



## MARYLAND SEA GRANT 2020 COMPETITIVE GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

### REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland Sea Grant (MDSG) is pleased to announce the Maryland Sea Grant Competitive Graduate Research Fellowship. Students apply for a two-year Maryland Sea Grant fellowship that provides stipend, fringe benefits, and a tuition remission allowance. **Due Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 5 PM EST.** To be eligible, graduate students must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at a Maryland academic institution and engaged in research that is relevant to Maryland and the MDSG Strategic Plan 2018-2021. In addition to financial support, these opportunities will provide additional professional development opportunities in science communication, the science-to-management process, proposal/grantsmanship, and/or other relevant skills. As increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in coastal and marine science research is an important programmatic priority for MDSG, we especially encourage applications from students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, individuals from minority serving institutions, and individuals from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds that have inhibited their ability to pursue a career in STEM. MDSG is administered by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the state of Maryland.

#### CONTACTS

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact either the MDSG Director, [Fredrika Moser](#), or the Associate Director for Research and Administration, [Mike Allen](#), to discuss their proposal ideas. For technical assistance, contact Olivia Isaacs ([mdsg.research@mdsg.umd.edu](mailto:mdsg.research@mdsg.umd.edu)).

Maryland Sea Grant College  
5825 University Research Ct. Ste 1350  
College Park, MD 20740  
301-405-7500  
[mdsg.research@mdsg.umd.edu](mailto:mdsg.research@mdsg.umd.edu)

**Have questions or need more  
information?**

Join our webinar on Thursday, February 27  
at 4 pm. Register for [Fellowship Webinar](#).

# Maryland Sea Grant Competitive Graduate Research Fellowship

The Maryland Sea Grant research, education, and outreach mission is to address gaps in the knowledge needed for science-based efforts to inform conservation, restoration, sustainability, and resilience in the Chesapeake and coastal bays and their watersheds. As part of this mission, we anticipate awarding two competitive fellowships to support graduate students conducting research within Maryland's coasts and watersheds. We look to support student research that is socially relevant and is at the intersection of public engagement and science. An applicant's research must be consistent with the [Maryland Sea Grant Strategic Plan](#) and address one of the MDSG focus areas described therein: 1) Healthy Coastal Ecosystems; 2) Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture; and 3) Resilient Communities and Economies. Maryland Sea Grant emphasizes translational research that is directly applicable to informing key stakeholders outside of academia.

As part of this fellowship experience, successful candidates should be committed to expanding their engagement with groups beyond academia and have an interest in applying their research to informing management or policy. To assist with this, Maryland Sea Grant will offer professional development on relevant skills, including education, outreach, and communications. As a requirement of the fellowship, fellows must choose and work with a professional mentor (i.e., extension staff, educator, resource manager, or other end-user) to ensure that their project design and research results are responsive to the needs of resource managers, policy makers, educators, industry, NGOs, or other stakeholders. Outreach or end-user mentors should not be academic scientists.

Fellows will be selected based on their academic achievements, the relevance of the proposed research to [MDSG's mission](#), their demonstrated interest in connecting science with user communities, and the scientific and technical merit of their proposed research project. While all qualified graduate students should apply and will be fairly considered, MDSG is interested in increasing diversity in coastal and marine science research, and thus we encourage applications from students who have been historically underrepresented in coastal or marine science. In addition, Maryland Sea Grant is particularly interested in research that furthers our understanding of the coastal resilience and sustainability in Maryland's Chesapeake and coastal bays and watersheds. As funding for research costs is not associated with this fellowship, students working on coastal and marine research projects funded by non-Sea Grant sources are particularly encouraged to apply.

## **AWARD INFORMATION**

The two year fellowships will provide a stipend (\$25,000), fringe benefits and tuition remission for the fellow. Fellows will be paid as graduate research assistants by Maryland Sea Grant, a University System of Maryland institution, following the same model and terms as our [Maryland Sea Grant Research Fellowships](#) program. Continued support after the first year will be contingent upon satisfactory performance by the Fellow and the availability of federal funds. The anticipated start date is the fall semester 2020.

