

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
USAF Summer Faculty Fellowship Program and the USAF/NRC Resident Research
Associateships Program

A. Justification

1. Circumstances making the collection of information necessary.

The Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) manages the entire basic research investment for the US Air Force. As part of the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), AFOSR's technical experts support and fund research programs within the AFRL and other Air Force research activities. Applications for fellowships and associateships at AFRL research sites and the research activities at the US Air Force Academy and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), and the associated award forms provide information used to identify some of the Nation's most talented scientific personnel for award of fellowships and associateships at Air Force research activities. Summer fellowships provide research opportunities for 8-14 weeks at an Air Force research site. Research Associates generally spend 1 to 3 years at an Air Force research site.

Fellowship and associateship programs are currently administered, in part, under contract with American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences.

- **Air Force Summer Faculty Fellowship Program (SFFP)** (Administered by ASEE)
- **US Air Force/National Research Council Resident Research Associateships (NRC/RRA) Program** (Administered by NRC)

2. How and by whom the information will be used.

The information collected is used to support the scientific and research interests of the Air Force and the Department of Defense. The information collected is used in assignment of personnel to review, evaluate, and select research fellows/research associates and for award processing and accounting. Information is used by the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), the contractor selected to administer the program, to down-select the eligible applicants by means of a peer review panel. The information is also used by scientists of the Air Force to make the final selection of awardees.

Awardees will be required to provide personal information such as Social Security Numbers, Bank Account transfer codes, etc., to receive direct-deposit payments of their stipends and required reporting to the internal revenue Service (IRS). Awardees are independent contractors and are not employees of ASEE, NRC, or the Air Force.

The information (voluntary) collected on gender, race, ethnicity or handicap is used in meeting Air Force needs for data to permit response to Congressional and other inquiries into equity issues. Only aggregated data will be used. Data specific to individuals will not be accessed.

3. Consideration of the use of information technology.

Applications are by electronic submissions to ASEE and the NRC. Recommendation letters are requested to be submitted electronically; however, paper submissions are acceptable. Academic transcripts are received directly from universities by mail.

Fellows/associates selected for awards are paid by electronic transfer to their bank account.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication.

SFFP and NRC/RRA are unique programs and these one-time applications do not duplicate other Air Force requests.

5. Small Business/Small Entities Considerations.

Small businesses and small entities are not impacted by this information collection.

6. Consequences of Non-collection or Less Frequent Collection.

SFFP awards are granted annually. NRC/RRA convenes peer review panels quarterly to shorten the time between application and employment. The pool of potential applicants is continually changing as new students achieve doctorates and become eligible to apply. Non-receipt of information to evaluate and make awards would mean that approximately 100 academics would not receive fellowships/associateships.

7. Special Circumstances for Collection.

There are no special circumstances requiring the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. Federal Register Notice and Other Consultations.

The 60-day Federal Register notice published July 31, 2006 (71 FR 43137). No comments were received.

The type of information to be collected is similar to information collected by universities, other government agencies, and the National Science Foundation to enable evaluation and selection of academics to be awarded fellowships and associateships.

9. Payments to Respondents.

None.

10. Confidentiality.

The announcement and the electronic application process for these programs contain a Privacy Act Statement (included in attached Application Instructions) which specifies the use of the information in evaluating and selecting the awardees. It further advises that voluntary demographic information may be used in the aggregate for evaluating equity issues. No personnel information is released to the public.

Information collected will be maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974.

11. Sensitive Questions.

Application information collected on gender, citizenship, race, ethnicity, or disability is collected voluntarily and in a separate section of the electronic submission to the contractor. Only aggregated data are used for required reports and equity issues. Those selected for awards will be required to provide their Social Security Number and bank routing codes in order for the government to provide their stipends.

This information will be maintained by ASEE (current contractor for SFFP) and the NRC under Privacy Act Systems of Records to be established at ASEE and NRC.

12. Response Burden Hours.

ASEE receives approximately 180 fellowship applications annually and the NRC approximately 100. We estimate that an average of 16 burden hours is expended by the public for each application for an annual total of 4,480 hours. These submissions are considered “required to receive a benefit.” Application Instructions are attached.

There is no cost to the applicant above the expense of preparing and submitting the application. Applicant completes the application package – estimated cost of burden is \$28/hour x 16 hours = \$448 per applicant. Approximately 280 applicants = \$125,440.

13. Burden Cost to Respondents.

This is no Operational and Maintenance or Startup costs for the applicant.

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government.

It is difficult to estimate the annualized cost to the Federal Government in terms of hours expended, salaries, equipment involved etc since peer review panels consist of academic, scientific, engineering communities and full-time government employees from GS-12 through Senior Executive Service (SES). They rank order all the applicants. Actual selections recommendations are made from further review at the field level based on both ranking from peer review panels and scientific and engineering needs of Air Force research sites.

Recording keeping expense is \$632,000 paid to contractors.

15. Reasons for Program Changes (Items 13 or 14 of OMB-83-I).

This is a first-time collection request.

16. Publication of Information.

Information will not be published.

17. Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval.

We are not seeking an exemption.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement (Item 19 of OMB-83-I)

There are no exceptions to the Certification Statement.

Part B: Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods.

This collection does not employ statistical methods.