

**Supporting Statement
Information Collection Request for a
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Completion Report
for GRFP Institutions (OMB Clearance No. 3145-0223)
Submitted by
The National Science Foundation**

**1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION
NECESSARY**

GRFP collects numerous sources of information from GRFP Fellows and from the grantee GRFP Institutions. We use several reporting modules within NSF's GRFP FastLane system to collect this information. Fellows are required to prepare and submit an Annual Activity Report through the GRFP FastLane module. GRFP Institutions are required to submit on an annual basis the Program Expense Report for the previous Fellowship year and the Grants Roster Report, the latter confirming the current Fellowship status of all Fellows. Both Reports are certified by the GRFP Institution to be in compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Fellowship award to the institution. The Completion Report was added in 2012 as a third annual reporting requirement of GRFP Institutions.

Although Fellows are asked to indicate their proposed plans for graduation and completion of their fellowships in their Annual Activity Reports, the actual completion status of the graduate degree is only reported to the NSF in the GRFP Completion Report. Information on degree completion by Fellows and time to degree informs program management and outcomes reporting for the GRFP. The Completion Report submitted by each GRFP Institution certifies the completion status of Fellows at the institution (e.g., in progress, completed, graduated, transferred, withdrawn) and degree, if awarded.

The Completion Report allows GRFP Institutions to certify the current status of all GRFP Fellows at the institution. The current status identifies each Fellow as: In Progress, Graduated, Transferred, or Withdrawn. For Fellows with Graduated status, the graduation date is a required reporting element. The collection of this information allows the program to obtain information on the current status of Fellows, the number and/or percentage of NSF Graduate Research Fellowship recipients who complete a graduate degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field, and provides an estimate of time to degree completion.

2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND PURPOSE FOR WHICH INFORMATION IS TO BE USED

The National Science Foundation (NSF) serves as sponsor of this report. The information is gathered electronically through the GRFP FastLane module, as certified and submitted by the institution's designated Coordinating Official (CO).

The purpose of the information request is to provide NSF information on the current status of Fellows, the number and/or percentage of Graduate Fellowship recipients who complete a STEM degree, and an estimate of time to degree completion. The information informs program management and outcomes reporting for the GRFP.

3. USE OF AUTOMATION

Research.gov is an initiative that provides a menu of services tailored to the needs of the research community. Research.gov provides next generation capabilities by enabling organizations and grantees access to a menu of NSF services such as FastLane.

FastLane is the mechanism used by institutions to submit requests and reports to the NSF. As noted above, and reiterated here, the Completion Report, which is part of the Annual Reporting requirements of GRFP, will be submitted through FastLane.

4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION

Information regarding when, and with what degree, Fellows complete their graduate degree is not currently available to the NSF. The information currently available in NSF FastLane records includes only a Fellow's Tenure, Reserve, Deferral or Termination status, as estimated by the Fellow. These different statuses are confirmed by the institutions when they certify the previous fellowship year Program Expense Report and the Grants Roster Report for the current fellowship year. The Completion Report is used by the NSF to monitor graduate degree completion and time to degree of Fellows. The Completion Report does not duplicate any reporting system, and improves the current required reporting system by providing Fellow degree status and completion date for each Fellow at the GRFP Institution.

5. SMALL BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF LESS FREQUENT COLLECTION

Not applicable.

7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR COLLECTION

There are no special circumstances for this collection.

8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE/OUTSIDE CONSULTATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) proposed continuation of the Completion Report for comment in the **Federal Register** [Volume 80, page 50328, August 19, 2015]. No public comments were received from GRFP institutional representatives, including Coordinating and Financial Officials. A description of these roles and responsibilities is provided below, as they relate to the comments received in response to the Federal Register notice when this collection was established in 2012.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

GRFP Institutions support and advise Fellows throughout their Fellowship Period, receive NSF Awards (Grants) to financially support Fellows on Tenure, and report to the NSF on Fellow and Award activities. The primary GRFP Institution representatives are the Principal Investigator (PI), Coordinating Official (CO), and Financial Official (FO). The Fellows' Academic/Research Advisors are also integral to ensuring Fellows are making satisfactory progress toward degree completion. Each institution, in accepting the funds, also certifies that the Fellows are eligible to receive the Fellowship under the Terms and Conditions specified in the Guide. The institution has full responsibility for the conduct of the project or activity supported under an NSF grant and for the results achieved.

