



Georgia Sea Grant
Research Traineeship Program

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Sea Grant is a national network of thirty-four university-based programs in each of the coastal U.S. states, Great Lakes region, Puerto Rico and Guam. For over 40 years, Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant have supported research, education and outreach activities that promote environmental and economic health in Georgia by helping improve public resource policy, encouraging far-sighted economic and fisheries decisions, anticipating vulnerabilities to change and educating citizens to be wise stewards of the coastal environment.

Georgia Sea Grant strives to identify qualified undergraduate and graduate students in all disciplines displaying evidence of high level of motivation and the capability to pursue marine, coastal and ocean science research. Under the supervision of faculty and professional mentors, Sea Grant Research Trainees will undertake research projects that advance the goals and objectives outlined in Georgia Sea Grant's Strategic Plan. A Sea Grant Research Trainee is a full-time registered undergraduate or graduate student who is working towards a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree. Through sustained interactions with faculty and professional mentors, Sea Grant Trainees will conduct high-quality research, understand the relevance and impact of their research on the real world and gain critical professional skills.

The purpose of this request for applications is to help ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific workforce by supporting original and innovative student research projects that address one or more priorities identified in our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan (<https://gacoast.uga.edu/about/about-us/strategic-plan/>). Student research projects must be aligned with one or more of our four focus areas:

1. Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
2. Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
3. Resilient Communities and Economies
4. Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

The goals of our Traineeship program are: (i) to select, recognize and provide financial support to individuals with demonstrated potential to be successful scientists and professionals in marine, coastal or ocean science disciplines; and (ii) broaden participation in marine, coastal and ocean sciences by providing research and education opportunities to individuals from underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Georgia Sea Grant's Research Traineeship program awards grants for undergraduate and graduate study that lead to research-based degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines. Proposed research projects must be related to marine, coastal or ocean environments. Sea Grant Traineeship supports individuals proposing a comprehensive plan for undergraduate or graduate education that takes individuals interests and competencies into consideration. The plan describes the applicant's academic preparation, research plan, personal and career goal statement, and any relevant experiences and achievements that demonstrate the applicant's potential.

Each academic year, Georgia Sea Grant will invest nearly \$120,000 in its Research Traineeship Program. Graduate Traineeship applicants can request up to \$25,000 in assistantship, materials, and/or travel. Undergraduate Traineeship applicants can request up to \$4,000 in stipend to cover expenses associated with a research project. We anticipate making 5-6 graduate and 4-5 undergraduate Research Traineeship awards each year.

Our Research Traineeship program includes an assistantship or stipend that offers qualified graduate or undergraduate students respectively, the opportunity to work with faculty mentors at different universities in Georgia. The Traineeship does not cover tuition and fees. Sea Grant Trainees work closely with faculty conducting research to formulate methodology and conduct scientific research. A Sea Grant Trainee is expected to work as an investigator (not simply a research technician or laboratory helper) on the research project.

All graduate Traineeship applicants must work with their faculty mentors to route their Traineeship applications to Georgia Sea Grant through their university's sponsored program office. The award will be made to the faculty mentor and the Sea Grant Trainee is expected to lead the application development and submission process.

All undergraduate Traineeship applicants can be submitted directly to Georgia Sea Grant.

B. Award Period

Georgia Sea Grant Trainees will begin their projects in the fall semester. The anticipated start date for all research projects will be August 1, 2020. Projects funded through the Traineeship Program will have a performance period up to 12 months.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Prospective Sea Grant Trainees must either be enrolled or prepared to enroll in a university, college, or non-profit academic institution of higher education accredited in, and having a campus located in Georgia, no later than fall of the year the award is accepted.

Students may apply before enrolling in a degree-granting program, but all prospective Sea Grant Trainees must be affiliated with an institution of higher education in Georgia, at the time of acceptance through completion or termination of the Traineeship.

Applicants must identify a faculty mentor under whose supervision the Sea Grant Trainee will conduct research. The mentor is usually a faculty advisor at any institution of higher education in Georgia.

