

Pacific Islands Ocean Acidification Master's Student Fellowship FAQs

Who is eligible for this fellowship?

Eligible applicants include:

1. Any individual who is currently enrolled in a research-based Master's degree program
2. Any individuals who has applied to, and intends to enroll in, a research-based Master's degree program

Please note, the applicant's Master's degree program must be based at a university or other institution of higher education and should be in one of the following (or a related) field: oceanography, marine science, environmental science, ocean engineering, chemistry, biology, resource management, coastal community social science, etc.

If I have a postgraduate diploma in Biology or Chemistry, would I be eligible to apply for this fellowship?

At some universities in the Pacific Islands region, individuals pursue a postgraduate diploma after acquiring an undergraduate degree. While having a postgraduate diploma is not a prerequisite for this fellowship, it is often required for individuals who apply to a Master's degree program in this region. So, as long as you have submitted an application to, or if you are currently enrolled in, a Master's degree program, then you would be considered eligible for this fellowship.

Am I eligible for this fellowship if I am pursuing a PhD?

If you have already completed your Master's and are pursuing a PhD, then you are ineligible for this fellowship.

Are there priority countries?

Yes, an applicant's proposed work must bolster ocean acidification (OA) research capacity in one of more of the following nations: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam. Preference will be given to: (1) applicants who are citizens, nationals, or permanent residents of these nations, (2) applicants whose work will be conducted in these nations, (3) and to a lesser extent, to applicants whose work is being conducted in other non-US countries and territories in the Pacific Islands region but directly benefits these nations.

Do I need to apply through a university in the USA?

Absolutely not! Applicants affiliated with international universities are highly encouraged to apply. After all, the purpose of this fellowship program is to build international OA research capacity, specifically across Pacific Island nations.

Is the grant only for full-time study?

No, this fellowship can support part-time Master's students. However, the scope of work and budget should accurately reflect their part-time status.

Are there any work experience prerequisites for this fellowship?

No, you do not need to have any prior work experience to be eligible for this fellowship. In other words, if you have only ever been a student, you are certainly eligible to apply. However, applicants who have obtained research experience, particularly OA research experience, through student research opportunities or formal work experience will likely be reviewed more favorably than applicants with no prior research experience.

Are applicants free to approach an academic advisor of their choosing, or is there a list of possible academic advisors we must choose from?

Applicants are highly encouraged to approach an academic advisor who they

are interested in working with. If applicants need assistance finding an advisor, they should reach out to the Pacific Islands and Territories Ocean Acidification (PITOA) Hub. PITOA is a network of OA scientists and professionals in the region, and it is a regional hub of the Global OA Observing Network (GOA-ON). Please send your inquiry to Dr. Kerri Dobson (Kerri.Dobson@noaa.gov), the GOA-ON liaison for PITOA.

Does NOAA expect to offer the fellowship in following years?

At this point, NOAA does not anticipate repeating this fellowship in the future. However, depending on the success of this fellowship and the availability of funds, NOAA may revisit this in the future.

What is a Letter of Intent (LOI)?

A letter of intent (LOI) is a two-page document that an applicant must compose to express their interest in applying for this fellowship. LOIs are intended to help NOAA gauge the merits of the applicants and the relevance of their proposed projects to the goals and priorities of this funding opportunity. The LOI process also helps to reduce the burden of preparing full proposals for applicants who do not have a high probability for being funded.

All applicants must submit an LOI in order to be eligible to apply for this fellowship. Late or incomplete LOIs, as well as those that considerably deviate from content or format requirements, will be rejected without consideration and any associated full applications will not be accepted.

How do I submit an LOI?

Email your LOI directly to the fellowship Program Manager, Erica Ombres at Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov. In your email, please use the subject line heading that follows this template: PI Fellowship_Applicant Last Name_LOI (eg: PI Fellowship_Ombres_LOI)

When will applicants receive feedback about their LOIs?

Approximately one month after the LOI due date, all applicants will be emailed with a notice that either encourages or discourages a full proposal.

The final decision to submit a full proposal will be made by the applicants, regardless of the recommendations made by the Program Manager.

After submitting an LOI, do I need to wait to receive my feedback before submitting a full proposal?

Technically no, but we highly encourage you to wait until you have received your LOI feedback before submitting a full proposal. The LOI process is intended to provide constructive feedback on each applicant's proposal ideas, which the applicants can then use to strengthen their full proposals. The LOI process is also intended to reduce the burden of preparing full proposals for those applicants who do not have a high probability for being funded.

Is there an LOI template?

Yes! Please access the LOI template and an LOI example document [here](#).

How do I show proof of application or acceptance into a Master's program?

If you are currently enrolled in a Master's program, then your current transcript will suffice.

If you have been accepted to, but have not yet enrolled in a Master's program, then submit the letter of acceptance you received.

If you have applied to a Master's program, but your application is still pending, then submit the confirmation letter you received from the institution stating that they have received your application.

Where can I find the Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire?

This can be found [here](#). Applicants should complete questions 4-7 and 10-13. Your response to the questionnaire must include detailed information regarding project information, such as location, methodology, and permits. However, applicants are encouraged to cite sections of their Project Description or other components of their application to minimize paperwork burden. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be

included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information. If you require assistance, please contact the fellowship Program Manager, Erica Ombres at Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov

How does my university become registered with grants.gov?

