

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program
Student Applicant Information
OMB CONTROL NO. 0693-0042

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program provides an opportunity for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) laboratories (at both the Gaithersburg and Boulder campus locations) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to join in a partnership to encourage outstanding undergraduate students to pursue careers in science and engineering. The program provides research opportunities for students to work with internationally known NIST scientists, to expose them to cutting-edge research and promote the pursuit of graduate degrees in science and engineering. The authority for the SURF Program is 15 U.S.C. 278g-1, which authorizes NIST to fund financial assistance awards to students at institutions of higher learning within the United States.

The purpose of this instrument is to collect the information items detailed in the Proposal Review Process and Evaluation Criteria sections of the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) Announcement (copy of the most recent FFO is in ROCIS). The information will be provided by student applicants. The information will be used to determine eligible students, select students for the program using the Evaluation Criteria described in the FFO, and place selected students in appropriate research projects that match their needs, interests, and academic preparation. The information includes: student's name, host institution, e-mail address/contact information, home address, class standing, first- and second-choice of NIST laboratories they wish to apply to (Boulder applicants may select up to six choices of NIST research opportunities), academic major (minor), current overall grade point average (GPA), need for housing and gender (for housing purposes only), availability dates, resume, personal statement of commitment and research interests, two letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, verification of U.S. citizenship or permanent legal residency, terms and conditions (Real ID Act, housing request, and background check) and verification of health coverage.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The information will be used by the central administrative coordinator to determine complete applications, and by the SURF Program Directors and technical reviewers to determine student eligibility, and to evaluate and select students for the program. The Proposal Review Process and the Evaluation Criteria are given in detail in the FFO.

student's name, host institution, e-mail address, phone number, home address – Identifying and contact information is needed for such reasons as notification of incomplete packages, initiation of contact with the research advisor, and arrangement of travel.

class standing, academic major (minor) – This information is needed to place students in appropriate research projects that match their needs, interests, and academic preparation.

current overall GPA – This is needed to determine student eligibility and is also an Evaluation Criterion.

previous participation and mentor identification- This information is needed to place students in appropriate research projects that match their needs, interests, and academic preparation.

choice of SURF-specific location- Boulder and/or Gaithersburg; This information is needed to match students to requested location.

research preference- (for Boulder, top six choices of NIST research opportunities and for Gaithersburg, top 2 choices NIST laboratories they wish to apply) – The information is needed to place students in appropriate research projects that match their prioritized research interests.

need for housing and gender – This information is required for housing purposes, since students must share bedrooms.

availability dates – This is needed to place students in appropriate research projects, and to determine if adjustments can be made to accommodate specific academic schedules.

resume, personal statement of commitment and research interests – These are Student Information Items listed under the Proposal Review Process in the Federal Register Notice for the SURF; they provide Evaluation Criteria and are also needed to place students in appropriate research projects that match their interests.

laboratory skills, computer language skills, and other skills: These skills are needed to place students in appropriate research projects that match their interests.

two letters of recommendation, academic transcripts – These are Student Information Items listed under the Proposal Review Process in the Federal Register Notice for the SURF.

verification of U.S. citizenship or permanent legal residency – These are Student Information Items listed under the Proposal Review Process in the Federal Register Notice for the SURF, and are needed to determine student eligibility for the program.

terms and conditions: These are acknowledgements which remind students to request housing during the time of application, inform the students about the required background check, and describe the requirements for the Real ID Act. The student must initial confirming they have read the terms and conditions.

This information collection and dissemination will comply with the NIST CIO Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The Student Application Information form will be available on the web. The collection is currently limited to paper form and is required to be scanned and submitted electronically via the Internet using the grants.gov system (<http://grants.gov/>).

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The information needed is itemized and described in the FFO Notices for the SURF Program. This information is not included in the Application Institution's proposal and therefore is not duplicated anywhere.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Not applicable.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The SURF Program cannot be conducted without the collected information because it assists NIST to evaluate, select, and place students in appropriate research projects that match their needs, interests, and academic preparation.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The collection will be conducted consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information of the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A 60 Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) soliciting public comment was published on Wednesday, June 24, 2015 (Vol. 80, No. 121, pages 36321-36322). NIST received no public comments.

A 30 Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) soliciting public comments was published on Monday, October 15, 2018 (Vol. 83, No. 199, pages 51924-51925).

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts are given to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality is given, however the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, is the basis for assurance of confidentiality. Personnel privacy information would be withheld under FOIA exemption (b)(6): Personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

It is estimated that approximately 650 (Gaithersburg-550; and Boulder-100) undergraduate students will apply to the SURF Program annually. The instrument requires 1 hour to complete = 650 x 1 hour = **650 hours**.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

Not applicable.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

It is estimated that it takes 5 minutes to review an entire application. Each application is required to have three reviews per the FFO, 5 minutes x 650 x 3 = 9,750 minutes = 162.5 hours. The hourly rate of the Federal Employee performing the reviews is \$45.

$$163 \text{ hours} \times \$45 = \$7,335.$$

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

NIST is requesting to consolidating two “collection instruments” into one application for both Gaithersburg and Boulder locations. The combined application is estimated to receive 650 respondents (Boulder=100 and Gaithersburg=550) annually. .

The estimated response time to complete an application package will remain the same (1 hour). With the estimate of additional responses to be received the previously approved burden hours would increase from 400 hours to 650 hours (+250). This increase was determined based on the upsurge of applications received since the last submission.

Adjusted Totals: Respondents/responses increased from 400 to 650 which amplified the burden hours to 650.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The results of this collection will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

The instrument will display the OMB Control# and expiration date along with the following notwithstanding statement.

OMB Control No. 0693-0042
Expiration Date: XX-XX-XXXX

This collection of information contains Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements approved

by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to be 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Persons wishing to comment on the burden estimate or any aspect of this collection of information, or offer suggestions for reducing this burden, should send their comments to Dr. Brandi Toliver, Email: branditoliver@nist.gov Phone: (301) 975-2371.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

NIST does not require any exceptions.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

(If this collection does not employ statistical methodology, state this information. Delete the following questions.)

This collection does not employ statistical methods.