In addition to faculty mentors, applicants must identify a professional mentor who will be an individual representing an outreach group or education group or an end-user community or stakeholder group.

Georgia Sea Grant especially encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, persons with disabilities, veterans and undergraduate seniors to apply. We strongly encourage applications from Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in Georgia.

B. Field of Study

Sea Grant Traineeships are awarded for undergraduate or graduate study leading to research-based degree in a STEM discipline. The undergraduate or graduate research project being proposed must be related to the marine, coastal or ocean environments. The proposed projects could be natural science, social science or engineering in nature.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Matching funds are not required for this solicitation.

D. Other Criteria That Affect Eligibility

Prospective applicants can only submit one application in response to this solicitation.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Submit Application

Georgia Sea Grant uses a web-based system called eSeaGrant (eSG) that allows preparation, submission, and management of proposals online. Mandatory registration is required before the pre-proposal submission process. Applications that are not submitted via eSG will not be considered.

Prior to submitting an application, the prospective applicant must complete a one-time registration process in the eSG. It can take as long as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible before the pre-proposal due date.

Instructions on how to register to use the system and how to upload your proposal to the eSG system can be viewed on the following webpage: <https://gacoast.uga.edu/research-trainee-program/>

No applications will be accepted after the proposal deadline.

B. Application Information

Prospective applicants are expected to take a lead in preparation of their applications with guidance from their faculty mentors. Applications submitted in response to this call for applications must be submitted via eSG.

All applications must be single-spaced with 1-inch margins, written in 12 point, Times New Roman, and must contain the following items, arranged in the order listed, and strictly adhere to the specified page limitations. Figures and tables are included in the applicable page limitations. References are not included.

Prospective applicants for undergraduate and graduate Research Traineeship must submit the following items.

1. Applicant and Mentor Information: Each applicant should submit a two-page CV that includes applicant's academic preparation, professional achievements, volunteer activities and any awards received. Two-page CV should also be included for the faculty mentor. It should include the individual's expertise as it relates to the proposed research, professional preparation, professional appointments, five relevant products and up to five synergistic activities. Applicants must also identify the name and contact information of a professional mentor. A CV is not required for professional mentors.
2. Career and Professional Development Goal Statement: The statement should be limited to two-pages and should describe the applicant's educational and professional goals and objectives. The statement should highlight how applicant's academic preparation and professional experiences have contributed to their long-term career goals and clearly explain how the Sea Grant Traineeship will help advance those career goals.
3. Abstract: Abstracts are the public-face of Sea Grant research investments and decision-making. Each application must include a 250-word abstract that states the problem to be studied and explains the project's broader significance and importance, that serves as a justification for Sea Grant funding. The abstract should be understandable to broader public.
4. Project Description: The project description should be limited to two pages in length. The project description should provide a clear statement of work that will be undertaken including research need, goals and objectives for the period of the proposed research, expected significance of the research project, relevance to 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field. The project description should also outline the general plan of work including a broad design of the research project, clear methodology, outreach plan, expected outputs and outcomes, any professional or technical partnerships that will be leveraged or created, and timelines for major tasks; target milestones and key project outcomes.

Some guiding questions are as follows.

