (O-STEAM) Fellowship, a week-long, residential fellowship in [Woods Hole](#) offered at no cost to Massachusetts high school sophomores and juniors. We are pleased to announce that we will run **2 weeks** of O-STEAM in 2026!

Fellows are housed on the beautiful [Sea Education Association](#) campus during the fellowship, with easy access to the nearby [WHOI](#) facilities. During the week, fellows work with WHOI Sea Grant Education Specialist Grace Simpkins, WHOI researchers, and program assistants to dive deep into ocean research while also meeting other Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) professionals and learning from their collective expertise. The immersive experience seeks to expose the participants to a wide range of marine careers, involve them in research, and help them form meaningful connections with scientists, educators, and fellow students. Activities during the week include building their own underwater microphone (or hydrophone), testing their hydrophone by towing it while kayaking (weather dependent), sound analysis of dolphin vocalizations, participating in shipboard oceanographic techniques, water quality testing, constructing and deploying an ocean drifter, going on a whale watch expedition to observe marine mammals (weather dependent), and more. Fellows will also learn from communications specialists about how to share their research and experiences with their community.

Expanding Access to Ocean Science.

We are committed to creating a welcoming and dynamic learning environment that brings together and values a variety of perspectives and life experiences. O-STEAM was designed to expand access to ocean sciences by encouraging students who may not otherwise have opportunities to participate in hands-on research and fieldwork. Participants are selected based on interest, curiosity, and potential, and all applicants are given equal consideration.

You must be a resident of Massachusetts and attend a school in Massachusetts. You must be starting your high school junior or senior year in fall of 2026. *All levels of interest and experience are welcome.*

This is a field experience and will involve working both inside and outside with light to moderate activity levels. We will work full days but have ample free time after dinner. You must be willing to fully commit to the learning experience, meeting new people, making connections, and giving the week your all.

IMPORTANT - Read Before Applying

We recommend printing or saving a copy of the application PDF so you can prepare your responses in advance. Writing your answers in a word processor such as Word or Google Docs will allow you to spellcheck and edit your 300-word essays before submitting them.

If you would like help with your application, please contact Grace Simpkins at gsimpkins@whoi.edu. A WHOI student can be assigned to support you through the application process.

A recommendation from an adult who is **not a relative** is required for your application to be considered. This recommendation may come from a teacher, coach, mentor, instructor of an extracurricular program, or group leader who knows you well. Be sure to ask whether a recommender is available to write a recommendation before completing your application. **YOU are responsible for asking your recommender to send a letter (pdf please) to Grace Simpkins, gsimpkins@whoi.edu, by March 20th.**

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

Publicity

2. How did you find out about the O-STEAM program? *

Mark only one oval.

- E-mail
- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- A mentor
- An alumni of the program
- School guidance counselor
- Local Library
- Teacher
- Friend
- After school activity
- Other: _____

Personal Information

3. First name *

4. Last name *

5. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) *

6. Personal Email Address *

7. School Email Address *

8. Preferred Email *

Mark only one oval.

Personal

School

9. Phone Number *

10. Address *

11. City *

12. State (You must be a resident of Massachusetts) *

13. Zip Code *

14. Race/Ethnicity (you may choose more than one) *

Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino/a/x
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White/European
- Choose not to disclose
- Other: _____

School Information

15. Current Grade (you must be a current sophomore or junior) *

Mark only one oval.

- Sophomore (10th)
- Junior (11th)

16. Official School Name (No abbreviations; if homeschooled use "homeschool" for this section) *

17. School City *

18. School State (You must attend school in Massachusetts) *

19. School Type *

Mark only one oval.

- Public
- Charter
- Private
- Homeschool
- Technical High School

Parent/Guardian and Household Details

20. Parent/Guardian First Name *

21. Parent/Guardian Last Name *

22. Parent/Guardian Relationship *

23. Parent/Guardian Email (please make sure this is correct and is not the same one * you have listed for yourself)

24. Parent/Guardian Phone *

25. Parent/Guardian's occupation? (Please list both if you reside with 2 parents or * guardians)

26. What is the highest level of education in your household? *

Mark only one oval.

GED

High School Diploma

Associate's Degree

Trade School

Undergraduate Degree

Master's Degree

PhD

Other: _____

Short Response

27. If you have ever participated in a fellowship or STEAM expedition before, please check yes here and use the following question to provide details on when, where, length of program and what you did. *

*The goal of the fellowship is to provide opportunities to participate in hands-on research in ocean sciences for those who haven't had this experience and would not have the opportunity otherwise.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

28. If yes to the last question, please give a brief description of the program and when you attended it.

29. Have you ever been on a recreation boat such as a sailboat or motorboat? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

30. What does your family typically do on school breaks? (Please limit yourself to 1-2 * sentences)

31. Experience on the water is NOT required for this fellowship. If you have had experience on the water please describe your favorite one. (Please limit yourself to 2-3 sentences)

Essay Questions

Please limit each response to 300 words or less. Anything over 300 words will not be reviewed.

32. Why are you interested in the Fellowship? *
(max of 300 words)

33. Help us get to know you. Please describe what extracurricular activities, experiences, or jobs (including childcare), you participate in and why. If applicable, please discuss how your activities have helped you build leadership and teamwork skills, maturity, and community involvement. *

(Max of 300 words)

34. O-STEAM was created to expand access to hands-on ocean science research and * fieldwork to students who haven't had prior opportunities in the field. Describe ways in which your access to STEAM programming or learning has been limited. Please use examples.

(Max of 300 words)

35. How would you contribute to an inclusive fellowship environment that would support peers who are new to research and ocean science, and how do you think STEAM fields more generally could be made more accessible/inclusive to participants without prior experience? Think about your personal experience – whether based on identity, education, your community, your culture, economic status, and use that to craft your answer. *
(max of 300 words)

Recommenders

You are required to have a recommendation from a NON-relative for your application to be accepted. This recommendation can come from a teacher (preferably STEAM), coach, mentor, instructor of an extracurricular program, or group leader. Be sure to ask whether a recommender is available to write a recommendation before completing your application.

YOU are responsible for asking your recommender to send a letter (pdf please) to Grace Simpkins, gsimpkins@whoi.edu, by March 20th. Please check in with them to confirm that they sent in their letter. They will get a confirmation of receipt.

36. Recommender Email *

37. I have asked this person to write a letter of recommendation and they have agreed. *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

38. I have told the recommender to send their letter to Grace Simpkins, gsimpkins@whoi.edu, by 3/20/26. *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Final Questions and Submission

39. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

Non Binary

Transgender Male

Transgender Female

Not listed

40. Not required: Please use this space to elaborate on your identity and preferred gender.

41. This is a field experience and will involve working both inside and outside with light to moderate activity levels. I understand that we will work full days but have ample free time after dinner. I am willing to fully commit to the learning experience, meeting new people, making connections, and giving the week my all. *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

42. Signature (by typing your full name here you are giving your digital signature) *

Example: January 7, 2019

Google