If your institution requires paying graduate students through its own payroll system, Maryland Sea Grant will provide an institutional award to cover only the \$25,000 stipend, fringe benefits, and partial tuition remission up to a total of \$35,000 per year. Typically, these awards would need to be made to the faculty advisor of the student. We will negotiate this arrangement with the institution of the selected students. No budget is required at the application stage.

## ELIGIBILITY

Students must be enrolled in or admitted to a full-time graduate or professional degree program at a Maryland academic institution at a graduate level. Students who have not yet enrolled should submit a letter of acceptance from the dean of the graduate program at their new institution with their fellowship application package. Students may be working toward any masters or Ph.D. degree, as long as their research is relevant to the mission and strategic plan of MDSG and has an emphasis on Chesapeake or coastal bays and their watersheds.

## REQUIREMENTS

Graduate student fellows who are selected will be required to:

- Select and work with a professional outreach or end-user mentor who is an extension, education, or communication staff person or an end-user of research results (e.g., state or federal agency professional, K-12 teacher, industry partner) to ensure that results are communicated and translated for end-users;
- Provide annual and final progress reports to MDSG, as well as electronic copies of derived publications and their thesis or dissertation;
- Participate in MDSG-sponsored professional development activities, anticipated to be 1-3 activities;
- Contribute one entry per semester to the MDSG student blog, *Fellowship Experiences*;
- Acknowledge MDSG support in all relevant scientific presentations and publications.

At a minimum, fellows are required to meet with outreach or end-user mentors periodically (no less than three times/year) to reflect upon their research design, activities, and plans. They should provide guidance on issues associated with communicating the information to non-experts, advancing the information to managers or policy makers, promoting adoption of the innovation or technology, or other application of results. In some situations, outreach or end-user mentors may serve on a student's academic committee. The exact role of the mentor is determined and defined by the applicants, in conjunction with their primary advisor.

An outreach or end-user mentor could be from the public, private, or non-profit sector. While we encourage students to explore opportunities to work with Maryland Sea Grant educators, communicators, or Extension faculty within the University of Maryland Extension program as outreach mentors, it is not required. They should be individuals in a professional situation that requires the application of scientific information and research—particularly the information, data, and findings coming from the applicant's research project—to a pressing management or policy decision. Ideally, the mentor would directly involve the student in policy discussions and development on an issue closely tied to the student's research. The mentor should not be an academic scientist. Maryland Sea Grant can provide assistance to prospective fellows in identifying potential mentors during the application period.

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND SUBMISSION THROUGH ESEAGRANT

**Adherence to the format requirements is mandatory.** Font size can be no smaller than 12 point (Arial preferred) and margins must be 1 inch on standard 8.5x11 inch paper throughout the document.

You must submit your proposal online at <https://eseagrants.mdsq.umd.edu>. Login to the proposal online submission system with your credentials. Fill out the registration information to create an account, if necessary.

Click "Add Proposal" under the "2020 MDSG Competitive Graduate Research Fellowship" selection and enter a title to start a new submission.

### eSEAGRANT TAB: START HERE

Provide your proposal title and any keywords. The dates of your project should be 9-1-2020 to 8-31-2022. On this tab, you can also add a delegate—someone who has access to your submission—by clicking on the “Actions” dropdown box. This person must already be registered for an eSeaGrant account. For example, the student applicant may add an advisor to the proposal.

### eSEAGRANT TABS: PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR – STUDENT APPLICANT

Complete the requested information for student applicant in the appropriate form.

### eSEAGRANT TAB: PROJECT DESCRIPTION UPLOAD

Enter the title of your proposal and then upload the proposal narrative file (PDF only).

