

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

**Office of Education
Educational Partnership Program**

Graduate Sciences Program

2009

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



<http://epp.noaa.gov>

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009, 5:00 P.M. EST**

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

**OFFICE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

GRADUATE SCIENCES PROGRAM

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Office of Education Educational Partnership Program

INTRODUCTION

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) is designed to provide financial assistance to minority serving academic institutions to support collaborative research and training of students in NOAA-mission sciences through competitive processes. The program's goal is to increase the number of students who are trained and graduate in sciences directly related to NOAA's mission. It also seeks to increase collaborative research efforts between NOAA scientists and researchers at minority serving academic institutions, as defined by the Department of Education. Financial assistance is provided through four program components, they include: the Cooperative Science Centers; the Environmental Entrepreneurship Program; the Graduate Sciences Program and, the Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

NOAA's EPP/MSI **Graduate Sciences Program (GSP)** is specifically designed to recruit and develop outstanding candidates for entry-level employment within NOAA's scientific occupations. The NOAA EPP/MSI GSP offers a training and employment opportunity for students who possess a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a NOAA related science and an opportunity to pursue research at a NOAA research laboratory. GSP targets student recruitment from MSIs, including Alaska Native Serving Institutions (ANSIs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (NHSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).

NOAA EPP/MSI GSP targets individuals who are traditionally under-represented in science, mathematics, and engineering.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligibility: An applicant must be a United States citizen; possess a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a NOAA science, including but not limited to: biology, chemistry, physics, physical science, geology, geography, mathematics, social science, or engineering; have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in undergraduate and graduate courses; have been accepted to an accredited U.S. graduate school; be enrolled full-time in an accredited U.S. undergraduate or graduate program at the time of application; and have the ability to complete required course work and assignments for the targeted position within two years if completing a Master's degree or four years if completing a PhD. **A current graduate student with a M.S. degree in the fields of study listed above may apply as long as the dissertation topic for the Ph.D. relates to NOAA's research.** The length of the training period may be extended on a case-by-case basis. Renewal of the academic training is based on excellent academic progress and research consistent with the NOAA mission.

The Department of Commerce does not condone or tolerate discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.

Conditions and Obligations: All contingencies of an excepted appointment must be met before an offer of employment is extended to selected candidates. NOAA must implement a formal agreement under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) with the college or university and each selected graduate student. Target positions maybe located nationwide. All participants must sign the Training Agreement, SF-182, which requires three years of Federal service for each year of university/college level training received.

Extension of the Training Period: The established training period may be extended up to the maximum of six months after consultation with the GSP Manager and upon the recommendation of the NOAA supervisor and academic advisor to allow for unforeseen circumstances (such as family or personal medical emergencies which require extended absence from school and/or suspension of research work). The decision to amend a training pattern will be made only after taking into consideration the trainee's current program progress and ability to progress at an accelerated pace.

Failure to Meet Requirements: Graduate Scientists serving on a probationary period may be terminated for failure to complete the program requirements.

Program participants who are career or career-conditional NOAA employees and hold a competitive permanent position within NOAA at the time of application and acceptance to the GSP, and who fail to successfully complete the academic training, will be reassigned to a position outside the program that is comparable to the duties and grade held prior to entering the program. The participant may not be reassigned to another position in the same series as the target position.

Application Deadline: Application forms will be available from October 1, 2008 to January 30, 2009. Completed applications will be accepted until January 30, 2009 at 5 p.m. EST. An application is made up of the following sections:

Background Information and References (3 requested)
Statement of the Applicant's Academic and Career Goals
Essay on How Your Course of Study will Benefit or Complement NOAA's Mission
Letter of Acceptance to an Accredited Graduate School/University; a List of Graduate
Schools/Universities you have applied to for admission for Fall 2009; OR
Certification of Enrollment as a full-time student at your current Graduate School
List of Current and Planned Courses
Official Transcripts

Please note: All parts of the application must be received by NOAA on January 30, 2009 by 5:00 p.m. EST. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted or reviewed.

Completed Applications:

Mail Completed applications to:

Dr. Priti Brahma
NOAA/OED EPP Graduate Sciences Program
1315 East West Highway
SSMC3, Room 10725
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Applications may also be submitted electronically to: *studentscholarshipprograms@noaa.gov*
However, all supporting documentation, including references, and official transcripts must be mailed to the address above and received by January 30, 2009 at 5 pm EST.

