

Eligibility Requirements

Who should apply during an open application period?

Applicants can be prospective students who would first apply to a graduate degree program for admission before applying for the NRT program and/or fellowship. Current students at Tennessee Tech who are interested in the program can also apply but will need to confirm their eligibility with the Program Coordinator.

Eligible applicants interested in applying to graduate school as well as current graduate students enrolled in programs at Tennessee Tech are also encouraged to apply for the NSF-NRT fellowship.

Please note the specific requirements from the National Science Foundation NRT program for fellowship recipients:

- *NRT trainees must be master's and/or doctoral STEM students in a research-based degree program that requires a thesis or dissertation.*
- *If chosen to participate in the program, you will need to complete the required NRT elements including but not limited to 1) a thesis/dissertation, 2) specific NRT courses, 3) workshops, 4) projects, and 5) other training activities.*
- *If awarded an NRT fellowship, you will need to meet certain commitments required by the NSF NRT guidelines, including having the following items approved and signed by your advisor: 1) letter of intent, 2) statement of your research interests, and 3) an adjusted program of study incorporating the FEW courses. **Items 1, 2, and 3 must be signed by your advisor by the end of the second semester of full-time enrollment.***
- *NRT stipends and support for customary costs of education (tuition and required fees) are limited to U.S. citizens, nationals and permanent residents. However, international students can participate as non-stipend-supported NRT trainees or as non-trainees.*

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2021/nsf21536/nsf21536.htm#:~:text=NRT%20trainees%20must%20be%20master's,requires%20a%20thesis%20or%20dissertation.>

The Fellowship Selection Committee will holistically evaluate applications based upon the fellowship eligibility factors.

Eligibility for Fellowship

In order to be an eligible candidate, applicants must first be admitted to full standing to the Tennessee Tech Graduate School; be a U.S. citizen, national, or permanent resident; and meet at least two of the following factors:

1. Have an interest in and commitment to place-based research in partnering with indigenous, Appalachian, and rural communities.
2. Have an interest in and commitment to indigenous and rural knowledge systems.
3. Evidence of experience in and/or commitment to transforming challenges at the food-energy-water nexus.
4. Commitment to integrating indigenous, rural, and Western sciences into holistic learning processes.

5. Be a resident of one of the educationally under-served/underrepresented areas in Tennessee (refer to list below) *
 - List of educationally underserved/underrepresented counties are: Bledsoe, Campbell, Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Grundy, Hamilton, Jackson, Macon, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Rhea, Scott, Sequatchie, Smith, Trousdale, Van Buren, Warren, White.
6. Be a resident of other Appalachian counties as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission.
7. Belong to a U.S. underrepresented/under-served gender in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
8. Demonstrate character, motivation and ability to succeed in graduate studies based on academic record and a written essay.

Conditions of maintaining eligibility

A recipient of a full fellowship is expected to devote 20 hours per week to research or teaching. Full fellowship pays tuition, fees and stipend at the rate set by the NSF NRT program (\$34,000 annually). Fellowship funding is contingent upon available funding from the NSF and meeting all stipulated requirements.

The courses enrolled must count toward the degree and must be approved by the student's academic advisor. Students must complete a thesis or dissertation.

Fees will not be paid for audit courses, repeat courses, personal enrichment courses, undergraduate courses, certification courses, or more than six hours of thesis, or 24 hours of research and dissertation. You may not deviate from your approved program of study without consulting with the Graduate College. The fellowship covers only IN-STATE fees. If the student receives a funded Graduate or Teaching Assistantship, they will be excluded from receiving the NSF-NRT FEW Fellowship.

- Students in 'provisional' status are not eligible for this fellowship.
- This award only applies towards one graduate degree.
- Tennessee Tech University is under no obligation to continue the fellowship if the student transfers to another degree program or degree classification, or if funds are not available.
- Preference will be given to students who meet the above criteria as this fellowship is funded by specific NSF initiatives.
- Students cannot be relatives of Tennessee Tech University employees.
- For more information contact the College of Graduate Studies at 931-372-3233.