The project description file must include the following components in this sequence:

- Cover Sheet
- Career Goal Statement (1-page maximum)
- Project Description (5-page maximum)
- Literature Cited
- Timeline and Tasks (1-page maximum)
- Academic CV/Biosketch
  - Student (2-page maximum)
  - Advisor (2-page maximum)
- Undergraduate and graduate transcripts
- Data Management Plan
- Proof of acceptance (if needed)

- A. *Cover Sheet (1-page maximum)*: This should clearly indicate include “Maryland Sea Grant Competitive Graduate Research Fellowship Application” as well as include title of proposed project; detailed contact information for the applicant, their faculty advisor, and the professional mentor; degree being sought; the primary Sea Grant focus area; and any signatures required by your institution to submit the application.
- B. *Career Goal Statement (1-page maximum)*: The statement should describe the applicant’s educational goals and post-education professional plans; how these goals connect to coastal science, sustainability, and/or issues relevant to the Maryland Sea Grant mission; and how the fellowship will contribute to these goals.
- C. *Project Description (5-page maximum, including figures, tables, and other graphics)*: The narrative should describe the background and rationale, objectives, general approach and methods, anticipated results, broader impacts, and research team and partners. It is intended to be a brief summary of the proposed research project, but should include sufficient detail to evaluate the appropriateness and feasibility of the approach, and the alignment of the project with MDSG’s strategic plan.
  - a. Abstract. Provide an up to 300-word abstract describing the objectives, rationale, methodology, and anticipated impact of the research.
  - b. Introduction / Background / Objectives. Why is the project needed? Provide the need for the research project, background information, and how the proposed project addresses a specific MDSG mission and strategic plan focus (e.g., reference the strategic plan priority that the research will address). What is the objective, purpose, or hypothesis of the proposed project?
  - c. General Approach and Methods. How will the project be accomplished? Describe the methods, approaches, and techniques that will be used to meet the objectives. Describe the role of the applicant and any other individuals contributing to the approach.

- d. **Anticipated Results.** What will be accomplished? Describe the results to be achieved by the project, how these results relate to current knowledge of the proposal topic, and of what use the results will be for specific audiences or end-users.
  - e. **Broader Impacts.** Connect the research to the broader impacts it will have beyond the academic community. Include a brief description of the outreach, education or dissemination strategies to be used. This strategy should go beyond traditional dissemination (e.g., presentations and peer-reviewed literature) to reach end-users directly (e.g., training, workshops, development of appropriate outreach products for non-scientific audiences, work with K-12 students and teachers, develop training manuals for end-users). The participation of the end-user mentor should be explicitly described. Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their mentors to develop their outreach strategy. More detail about sharing your outreach beyond academic venues is available <https://www.mdsq.umd.edu/share-your-research>.
  - f. **Research Team and Partners.** Briefly describe the research team and their roles and responsibilities, including the role of the outreach or end-user mentor.
- D. **Literature Cited:** Document all references cited in your proposal.
  - E. **Timeline and Tasks (1-page maximum):** The schedule should show, in table form by month, the milestones and tasks to be achieved (e.g., field work, data analysis, work with outreach mentor, development of outreach products) and the anticipated dates for achieving those tasks. An example table is available on our website: <http://www.mdsq.umd.edu/proposal-forms-and-worksheets>. *This section does not count toward your 5-page limit.*
  - F. **Academic CV/Biosketch (2-page maximum):** Provide a two page (maximum) curriculum vitae for the faculty advisor and student. We recommend you use the format of a National Science Foundation Biographical Sketch or SciENCv. Students may list presentations in the Products section.
  - G. **Undergraduate and graduate school transcripts:** Unofficial copies are acceptable.
  - H. **Data Management Plan:** Proposers must complete a Data Management Plan for making environmental data and results accessible and interpretable within two years of collection. Download and fill out the “Sea Grant Data Management Plan Form” from our forms page (<https://www.mdsq.umd.edu/proposal-forms-and-worksheets>). Additional instructions are provided on the form. Storing data on local servers or external drives without public access or noting that data will be available “upon request to the PI” are no longer sufficient options. Note you will be required to list data sets created and how to access them when reporting on your project. For additional guidance, see our “Data Management and Sharing” page: <https://www.mdsq.umd.edu/data-management-and-sharing>.
  - I. **Proof of acceptance and enrollment** in a graduate program in a relevant field of study is required for students beginning their graduate work in Fall 2020.