As soon as you decide to apply for this fellowship, you should immediately contact a representative at your institution who is responsible for managing external grants. Usually this person will be associated with your institution's sponsored programs office, grants management office, or financial office.

A representative from one of those offices should be able to help you fill out the required forms (SF-424 Form, SF-424A Form, SF-424B Assurances, CD-511 Form, SF-LLL Form). They also will be responsible for submitting your full proposal to grants.gov once you've completed the application.

When you first make contact, ask the representative if your institution has already been registered with grants.gov. If not, please share this information with them. They will need to follow these steps and register your institution with grants.gov in order for you to apply to this fellowship. This process can take several weeks, so please do not wait until the last minute.

Step 1: Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. DUNS numbers can typically be obtained within two business days. For information on obtaining a DUNS please visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or call Dun & Bradstreet at +1-866-705-5711.

Step 2: Register with the System for Award Management (SAM). This process can take anywhere from several business days up to several weeks. You can begin your registration by going to the SAM.gov website. If you need assistance with creating a new SAM account and logging into the SAM system please contact the SAM.gov Federal Service Desk. You may reach the Federal Service Desk by phone at +1-866-606-8220.

Step 3: Register with Grants.gov. This process can be completed 24-48

hours after you've got an active SAM registration. You would start by creating a Grants.gov account and adding an Organization Profile using your UEI or DUNS. Once you've added an Organization Profile under your UEI or DUNS, the organization's EBIZ POC would need to assign you roles.

For more information on the registration process, you may reference this YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/sj3X2XPAQ5g>

For additional questions or concerns, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk. If your request is urgent, please call the help desk at +1-800-518-4726. The Help Desk is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding US federal holidays.

If you are an international customer you may call the Grants.gov local line at +1-606-545-5035. The Grants local line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week, excluding US federal holidays.

You may also e-mail your request to support@grants.gov. Emails typically receive a response within one business day. However, it may take up to two business days to receive a response, depending on volume.

Finally, if you or your institution representative require assistance, please contact the fellowship Program Manager, Erica Ombres at Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov

Where can I find the required forms (SF-424 Form, SF-424A Form, SF-424B Assurances, CD-511 Form, SF-LLL Form)?

These required forms can be found on grants.gov, [here](#). The representative from your institution who is helping you submit your application (i.e., someone from your institution's sponsored programs office, grants management office, or financial office) should be able to help you fill out these forms. If you or your institution representative require assistance, please contact the fellowship Program Manager, Erica Ombres at Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov

How do I submit a full proposal?

All full proposal application materials - except Letters of Reference - must be submitted to www.grants.gov by an authorized representative at the applicant's affiliated institution, such as a sponsored program officer, grants management officer, or an administrative financial officer.

Letters of Reference must be emailed directly to Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov. Please ask your references to use the subject line heading that follows this template: PI Fellowship_Applicant Last Name_LOI (eg: PI Fellowship_Ombres_LOI)

Please note, the Letter of Support, which is composed and signed by the applicant's advisor, should be included with the grants.gov application package.

When will funding decisions be finalized?

Applicants will be notified about funding decisions in June or July 2022. The fellowship will formally begin and funds will be disbursed in September 2022.

Who is responsible for the administration of the fellowship?

NOAA distributes the funds to each applicant's institution, which then distributes the funds to the individual.

Timeline

<p>4:59 pm Fiji Time (UTC+12) on Tuesday, December 14, 2021</p> <p>To check the exact due date and time for your local time zone, we encourage applicants to check-out this website: https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html?iso=20211214T045900&p1=282&p2=277&p3=82&p4=280&p5=193&p6=726&p7=145&p8=95&p9=263</p>	<p>Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due.</p> <p>Email LOIs directly to Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov</p> <p>Use the subject line heading: PI Fellowship_Applicant Last Name_LOI (eg: PI Fellowship_Ombres_LOI)</p>
<p>mid-January 2022</p>	<p>LOI feedback will be released.</p>
<p>4:59 pm Fiji Time (UTC+12) on Friday, March 11, 2022</p> <p>To check the exact due date and time for your local time zone, we encourage applicants to check-out this website: https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html?iso=20220311T045900&p1=282&p2=277&p3=82&p4=280&p5=193&p6=726&p7=145&p8=95&p9=263</p>	<p>Full proposals are due.</p> <p>All full proposal application materials - except Letters of Reference - must be submitted to www.grants.gov by the applicant's affiliated institution.</p> <p>Letters of Reference must be emailed directly to Erica.H.Ombres@noaa.gov</p> <p>Use the subject line heading: PI Fellowship_Applicant Last Name_Reference Letter (eg: PI Fellowship_Ombres_Reference Letter)</p>
<p>March-May 2022</p>	<p>Applications will undergo an administrative review by program managers and a technical review by a panel of experts.</p>
<p>June-July 2022</p>	<p>Funding decisions will be finalized and applicants will be notified</p>
<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Funds will be awarded and the fellowship will begin!</p>