Coordinating Official(s) (CO)

The CO is designated by the GRFP Institution to serve as the primary and day-to-day point of contact for Fellows and the Program Office. Typically, the CO is located in the graduate school or other academic office that oversees fellowships and/or graduate student financial support. The CO is paired with a representative from the sponsored research/projects office and/or grants accounting office, the Financial Official (FO), who is responsible for the financial reporting requirements.

The CO performs the following duties:

1. Advises Fellows on GRFP Policies, Procedures, Terms and Conditions, etc.;
2. Interprets GRFP Policies in the context of the institutional procedures (e.g., Stipend Payment Schedules, enrollment requirements, etc.);

3. Reviews Fellow Change Requests in the GRFP FastLane Module and provides GRFP Institution Approval/Disapproval of such requests, as appropriate;
4. Reviews information on New and Continuing Fellows for the GRFP Institution during the New Fellowship Announcement and Fellowship Status Declaration Periods each spring;
5. Confirms the accuracy of the Fellows listed and their status for the next Fellowship Year;
6. Certifies the progress of continuing Fellows;
7. Submits the GRFP Grants Roster Report and the Completion Report; and
8. Participates in the preparation and submission of the GRFP Program Expense Report in coordination with the PI and FO.

Financial Official (FO)

The FO is the GRFP institutional representative from the Office of Sponsored Projects (or equivalent organization) responsible for financial oversight of NSF awards. In coordination with the PI and CO, the FO is responsible for ensuring that the quarterly Federal Financial Reports (FFR) and the GRFP Program Expense Report (due October 1 in the NSF GRFP FastLane Module) are submitted by the established deadlines. The FO also is responsible for assisting the PI/CO with NSF FastLane requests for Supplemental funding requests and No Cost Extension requests.

GRFP Institution Reporting Requirements:

Grants Roster Report

GRFP Institutions are required to submit the Grants Roster Report for the upcoming Fellowship year. The Grants Roster Report lists the Fellowship status of all new and continuing Fellows at the institution. The Coordinating Official submits the Grants Roster Report in the GRFP FastLane module. Through submission of the Grants Roster Report, institutions formally acknowledge the status of all Fellows with respect to reporting requirements and rating of progress, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the award.

Program Expense Report

GRFP Institutions are required to submit the Program Expense Report for the previous Fellowship Year. Only the designated GRFP Financial Official can submit the report in the GRFP FastLane module. By submitting the GRFP Program Expense Report, institutions verify and certify that the Program Expense Report is in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the award.

Completion Report

GRFP institutions are required to submit the GRFP Completion Report annually. The Completion Report allows GRFP institutions to certify the current status of all GRFP Fellows at the institution. The current status will identify a Fellow as: In Progress, Graduated, Transferred, or Withdrawn. For Fellows who have graduated, the graduation date is a required reporting element.

While no comments were received during the comment period for this information collection request, the program continued to address the earlier comments received when the ICR was initiated in 2012. All comments were carefully considered in developing a final version of the Completion Report. A number of specific issues were raised, and those comments and responses are summarized below:

Comment: One institutional Financial Official (FO) questioned why it was the responsibility of the FO to submit the Completion Report and not the responsibility of the Coordinating Official (CO). The FO was concerned that the information gathered by them may not be accurate.

Response: This issue was also raised by other GRFP officials. GRFP assigned responsibility for the Completion Report to the CO by separating submission of the Completion Report from submission of the Program Expense Report. There have been no further issues raised with this GRFP reporting requirement.

Comment: One institutional CO requested clarification of the “current degree status.” Did it mean type of degree (i.e. MS or Ph.D.), or years remaining until conferral of degree, or something else. The CO stated that knowledge of the specific information requested by NSF is necessary in order for them to obtain the needed personnel to perform the work, as that institution has a significant number of Fellows.