- a. *Rationale*: What is the proposed research? What is the problem or issue that the proposed research will address? Why should Georgia Sea Grant invest in the proposed project?
 - b. *Scientific or Professional Merit*: How will the proposed research advance the state of the scientific knowledge or discipline? How will the proposed research be implemented? Which methods will be used in the proposed research?
 - c. *Innovativeness*: How is the proposed research unique? How does the proposed research activity lead to innovative solutions to a research need that is being addressed?
 - d. *Relationship to Sea Grant Priorities*: What is the project's relevance to the Georgia Sea Grant program goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan?
 - e. *Task Outputs and Outcomes*: What benefits (societal/economic/environmental) could accrue if the project is successful? How does the proposed research contribute to, or is an essential or complementary unit to other projects?
 - f. *User Relationships*: Who will use and benefit from your research? Are the users engaged in developing the proposal? How will the results be made available to the users?
 - g. *Milestone schedule*: Does the project description clearly outline a timeline for major tasks, target milestones for important intermediate and final products and outcomes?
5. References: Reference information is required and should include the name of all authors (in the same sequence that they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. The list of references should be limited to one-page.
 6. Budget Narrative and Justification: In order to allow reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of all costs, applications should include a detailed budget narrative and a budget justification. Sea Grant budgets are created through a budget worksheet available to registered applicants through our web-based application submission system, eSeaGrant. The budget narrative submitted with the final application should match the dollar amounts included on all required forms and clearly link to the project narrative. Please explain each calculation and provide a narrative justification to explain expenditures for each budget category. The budget narrative should describe, by category of expenditure, the total funding needed to accomplish the objectives described in the project description for the entire award period. The budget narrative should also provide, to the extent possible, detailed information on travel, including costs, a description of anticipated travel, destinations, number of travelers, and a justification of how the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. **Please note that indirect costs will apply to these projects based on your institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Please ensure that indirect costs are included in the submitted budget. The entire budget, including indirect costs, must not exceed \$25,000.**
 7. Data Management Plan: All applicants are required to complete a one-page Data Management Plan (DMP) (see Appendix A for more details). Even if no data will be produced, a DMP is required that states: "No data are expected to be produced from this project."

8. Letters of Commitment: Prospective applicants should include two letters of commitment – one from the faculty mentor who will oversee the student’s research project, and another from the professional mentor. The letters should describe mentor’s role on the project and how they plan to guide the Sea Grant Trainee in their academic and professional journey.
9. Undergraduate and Graduate School Transcripts: Unofficial copies of transcripts are acceptable and must clearly indicate the name of the institution, degree program, courses taken and GPAs. Transcripts should be included in reverse chronological order (i.e., newest transcripts first).

All applications must include a title page that is signed and approved by an Authorized Representative at the applicant’s institution (through Sponsored Programs or equivalent office). We strongly encourage inclusion of the University of Georgia’s Subrecipient Commitment Form with all applications. The form can be found here: <https://spa.uga.edu/docs/spa/Subrecipient-Commitment.pdf>.

V. Merit Review Information

To maintain the highest quality, integrity and relevance of Georgia Sea Grant funded research, we have modeled the core values of our merit review process after the National Science Foundation’s gold standard of scientific review. The primary goal of Georgia Sea Grant’s merit review process is to ensure that all applications are evaluated in a transparent, objective and rigorous manner.

A. Merit Review Criteria and Process

All applications that are submitted in response to Georgia Sea Grant’s Student Research Traineeship Program RFP will undergo review by technical experts, stakeholders and advisory board members.

All applications will be evaluated on the basis of following criteria.

- Academic and Professional Performance.
- Career and Professional Goal Statement.
- Faculty and Professional Mentor Relationship.
- Scientific and Technical Feasibility of the Proposed Research Project.
- Relevance to the Goals and Strategies of Georgia Sea Grant’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.
- Feasibility of the Project within the Proposed Timeframe and Budget.

B. Selection of Reviewers

Georgia Sea Grant strives to ensure selection of diverse experts who can provide us with appropriate information needed to make a funding decision. Selection of reviewers is based on the following criteria.

- Specialized knowledge of the science and engineering subfields involved in the proposals to be reviewed to evaluate competence, intellectual merit, and utility of the proposed activity.
- Broader or generalized knowledge of the science and engineering subfields involved in the proposals to be reviewed to evaluate the broader impacts of the proposed activity.
- Broad knowledge of the infrastructure of the science and engineering enterprise, and its educational activities, to evaluate the contributions to broader impacts.
- Broad knowledge of environmental issues and research needs in Georgia.
- Broad knowledge of 2018-2021 Strategic Plan to establish relevance of the proposed research activity in achieving the goals and objectives of the plan.
- To the extent possible, diverse representation within the review group, including but not limited to, reviewer diversity, type of organization represented, age distribution and geographic balance.