#### eSEAGRANT TAB: INVITE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WRITER

*Two letters of recommendation (submitted directly to eSeaGrant by writers):* One letter of recommendation should come from your primary faculty advisor. A second letter should come from the professional mentor indicating a commitment to mentor and describing the role that the mentor will play in the fellow’s academic experience. Only two letters will be accepted, so if more than one professional mentor is selected, a joint letter is preferred. If an applicant wants assistance identifying potential professional mentors, or would like to talk further about this expectation, they are encouraged to contact MDSG. Please enter the recommenders’ contact information into eSeaGrant well in advance of the deadline to ensure your writers have time to submit.

### eSEAGRANT TAB: SUBMISSION PREVIEW

Review the data and filenames of your submission. Click the “Submit” button in the upper right corner to submit your proposal package. **You MUST click submit by the deadline or your proposal will not be considered, regardless of what you have already uploaded.**

### **DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION PORTAL**

Applications must be submitted online by **Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 5:00 pm EST** to MDSG’s proposal system, eSeaGrant: <https://eseagrant.mdsq.umd.edu>. The submission system closes promptly and MDSG will not accept late proposals, so allow ample time to submit your proposal before the deadline. Confirmation of application receipt will be sent to the submitter by email only. Please contact Jenna Clark or Mike Allen if you do not receive confirmation shortly after submitting your proposal ([eseagrant@mdsg.umd.edu](mailto:eseagrant@mdsg.umd.edu)). Applicants are reminded to follow submission policies of their home institutions (e.g., obtaining review and signatures).

Please ensure that you select the application portal for the “Maryland Sea Grant Competitive Graduate Research Fellowship.”

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

MDSG will assemble a peer-review panel composed of the MDSG director, faculty, and professionals (e.g., extension staff, resource managers, private and non-profit sectors, and/or additional stakeholders) familiar with the coastal issues faced by Maryland, the region, and the nation. MDSG follows strict [conflict-of-interest policies](#). The panel will evaluate applications and make recommendations for MDSG to selected fellows based on the following criteria:

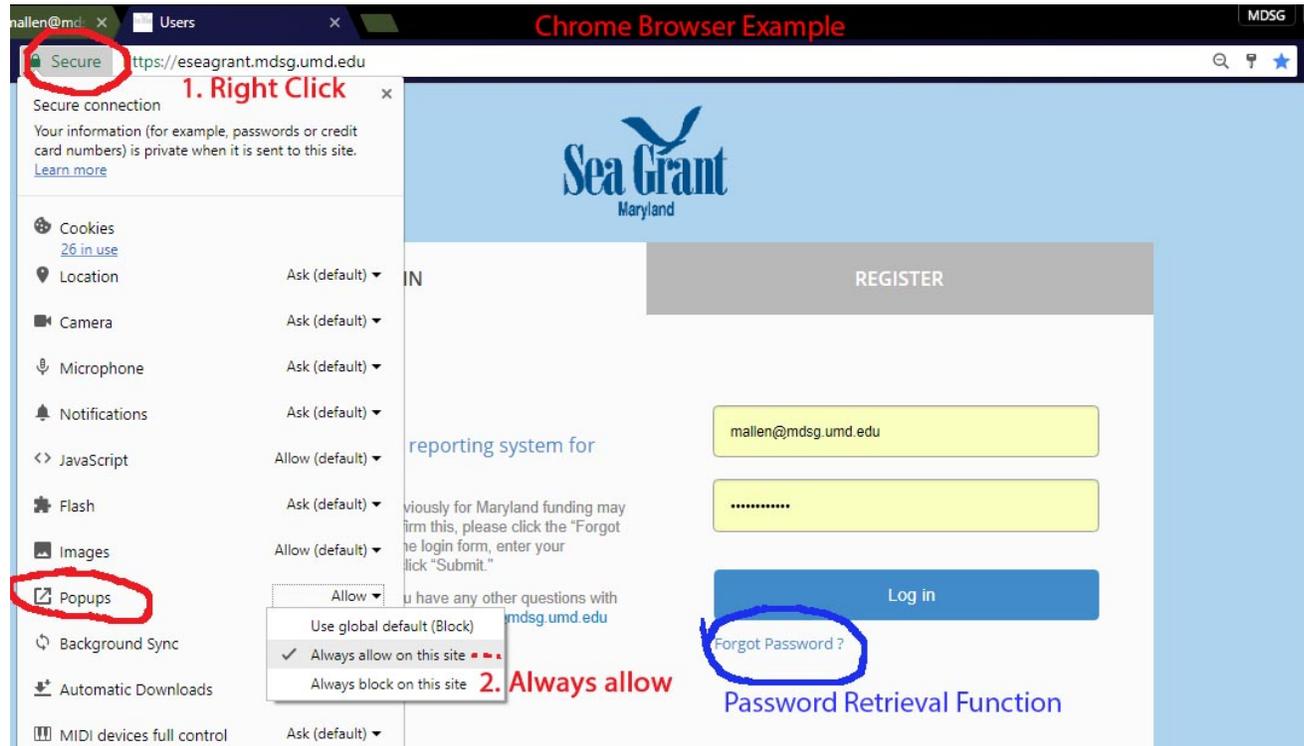
- Strength of the proposed plan of research (including their research plan; the applicant’s organization, analytic, and communication skills) (35%)
- Potential research impact and relevance to the Maryland Sea Grant strategic plan (25%)
- Demonstrated strengths and potential impact of the applicant on watershed, coastal, marine or social sciences (including applicant’s academic qualifications; potential for leadership in the field; demonstration of maturity, responsibility, and integrity; and proposed outreach) (25%)
- Other broader impacts including applicant’s demonstrated or potential impact on increasing access to and diversity within watershed, coastal and marine sciences (including applicant’s outreach, engagement, extracurricular activities, and background) (15%)