Response: The Completion Report menu has four columns to populate, 1.) Degree Status, 2.) Graduate Program Start Date, 3.) Degree Sought, and 4.) Graduation Date. The Degree Status has four pull-down choices- In Progress, Graduated, Transferred, or Withdrawn. The Graduate Program Start Date requires a month and a year. The Degree Sought is pre-populated from the Degree Sought field of the Fellow’s Annual Activity Report. The Graduation Date is required only if the Fellow’s degree status is marked as “Graduated”.

Comment: One institutional CO asked how to report Fellows who are on an approved leave (medical or military deferral), as “In Progress” does not fit their situation.

Response: All Fellows within the five-year Fellowship Period who are not Completed or Terminated are active Fellows who should be reported as “In Progress” on the Completion Report. Active Fellows must be in one of the following statuses: Tenure, Reserve, Forfeit, Medical Deferral or Military Deferral. The Fellowship Period is a five-year Fellowship Period

which includes three Tenure Years of Financial Support (Stipend and institutional Cost-of-Education Allowance) and two Reserve Years. .

In addition to the Federal Register notice, the information collection for the Completion Report was introduced to Coordinating Officials via Webinars in March 2011. The Completion Report was introduced to Graduate Deans (the PIs of the GRFP awards) at two meetings of the Council of Graduate Schools, in July 2011 and December 2011. The Completion Report was introduced to Sponsored Research Officials and other GRFP Officials at two meetings of the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA), in 2013 and 2015. The attendees responded positively to the information request from the NSF.

9. GIFTS OR REMUNERATION

Not applicable.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS

The NSF maintains the authoritative copy of all Completion Reports. Collection of information will be consistent with OMB policies as well as agency policies and practices for access to electronic records. FastLane maintains all transmission records of submitted Completion Reports.

11. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE

The Completion Report does not contain specific demographic information such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc. The Completion Report does contain Fellow name, ID number, field of study, degree status, graduate program start date, degree sought, and graduate date information. The data will be collected, maintained, and used in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and any other applicable OMB and NSF policies and practices.

12. ESTIMATE OF BURDEN

Overall average time will be 15 minutes per Fellow (8,500 Fellows) for a total of 2,125 hours for all GRFP Institutions with Fellows. An estimate for institutions with 12 or fewer Fellows will be less than 4 hours, institutions with 12-48 fellows will be less than 12 hours, and institutions with over 48 Fellows will be more than 12 hours.

ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS

Institution	Type of Respondent	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate*	Total Respondent Cost
Graduate degree-	Coordinating Official (CO)	1 hour per 4 Fellows 4 hours per 16	\$27.47	\$27.47 \$109.88

granting institution accredited in, and having a campus located in, the United States, its territories, or possessions, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.		Fellows 12 hours per 48 Fellows		\$329.64
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*BLS website: http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/naics4_611300.htm

13. CAPITAL/STARTUP COSTS

There are no capital or startup costs to respondents.

14. ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Each agency currently has existing personnel, systems and processes (or other resources) in place to receive and review the Completion Report, as required by current, established practices mandated by OMB Circulars.

GRFP Program Directors who review progress and the individual GRFP Completion Reports generally are in the GS-14 and 15 range. Based on a step one average of these grades (OPM General Schedule Pay Table for 2012), an average hourly salary is \$44.00 per hour. It is further estimated that about 30 minutes of time is needed to review a Completion Report for an institution, and with an estimated 250 institutions, the estimated annual cost to the Federal Government leading is \$5,500.00. This cost does not include the cost of developing and maintaining the GRFP Completion Report module, nor does it include the cost of developing summary reports from the data captured across all GRFP Institutions.

15. CHANGES IN BURDEN

While the overall burden has increased due to the increase in the number of respondents, the burden time has not increased.

16. PUBLICATION OF COLLECTION

Not applicable.

17. SEEKING APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY OMB EXPIRATION DATE

Not applicable because the OMB number and expiration date will be included on the data collection.

**18. EXCEPTION(S) TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT (19) ON
OMB 83-I**

Not applicable.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

No statistical methods are employed in this information collection.