



## SOUTH DAKOTA SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM Student Stipend Program

### **GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP STIPENDS – Application and Instructions** **2025/2026 Academic Year (Summer/Fall 2025 & Spring 2026)**

(Release Date – November 1, 2024)

#### **Program Summary**

The South Dakota Space Grant Consortium (SDSGC) NASA Internship and Fellowship (NIF) stipend program invites applications from U.S. citizens for **Graduate Research Fellowships** that directly contribute to advancements in NASA's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related areas of study, and that support the pursuit of graduate degrees in the fields of STEM. Research projects must align with NASA's mission and those of the SDSGC and its affiliates. *All 2025/2026 awards are contingent upon U.S. Congressional approval of the 2025 federal budget and the availability and receipt of FY2025 Space Grant funding from NASA.*

- **Research stipends** are provided at amounts up to \$6,000\* and will support graduate-level STEM research projects conducted during the academic year and/or summer that **must** align with at least one of NASA's Mission Directorate Research Priorities [see Appendices A.1 – A.6 for a list of these priorities (pages 1-27)] posted at:

<https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/NASAMissionDirectorate&CenterAlignmentFY2023.docx>

Research stipend awardees are expected to produce a publication or presentation at a professional conference (i.e., poster and/or talk).

\* If the graduate student research project includes travel to a NASA Center, an additional \$1,500 will be added to the stipend, raising the upper limit to \$7,500.

#### **Important Dates**

Application Receipt Deadline: **January 23, 2025, 11:59 p.m. MST.**

Award Notification: anticipated to be announced by March 20, 2025.

#### **Eligibility and U.S. Citizenship Requirement**

All applicants must be citizens of the United States. Stipends under this solicitation are available only to graduate students attending South Dakota institutions of higher education during the award period. Women students and students from underrepresented groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

#### **Application Instructions**

Applications are to be submitted online and consist of the following five items in this order:

1. A completed application form
2. Cover letter
3. Faculty recommendation letter
4. Resume
5. Transcript(s) of completed undergraduate and graduate work, including a list of current course registration

1. **Application form** must be completed online at the following website:

[https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg\\_update\\_app.cgi](https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg_update_app.cgi)

2. **Cover letter** must include: A) reference to any education or experience the applicant may have in relation to NASA, B) a career goal statement, C) a statement indicating whether the applicant plans to be enrolled as a full-time or part-time student during the requested stipend period (preference given to full-time students), and D) a **research project proposal** that includes the following:

- Title and executive summary of the proposed research
- Project description that includes:
  - previous scientific work / relevant literature upon which the research will build
  - specific goals and outcomes of the proposed research

- research activities that will accomplish the goals and produce the outcomes
  - specific metrics that will be used to measure project success
  - timeline for activities
  - detailed budget including estimated costs for individual line-items (e.g., compensation for student's research time, travel, \*supplies/materials, etc.) \**Computer purchases not allowed.*
  - Statement of how the proposed research aligns with at least one of **NASA's Mission Directorate Research Priorities** listed in **Appendix A.1 – A.6** (pages 1-27) posted at: <https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/NASAMissionDirectorate&CenterAlignmentFY2023.docx>
- The Research stipend cover letter must not exceed three (3) single-spaced, 12-font pages (excluding references). Note: Spelling and grammar will be taken into account during selection.
3. **Recommendation letter:** Recommendation letter must come from a STEM faculty member supervising the research project. Alternatively, if the student has a NASA mentor or collaborator involved in the research project, that person may submit the recommendation letter in lieu of a college faculty member. Letter must include an analysis of the applicant's preparation and ability to perform the research, the nature of any prior experience with the applicant, and a clear statement indicating the role of the advisor or mentor in the applicant's research project. Faculty or NASA mentors who prefer to submit their recommendation letter separately rather than giving it to the student to include in his/her application must submit it online by 11:59 p.m. MST on January 23, 2025, according to instructions that will be sent to them in a system-generated email message.
  4. **Resume** must include a summary of education, training, experience, and accomplishments.
  5. **Transcript** must be the most recent copy of the applicant's completed undergraduate and graduate work. An unofficial copy (e.g., from Web Advisor) or scanned photocopy of the transcript is sufficient.

#### **Application Electronic Submission Instructions**

- Application item 1 (the Application Form) is to be completed online at [https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg\\_update\\_app.cgi](https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg_update_app.cgi)
- Applications items 2, 3, 4, and 5 must be uploaded as a **single electronic file in PDF format** (5MB file size limit) online at the same website as the Application Form by **11:59 p.m. MST, January 23, 2025**. (*Students should not wait until the last day, or even close to it, if their faculty recommendation letter is to be submitted separately by the faculty member. The online application site will close to further uploads at 11:59 p.m. MST, January 23, 2025.*)
- Faculty who wish to submit their recommendation letter (item 3) separately rather than giving it to the student to include in their electronic application may do so by uploading the letter in **PDF format** directly to an online site that only the reviewers will be able to access. The recommendation letters are due by January 23, 2025, 11:59 p.m. MST. The URL address where the faculty member should upload his/her letter will be sent to that person in a system-generated email message immediately after the student enters that person's email address on the completed Application Form and clicks "submit".
- Late or incomplete applications or applications containing more than a single electronic file (with the exception of faculty recommendation letters which may be submitted separately) will **not** be accepted.

**Awards** (*All Awards are contingent upon SDSGC's receipt of FY2025 Space Grant funding from NASA*) Applications will be reviewed and award selections made by the SDSGC Management Team listed online at <https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/contact.html>. **The purpose of graduate fellowship stipends is to reward past accomplishments and recognize potential future achievements. The stipends are made to individuals and are not to be considered compensation for employment.** The student awardee should contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a tax accountant to determine what needs to be reported on a tax return since Consortium personnel may not be qualified to answer all questions in this regard.

#### **Reporting**

At the end of the award period, the student must submit a brief report (an email message will suffice) to Dr. Todd Letcher <[todd.letcher@sdstate.edu](mailto:todd.letcher@sdstate.edu)> at the Space Grant Headquarters Office summarizing his/her experience and accomplishments. Reports for research stipend awardees should include specific details about their research project. Additional survey/questionnaire documents will be sent periodically to student

awardees via email by a private company associated with the National Space Grant Foundation hired by the SD Space Grant Consortium to conduct “**longitudinal tracking**” of students supported by Space Grant. NASA requires that we gather data on the education and employment history of current and former participants in our programs. The longitudinal tracking survey/ questionnaire is an online document. The email message sent to the students will explain how to access it. Graduate Research awardees will also receive a survey from SDSGC’s program evaluator to complete at the end of their stipend period.

### **Inquiries**

Questions concerning the preparation and submission of applications and the administration of this program should be addressed to Dr. Todd Letcher, South Dakota State University, Crothers Engineering Hall 212, Mechanical Engineering-Box 2219, Brookings, SD 57007, Email: [todd.letcher@sdstate.edu](mailto:todd.letcher@sdstate.edu), Phone: 605-688-5311.

Students who have filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the period in which they would receive the Space Grant stipend may wish to visit with their institution’s Financial Aid office to determine what impact, if any, receiving a Space Grant stipend could have on their eligibility for certain types of Federal Student Aid (loans, work-study, and certain grants). This visit is just a suggestion.

### **Acknowledgement**

In any presentations or publications that the student develops as a result of his/her Space Grant-supported educational or research project, we ask that the student please acknowledge the support provided by the NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium.