



North Pacific Research Board 2012 Graduate Student Research Awards

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) funds marine research off Alaska's coasts to improve our understanding of the North Pacific, Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean ecosystems and to enable effective management and sustainable use of these vital marine resources. To encourage students to pursue scientific and scholarly research, NPRB established a program of graduate student research awards in 2008.

2012 Graduate Student Research Awards

In May 2012, NPRB will award up to six (three masters students and three doctoral students) Graduate Student Research Awards of \$25,000 each to qualified students for the opportunity to address scientific, technological, and socio-economic issues relating to the research themes identified in the 2005 NPRB *Science Plan*. Students are limited to one award per degree.

Award funds may be used for graduate student stipend and standard benefits, tuition or required university fees, or for specific research expenses such as travel, supplies and laboratory analyses. Indirect costs are not allowed. One hundred percent of the funds must be used for the benefit of the graduate student, who will determine how the funds are divided among the allowable uses.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a 2012 NPRB Graduate Student Research Award, students must be enrolled in or accepted by a graduate degree program at an accredited university or college by **February 10, 2012**.

Eligible applicants must have a graduate research topic relevant to the research themes and issues identified in the [2005 NPRB Science Plan](#).

Recipients of previous NPRB Graduate Student Research Awards are not eligible to apply for a subsequent award during the course of the same degree in which they received the initial award. However, previous recipients may be eligible for a second award if pursuing a different graduate degree.

Application Submission

Applications for the 2012 NPRB Graduate Student Research Awards must be submitted online at <http://www.nprb.org/education/gsra.html>. Applicants need to provide the following information and documents (described in more detail below) for submission.

- (1) Research Plan
- (2) Complete contact information for the Student Applicant, Academic/Thesis Advisor, and the Grant Administrator
- (3) Resume or basic curriculum vitae of the applicant
- (4) Names and contact information of two individuals that will be providing letters of recommendation.
- (5) Copy of undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts.

Application Components

(1) Research Plan

Upload the research plan in the appropriate section in the online submission system. The research plan should be a WORD document consisting of a maximum of **six** consecutively numbered pages, including any tables and figures. A reference section should be included but is not considered part of the six-page limit. The document (six pages plus references) must be single-spaced, with one-inch margins and 11 point Times New Roman font. The research plan must have continuous line numbers from beginning to end to facilitate review. **Failure to comply with any of the formatting specifications above will result in automatic dismissal of your application without further review.**

Following these formatting guidelines, your research plan should include the following elements:

- a) Project Title
- b) Project Summary: In 250 words or less, briefly describe the research question(s) being addressed by your graduate research, the scientific method(s) that will be used to address your question(s) and the significance of the project to our understanding of the North Pacific, Bering Sea or Arctic marine environment. Please use language understandable by individuals not familiar with the specific subject area.
- c) Responsiveness: Describe how your research relates to the 2005 NPRB *Science Plan* and is relevant to the mission of the NPRB.
- d) Introduction: Briefly review pertinent literature, state your primary hypothesis and research objectives and describe why conducting this research is important.
- e) Methods: Describe the methods, experimental design (including the data and analysis) you will be using to accomplish your research objectives.
- f) Community Involvement: Indicate how relevant Alaskan communities, including Alaska Native communities, tribal governing bodies or others, may be impacted by your project activities or may benefit from project results (e.g., seabird colony work at times of subsistence activities). Indicate how you plan to interact with communities during your research and how results will be brought back to the communities when the project is complete.
- g) Funding: Provide a brief description of how award funds will be used. Note a detailed budget is not required. If this project is being funded or may be funded, in whole or part, by NPRB through a current or pending project award, indicate how this Graduate Student Research award will complement, i.e. not duplicate, the project award.
- h) Project Milestones and Timeline: Indicate the timeline for the completion of your degree, including anticipated dates for field work/data collection, data analysis, reporting schedule and thesis defense.
- i) Literature Cited/References: References are not part of the six-page limit. List all references used in the Research Plan in a format appropriate for a major journal such as *Fisheries Oceanography*, *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*, *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, etc.

(2) Contact Information

During online submission, you will be asked to provide a mailing address, email address and phone number for the student applicant, the thesis advisor, the individuals submitting letters of support and the administrative contact at the university who should be contacted to arrange award distribution if your application is successful.

(3) Resume

A basic curriculum vitae or resume that includes the educational and research experience of the applicant, as well as a list of any published papers and/or presentations, must be uploaded in the appropriate section in the online submission system and may be in WORD or PDF format.

(4) Letters of Support:

Two letters of support must accompany each application. During online submission you will be asked to provide the names and contact information of the two individuals that you have asked to submit a letter of support. Letters of support should be sent separately by the author, as a WORD or PDF document, to Carrie Eischens at carrie.eischens@nprb.org and must be received by **4 pm** Alaska Standard Time on **February 10, 2012**. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure these two letters arrive on time.

One of the letters of support must be from the applicant's graduate thesis advisor and should clearly state that the applicant has been enrolled or accepted into the graduate program at the specified university. It should also provide information regarding the student's ability to successfully complete the research project. The second letter of support should be from another individual with professional knowledge of the student's academic abilities.

(5) Transcripts:

An electronic copy of the applicant's undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts is required. Official copies of transcripts should be scanned and uploaded in PFD format during online submission.

Application Review Process

Initial Review

Upon receipt, NPRB staff will screen the application for conformance with the requirements set forth in these guidelines, and will consider whether the research described is responsive to the 2005 NPRB *Science Plan*. If necessary, staff will request an ad hoc committee of available Science Panel members to help with the initial screening. **Applications that do not comply with the requirements set forth in this notice or are deemed ineligible for the award (see eligibility criteria above) will be rejected without further processing. Applicants will be notified of this outcome if applicable.**

Science Panel Review

All applications that pass the initial screening will undergo merit review by the NPRB Science Panel. Any members of the NPRB Science Panel with conflicts of interest (COI) will be excused from the review process. Each application will be independently reviewed by two Science Panel members (a primary and a secondary). Science Panel members will be asked to provide comments and qualitative

assessments of the applications (see review criteria below) and an overall summation. The overall summation will include five tiers: poor, fair, good, very good and excellent.

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- (1) Relevance/responsiveness to the 2005 NPRB *Science Plan* – is there clear applicability of the graduate student research to the research priorities outlined in the *Science Plan*?
- (2) Scientific or scholarly merit of the proposal - Are the study questions and methods clear? Has the applicant demonstrated a clear understanding of the problem being addressed, the present state of knowledge in the field and the value of this research to scientific and management communities? Is there a clear hypothesis to be tested or objectives to be addressed? Is the research question or methodology used particularly novel? Are the project timeline and milestones appropriate and realistic?
- (3) Community Involvement – Is there a clear plan to involve and/or engage one or more Alaska communities during the course of the research? If not, does the applicant justify the lack of community involvement?
- (4) Demonstrated ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed research -- What experience or credentials prepares the applicant to do this research?

The reviews of the Primary and Secondary Reviewer are made available to all Science panel members in advance of the Science Panel meeting. In instances where there are a large number of high-quality applications, the Science Panel may choose to move only those applications that have at least two overall “Very Good” ratings onto the next phase of the competition.

In the next phase of the competition, the Science Panel, as a whole, will give each application a separate score, out of 10, for “proposal merit” and “student qualifications,” recognizing that for these types of graduate awards, student qualifications should be weighted just as high as the scientific merit of the research. Based on these combined quantitative scores, the Science Panel will recommend the applicants from the top three Masters students and the top three PhD students to the Board as award winners.

Advisory Panel Review

The NPRB Advisory Panel (AP) will also review applications for the 2012 GSRA and will make award recommendations to the Board. The AP review is intended to highlight those applications that have special stakeholder, community and other societal relevance and public interest value. AP members will only consider those applications that have made it past the Science Panel’s first phase of consideration (i.e., only those applications that have received at least two overall “Very Good” ratings from the Science Panel review). Based on the criteria of stakeholder, community and other societal relevance, the Advisory Panel will recommend three Masters students and three PhD students to the Board as award winners. Standard Advisory Panel COI procedures will apply with respect to the AP review of proposals.

Board Review

In making the final determination of the 2012 Graduate Student Research Award winners, the NPRB Board will take into consideration the detailed reviews from the primary and secondary reviewers, the overall Science Panel recommendations, as well as the Advisory Panel recommendations. In instances where a tie-breaker is necessary, the Board may consider other factors such as:

- 1) Pressing fisheries management needs;
- 2) Ecosystem information needs;
- 3) Other projects currently funded on a similar topic;
- 4) Overlap with other ongoing programs;

Notification of Application Outcome

NPRB staff will notify all applicants of the Board's decision by Thursday, May 31, 2012. The primary and secondary reviews by the Science Panel will be returned to the applicant along with notification of the application outcome.

Award Recipient Requirements

Graduate Student Research Award recipients must agree to the following requirements:

- (1) By April 1, 2013, give a talk at a school or to a public audience, or work with the NPRB Communication and Outreach Director to share information about the student's research with the public. Note: the cost of this outreach activity will not be covered by NPRB in addition to the award amount.
- (2) Share ongoing research via an oral or poster presentation at the January 2013 Alaska Marine Science Symposium. NPRB will pay for travel to the Symposium in addition to the award amount.
- (3) By April 1, 2013, prepare a two-page summary of the research in the NPRB's Project Synopses format, working with the Communication and Outreach Director.
- (4) Send the NPRB an electronic copy of the completed thesis.
- (5) Acknowledge the NPRB Graduate Research Award in the student thesis, research presentations and publications, and send copies to NPRB.

Important Dates

The application deadline for the 2012 Graduate Student Research Awards Program is **4 pm (Alaska Standard Time) on Friday, February 10, 2012**. In the interest of fairness, no applications submitted after the deadline will be considered for funding. Note that two letters of support must also be received by this deadline for the application to be complete.

Online submission of applications will be available at www.nprb.org beginning on **December 5, 2011**.

Awards will be announced by **May 31, 2012** and awarded funds will be dispersed to the university/college of the recipients by **September 1, 2012**.

For more information visit <http://www.nprb.org/education/gsra.html> or contact Carrie Eischens at carrie.eischens@nprb.org