Notification of awards is expected by June 30, 2020.

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF MARYLAND'S eSEAGRANT SYSTEM

<https://eseagrant.mdsg.umd.edu>

## SITE-USE INSTRUCTIONS



**POPUP WINDOWS:** This site uses popup windows. Please ensure that they are allowed to permit proper functionality.

**LOGIN:** If this is your first time using eSeaGrant, go to <https://eseagrant.mdsg.umd.edu> and click on the gray “REGISTER” bar to create an account. Otherwise log in with your existing credentials.

Click on your name in the upper right corner to access the dropdown menu for your profile. Once on the profile page, your password can be changed by clicking the ‘Change Password’ button on the upper right side of your screen. Additionally, your contact information can be modified here by clicking the ‘Edit’ button.

**FORGOTTEN PASSWORD:** If you forget your password in the future, use the password retrieval function from the landing page. Maryland Sea Grant will not have access to your password.

**CREATE A NEW PROPOSAL:** On the Current Tasks tab, find the appropriate graduate student RFA. Click the “Add Proposal” link. Add the title of your new proposal and click “CONTINUE”.

When you later return to eSeaGrant. This proposal will be listed under the Fellowship Applications list as proposal 01. Click on the title to continue.

## **COMPLETE YOUR PROPOSAL**

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From the proposal landing page, you may modify the proposal title, keywords, and start/end dates. The recommended start date is September 1, 2020.

The “ACTIONS” menu allows you to add a delegate to your proposal – another individual already registered with eSeaGrant who you give permission to view and modify your proposal.

Navigate to different sections for the proposal using the tabs along the left. Each tab is required and includes a brief description of the file to be uploaded. You must follow the instructions outlined in the application description for each section.

Once you have completed all forms and uploaded your documents, navigate to the “Submission Preview” tab and submit your proposal.

## **NARRATIVE UPLOAD**

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Fill out the Principal Investigator form with the student’s contact information.

## **CAREER GOAL STATEMENT**

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You must upload your project narrative document as a single PDF as described in the application instructions. This should include sections A-G in the “Application Guidelines and Submission” section

## **INVITE LETTER WRITERS**

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Use this section to invite your one or two referees to submit letters of recommendation. Click the “Request Document” button and enter each referee’s name and email address. Do this well in advance. Once letters have been submitted, you will be able to see this on the tab.