If you have questions about the application or need additional information please contact Dr. Priti Brahma at (301) 713-9437 x118 or *priti.brahma@noaa.gov*. Again, please identify the program name when requesting materials or information.

APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS

When an application is received, NOAA Office of Education staff ensure that the applicant meets the basic criteria and has provided all application materials. It is the applicant's responsibility to check with NOAA to ensure that an application is complete.

After an application is designated complete and the applicant has met all of the eligibility requirements, the application is submitted to NOAA Workforce Management Office.

Selection Procedure: The final selection of the Graduate Scientists is made by NOAA, and is based on academic records, statement of career interests and goals, and compatibility of the applicant's background with the interests of NOAA. Successful candidates become full-time employees.

Generally, master's candidates will be appointed to a GS-7 or equivalent entry-level position and promoted to a GS-9 or equivalent target position at the completion of coursework and successfully defending their thesis. For doctoral students, the full-performance level will be at the GS-11 level or equivalent.

After NOAA selects the successful Graduate Scientists, NOAA Workforce Management Office notifies applicants of their selection and date to report for duty. Only the NOAA Workforce Management Office can extend an official offer of an appointment to the Graduate Sciences Program. Notification usually occurs in late March or early April. Questions about tuition and fees, and books and housing reimbursements should be referred to NOAA during a student's training period.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this program, the following definitions apply.

- 1. Student:** A Graduate Sciences Program participant who possesses at least a bachelor's degree in a NOAA related scientific field and is enrolled in an accredited graduate school, an MSI when possible, for the purpose of taking additional credit hours and perform NOAA related research in order to qualify for a specified position in a NOAA scientific mission related field. The course work and research must be approved by the Graduate Sciences Program Manager and the Workforce Management Office (WMO).
- 2. Trainee Position:** The position to which the student is assigned while he/she receives the required training.
- 3. Target Position:** The position the student selectee is being trained for and will be transferred to upon completion of the training.
- 4. On-the-job Training:** This training may be provided during the trainee position, in the target area, or by rotational assignments in NOAA, but must assure consistency and conformity to target position requirements.
- 5. Known Promotion Potential:** The highest grade (full performance level) of the Target position.
- 6. Continued Service Agreement:** An agreement signed by an employee who is scheduled for non-government training that exceeds 80 continuous hours within a 12-month period. The agreement is a statement that the employee will continue in service after completion of the training, computed at three times the length of total training hours.
- 7. Student Career Experience Program (SCEP):** The SCEP enables the student to gain work experience which is directly related to the student's academic program and career goals. Students in the SCEP may be noncompetitively converted to term, career or career-conditional appointments following completion of their academic and work experience requirements. A formal agreement is required with the agency, the university, and the student.

COMPLETING THE GSP APPLICATION FORM

The GSP application contains several different sections. It is important that applicants fill out these sections accurately.

Student Data Section

- **College/University and School Residence** - complete these sections for the school that is currently being attended. Applicants must be enrolled full-time in school at the time of application. If permanent address is the same as school address, write "same" on the permanent address line.
- **Telephone Number** - A telephone number is requested at both your school and permanent residence. Please make sure that the numbers listed are current. NOAA should be notified if there are telephone number changes after your application is submitted.
- **Email address and Cell Phone Number** – Please provide a current email address and cell phone number as these items will be used to contact you regarding completeness of the application and acceptance into the program if selected.
- **Educational Information** - List all universities attended. If currently enrolled in a graduate program, be sure to include it and give an anticipated graduation date. **Official transcripts should be provided for each university listed.** If already in graduate school, the undergraduate transcript should show evidence of the completion of an undergraduate degree.
- **Grade Point Average** - if the university grading scale is other than 4.0 (for example, 5.0 or 6.0) please re-compute to 4.0.

Essay

Please use at least two double-space, sheets of paper to describe your interest in NOAA and the benefit your graduate education will have on NOAA's mission.

