

SWS Student Research Grants Program - 2012

Policies and Application Instructions

Applications must be submitted by midnight EST on World Wetlands Day (2 February 2012).

Introduction

One objective of the Society of Wetland Scientists is to "develop and encourage wetland science as a distinct discipline by supporting student education, curriculum development, and research." As such, the primary goal of the Scholarship Committee of the International Society of Wetland Scientists is to provide partial support of wetland-related research conducted by qualified undergraduate and graduate students from any accredited college or university worldwide. Grants are intended to aid student research, but not be the sole source of research support. Because the total amount of funding requested always exceeds available funds, proposals are evaluated on a competitive basis. There is no predetermined funding limit, but the maximum award will not exceed US \$1,000.

Eligibility

A student is eligible to apply for a Student Research Grant if they are conducting undergraduate or graduate-level research in wetland science at an accredited college or university worldwide. Applications will be considered for funding periods of no more than one year, and a previous awardee may not reapply for additional support. ***The student applicant must be a member of SWS to apply.***

These instructions and forms are also used for selecting students who, in addition to being eligible for the national SWS Student Research Grant, may also be eligible for one of four other Student Research Grants associated with an SWS section or chapter: (1) the Ramsar Section, (2) the South Atlantic Chapter (SAC) of SWS, (3) the North Central Chapter (NCC) of SWS, and (4) the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Chapter of SWS. Read the eligibility criteria carefully on the application form.

Proposal Submission

Applicant information, proposals, and two letters of recommendation must be submitted electronically using the SWS Student Research Grants website.

I. Student Application Form

This online form must be completed to provide the applicant information, proposal classification, identity of the providers of the letters of recommendation, and proposal background. Fill out this form early to receive your proposal ID number to give to the providers of the letters of recommendation.

II. Proposal

Create a separate Microsoft Word document that contains the text of your grant proposal, the budget, and your resume or curriculum vitae. Use 2.5 cm (1 inch) margins on all sides and any standard font, with a font size of no smaller than 10 point (12 point preferred). Use single spacing within paragraphs and double-spacing between paragraphs. Include on separate pages:

1. Cover page
2. Proposal narrative
3. Literature cited
4. Budget
5. Resume or curriculum vitae

The cover page should include the title of the proposal (180 characters or fewer; all capital letters), the applicant's name and academic institution, and a nontechnical abstract (350 words or fewer). The nontechnical abstract should be understood by a general audience and include a clear statement of the research goals, methods, and significance. Citations of scientific literature should not be incorporated into the abstract. The abstract of funded proposals will be posted on the SWS Student Research Grants website.

The proposal narrative (3000 words or fewer including figures and tables) includes: 1) sufficient background about the research topic to convey its relevance and significance, as specifically related to the Aims of the Society of Wetland Scientists; 2) a clear statement of hypotheses, objectives, or research questions; 3) a description of methodological approach to be used, including a description of study sites, spatial and temporal intensity of sampling, tools and/or procedures used to generate data, and planned quantitative or statistical treatment of the data; 4) a description of how collected data will permit interpretations and or conclusions relevant to the proposed research. The proposal narrative should be supported by current, relevant citation of the scientific literature. All citations in text shall be formatted using *Wetlands* style and appear in a separate Literature Cited section of the proposal. Embed figures and tables in the text.

All references in the Literature Cited section must have been cited in the proposal narrative. The format of the Literature Cited section should be consistent with *Wetlands*. The maximum number of references cited is 15.

The intent of the Student Research Grant program is to provide funding to support student research, not to provide funding for incidental research tasks of a larger project directed by a faculty member. Student Research Grants generally are intended to defray the costs of travel, room, and board in the course of field investigation, and/or the costs of expendable materials and supplies required in the execution of the proposed research. Funds requested for equipment purchases, contracted routine chemical analyses, field assistant(s), vehicle rental, etc. will not be provided except under extraordinary circumstances. Such circumstances might include the need to fabricate a specialty piece of equipment, or the need for a field

assistant for a disabled student researcher. Applicants should recognize that the need for such requests should be especially well substantiated in the budget justification section of the written proposal. Funds for salary, tuition, costs associated with attendance at professional meetings or symposia, typing or word processing, routine photocopying, purchase of computer software, and/or thesis preparation will not be provided. Provide a budget table that includes an expense description, total cost, and amount requested from SWS (US\$) for each item, and the cumulative total cost and total amount requested from SWS. The total amount requested from SWS is not to exceed US\$1,000. In addition, provide a budget justification not to exceed 250 words.

All applicants must provide a resume or curriculum vitae, including education, professional and research experience, significant accomplishments and awards, and any publications. List entries rather than using a narrative format.

The file should be formatted as a Microsoft Word readable document (.doc) that is named "LastName InstitutionAcronym". For example, if the student's last name is Smith and they attend San Diego State University, the file should be named "Smith SDSU". Upload the file at the SWS Student Research Grants website.

III. Letters of Recommendation

Students applying for funding through the SWS Student Research Grants Program are required to have two letters of recommendation sent. One letter must be written by the applicant's research advisor. The second letter should be written by a qualified individual familiar with the applicant and technical details of the proposed project. Each referee must clearly identify the nature of his/her relationship with the applicant. The letters of reference must clearly and directly address the proposed research and the applicant's role in project development and initiation, taking into consideration the academic stage in the applicant's career (*viz.*, seeking a Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree). Letters also should evaluate the likelihood that the work will be successfully completed. Referees should submit their letters at the SWS Student Research Grants website.

Student applications with missing or late letters will not be considered for funding.

Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Proposal evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

1. clear statement of hypotheses, objectives, or research questions
2. appropriateness and adequacy of the experimental design, research plan, or research approach
3. reasonableness of the projected time schedule for accomplishing the proposed research
4. adequacy and appropriateness of literature citations
5. significance or potential impact of the proposed research to advancing knowledge and understanding in its field
6. creativity or originality of the approach or concepts in the proposed research

7. relevance of the proposed research as related to the Aims of SWS (Does this research focus on wetlands?)
8. qualifications and capabilities of the student to conduct the proposed research (likelihood of success)

Every proposal will be evaluated independently by three reviewers, each of whom will assign a numerical score for each of the criteria. These scores will provide the basis for funding decisions. The three scores may not necessarily be weighted evenly in making a decision to account for variation among the scoring criteria of individual judges. Letters of recommendation will be used to help assess the criteria. Funding amounts will be determined in light of both the budget justification provided by the applicant and funds available to be awarded by the SWS Scholarship Committee. Regardless of the final funding decision, each applicant will receive a summary of their numerical scores (by Email unless an Email address is not provided in the application), as well as any written comments that the reviewers may provide.

Responsibilities of Award Recipients

The awardee is expected to use the grant funds in accordance with the proposed budget. At the end of the grant period, each grant recipient must submit a report using the Student Research Grants website. Reports should briefly update the Scholarship Committee on the status of the research and also should describe the use of funds. Receipts are not necessary. If the recipient is unable to complete the research as proposed, unexpended funds must be returned to SWS.

Student investigators are encouraged to seek publication of research results. **For any published research or oral or poster presentations, the Society of Wetland Scientists (and/or the appropriate SWS Section or Chapter) should be acknowledged for its financial support through the Student Research Grant program.**

Late applications or applications that have missing or late letters of recommendation will not be considered for funding!

For questions or comments please contact:
Chair, SWS Student Grants Committee
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