VI. Important Dates

February 3	Request for Applications Released
February 12	Prospective Applicant Webinar
March 27	Application Deadline
April 24	Merit Review Panel
May 1	Funding Notification
August 1	Traineeship Begins
September (Dates TBD)	Student Onboarding
July 31	Traineeship Ends

VII. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Applications recommended for funding by Georgia Sea Grant will be forwarded to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the applicant.

B. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA requires that Federal agencies consider the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. If a proposed project might have an environmental impact, the proposal should furnish sufficient information to assist Sea Grant in assessing the environmental consequences of supporting the project. Applicants will be required to cooperate with Sea Grant in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. Georgia Sea Grant will determine:

- the adequacy of the information submitted;

- whether or not additional information is needed; and
- whether or not an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be necessary.

A NEPA form will only be required if the application is selected for funding.

C. Data Sharing

After an award has been made, implementation of data management plan (DMP) will be monitored through the annual and final report process. Research Trainees will be required to provide information on the data produced during the award period, where the data is being deposited, and how the data will be disseminated for long-term public access.

Failure to comply with DMP during and after the award may lead to ineligibility for future funding.

D. Reporting

Georgia Sea Grant adheres to the highest ethical and professional standards in conducting research and expects substantial outcomes from supported research projects. All outcomes should be submitted for peer-reviewed publications with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of each participant on the research project. Georgia Sea Grant expects timely dissemination of research results, data-sharing, and access to samples, collections or other supporting materials that are created or gathered during the research process.

For all Sea Grant funded projects, Sea Grant Trainees are required to submit progress and annual project reports. These reports collect information about project participants, research activities, outcomes, publications, tools and technology developed, management and decision-making processes influenced, education products and programs developed, and other products and contributions, which are critical to Georgia Sea Grant's annual performance evaluation.

All progress related to Georgia Sea Grant funded research projects must be submitted to Sea Grant using eSG. Within 60 days after expiration of a grant, Sea Grant Trainee is also required to submit a final project report. Failure to provide the required annual or final project report data jeopardizes continued funding.

E. Student Onboarding and Sea Grant Research Symposium

Sea Grant Trainees *are required* to participate in the annual student onboarding, and the annual research and student symposium. The former takes place in September/October (dates TBD) and the latter takes place in April/May.

VIII. Program Contacts

Applicants are welcome to schedule a time to discuss their application with director Mark Risse (mrisse@uga.edu) or associate director, Mona Behl (mbehl@uga.edu).

Appendix A

Sea Grant Data Management Plan Form

Title of the Proposal (required answer):

Name of the lead PI (required answer): Sea Grant requires that the lead PI serve as the data steward.

Contact Information (required answer):

Dataset Description(s) (required answer): What data will the dataset(s) contain? This includes descriptive details on data types, inclusion of metadata, data format(s), collection times / date ranges, etc. What name(s), if any, will be designated to the dataset(s)?

Do you agree to release all data no later than 2 years after the end-date of the project? (required answer):

Issues (required answer): Are there any legal, access, retention, etc. issues anticipated for the dataset? If yes, please explain.

Data Size: What will be the estimated size of the dataset? Please report estimated number of MB, GB, TB, etc., collected.

Data Format: What format will the dataset utilize? (i.e., Excel file, model code, audio/video recording, etc.)

Ownership (required answer): Who will own the dataset, if not the lead PI?

Post-Processing: What post-processing, QA/QC will this dataset undergo? Who will be responsible for performing this post-processing and QA/QC to prepare the dataset for its deposition into a repository?

Preservation Plan (required answer): What data repositories will be used to host the dataset? If none, how will the data be preserved?

Products: Will any information or data products be developed from this dataset? How will the related costs be supported? Which organization(s) will be producing these products?

Other Comments: Are there any additional comments related to the data that will results from your Sea Grant-funded study?