Current and Planned Courses

List courses currently being taken this academic year as well as the courses planned for the next year. For example, if currently a graduating senior, list in the first half of the table all of the courses that will be taken during senior year. In the bottom half of the table, list the courses planned for the first year of graduate school. If an applicant does not know which courses will be taken during the first year of graduate school, the applicant should contact the coordinator at the university they are applying to obtain a course listing.

Statement of Career and Academic Goals and Objectives

More than one sheet of paper may be used for the career statement (the average length is 1 1/2 pages, double-spaced and typed).

References

Provide copies of the reference forms to your references. One reference form must be from your academic advisor and the second one should be from your department head. A minimum of three references are required. All references should be from individuals who know you on a professional level. Please remember that references must be returned in a sealed envelope to NOAA by the application deadline.

Please note: All parts of the application must be received at NOAA by January 30, 2009, 5 p.m. EST. Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed for awards.

**NOAA OFFICE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
GRADUATE SCIENCES PROGRAM**

Program Application

Instructions: Refer to the current program description before completing the application. Please note the deadlines for the receipt of application materials by NOAA. Type or print all information clearly.

A completed application consists of the following required components:

1. Application Form (instructions on pages 7-8);
2. Current Official* Transcript(s) from each college or university attended and Course Sheets;
Note: Transcript(s) must be mailed by the university to the address below. If the applicant has already received a degree, the transcript should show evidence of completion of the degree program. *Unofficial transcript(s) will be accepted for review. Official transcripts must be provided upon notification of receipt of an award;
3. Statement of Career and Academic Goals and Objectives;
4. Reference Form. Submit three (3) references from faculty members (one must be from your academic advisor, another one should be from your department head, etc.). Have them each complete a Reference Form and mail directly to the address below. To return a reference form with the application packet, the applicant should have the person providing the reference place the form in an envelope, seal it and sign across the seal.

Please make sure that you have completed all parts of the application, including signing your name where requested. **Keep a copy of this application and supporting materials for your files.**

Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline [January 30, 2009](#) will not be reviewed. It is the applicant's responsibility to check with NOAA regarding the completeness of the application file.

Return the completed application and any correspondence to:

Dr. Priti Brahma
NOAA/OED EPP Graduate Sciences Program
1315 East West Highway
SSMC3, Room 10725
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application information will be used solely for the purpose of recruiting qualified candidates and administering the program. Selections will be made by NOAA.

GSP APPLICATION CHECK SHEET

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| <p>This checklist is provided to assist applicants in completing the application.</p> | <p>√</p> |
| <p>The application form is either typed or printed neatly in black ink.</p> | |
| <p>I have provided an address at which I may be reached after the completion of the Spring 2009 semester (page 1).</p> | |
| <p>I have requested transcripts to be sent to NOAA from each college or university I have attended (page 2).</p> | |
| <p>The undergraduate cumulative GPA I listed is a GPA from ALL undergraduate universities I have attended (page 2).</p> | |
| <p>The graduate cumulative GPA I listed is a GPA from ALL graduate universities I have attended (page 2.)</p> | |
| <p>I have described all paid and non-paid research work related to NOAA’s mission-related sciences. I have included my supervisor’s name and phone number (page 3).</p> | |
| <p>I have included a 2 page essay describing my interest in NOAA and how my graduate education will impact NOAA’s mission (page 4 and 5).</p> | |
| <p>I have listed 3 individuals (one must be my academic advisor) in the references section of the application and I have given those individuals the reference forms to fill out and return to NOAA. I understand that if these reference forms are not received by the application deadline, my application will be considered incomplete and I will not be considered for a graduate sciences position (page 6).</p> | |
| <p>I have included page 8 in my application packet even if I have not attended graduate school. I have marked the page with N/A if I have not yet taken graduate courses.</p> | |
| <p>I have filled out the Planned Courses section of the application with all planned courses for the 2009-2010 academic year (page 9). THIS IS MANDATORY FOR A COMPLETE APPLICATION.</p> | |
| <p>I understand the purpose of the Graduate Sciences Program and have written my state of career goals accordingly. On my career goal statement I have included my original signature (page 10).</p> | |
| <p>I have included one of the following items: the letter of acceptance to an accredited graduate program; a list of graduate schools I am applying to for graduate school; OR Certification of enrollment as a full-time student at my current graduate school.</p> | |