

# **NASA Fellowship Program Guide**

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## Purpose of Fellowship Programs

NASA's vision and mission necessitate that its workforce is ready and able to lead the world in space exploration, scientific discovery, technology development, and managerial excellence. NASA's Fellowship Program plays a key role in this pursuit by ensuring that employees have the opportunity to obtain best-in-class development at the finest educational institutions. The NASA Fellowship Program is designed to:

- Align individual development with NASA's Vision and Mission,
- Ensure that programs offered address NASA needs as identified in the Agency Leadership Model, in support of NASA's Strategic Plan,
- Provide competition to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected for the right program, at the right time in their career; and
- Ensure the knowledge gained is quickly applied and shared upon return to the Agency to be sure that NASA obtains the maximum benefit from its investment.

## Overview

NASA's Fellowship Program offers various education programs provided by external organizations. These organizations are nationally recognized as fully accredited college, university, or Federal training institutes. Participants are selected yearly on a highly competitive basis.

## About This Guide

This guide provides information on how to apply for a NASA Fellowship and includes information about eligibility, requirements, application procedures, forms, and program offerings. Specific questions about the Fellowship application process should be directed to your [Center's Fellowship Coordinator](#). Questions regarding Agency level policies should be directed to Maureen Dale, in NASA's Office of Human Capital Management, at 804-580-6182 or e-mail [mdale@sevatec.com](mailto:mdale@sevatec.com).

Throughout this guide, reference is made to other documents, self-assessments, models, Fellowship Program descriptions, etc. which can be found on the Fellowship Web site at <http://fellowship.nasa.gov/index.htm>.

## **Determining if a Fellowship is Right for You Now**

The Fellowship experience is most productive when it is linked closely to the development needs of the individual, the strategic needs of the Agency, and when the participant has the requisite background, position, experience, and opportunity to apply the learning. We have found that you gain the most from a Fellowship experience:

1. When you and your management have a common and clear understanding of how the experience is going to benefit you, your Center, and the Agency.
2. When the Fellowship occurs after you have participated in internal Center and Agency training programs. You should apply for an Agency-wide Fellowship only after you have taken advantage of Center and Agency management development programs (e.g., Business Education Program, Leading Change, Leadership Alignment for Managers, Leading Through Effective Communications, Leading Through Influence, Practical Human Resources Solutions for Supervisors, etc.).
3. When you and your management have a specific plan for applying and sharing the knowledge, immediately, back on-the-job. NASA and the employee will benefit most from a Fellowship when the employee is given an opportunity to quickly apply his/her learning to a broader context within the Center or Agency.

## **Determining Which Fellowship is Right for You**

It is critical to remember that the Fellowship experience is part of an overall development strategy. To this end, the Fellowship that you select should complement goals and career strategies and align to your long-term development plan. The following process is recommended to determine which Fellowship is appropriate, given your stage of development.

1. Identify your development needs.
2. Identify your existing learning and development experiences.
3. Determine what is missing.
4. Develop a plan to bridge the gap.
5. Determine which Fellowship fits your plan.
6. Complete your application.

### **Step One: Identify Developmental Needs**

It is important that the Fellowship program fits into your overall career strategy. The first step is to discuss your developmental needs with your supervisor and mentor/coach (if you have one). Review the NASA Fellowships - Agency Leadership Development Program Application, (NASA Form 1793, APR 10), and information in this guide with your supervisor to be sure that this is the right type of developmental experience you need, and this is the right time in your career to pursue it. The Fellowship application process is considered part of the employee's development experience and is therefore comprehensive.

Further determine your developmental needs by completing the NASA Leadership Model On-line Self-Assessment (<http://leadership.nasa.gov/Assessment/Overview.htm>). The Fellowship process requires that you complete the Self-Assessment for your leadership level and build the results into your application. The NASA Leadership Model provides guidance about performance dimensions and competence areas for leaders across the Agency. The Leadership Model and the Self-Assessment can be found on the NASA Training and Development Leadership Web site (<http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/training>). Your application, and ultimately your selection for a Fellowship, needs to reflect the Performance Dimensions found in the Leadership Model.

### **Step Two: Identify Learning Experiences**

Your application will also need to reflect how this Fellowship will enable you to contribute to Agency, Center, or Mission goals and objectives, such as the NASA Strategic Plan, and your Center's Implementation Plan. Examine your learning and development experiences. These should fit into your overall career strategy, the results of your Self-Assessment, and NASA, Center, or Mission goals and objectives. Learning experiences include training, rotations, special assignments, and self-development experiences. Complete the online self-assessment at <http://leadership.nasa.gov/Assessment/Overview.htm> to align the Performance Dimensions areas from the Leadership Model to your development experiences. A worksheet for this process is found on Page 9 of this guide.

### **Step Three: Analyze the Gap**

Examine what learning and development experiences you need. Look for gaps in development areas across the Leadership Model or those that might help you contribute to the NASA Strategic Plan, Center, or Mission goals, objectives or other strategic areas. Again, these should fit into your overall career strategy and be based on the results of your self-assessment. Determine how this Fellowship will contribute to your development and fill any identified gaps.

#### **Step Four: Choosing the Right Fellowship**

After you have identified gaps in your development, review the Fellowship descriptions against your goals and needs. Links to all Fellowship programs can be found on the Fellowship Web site (<http://fellowship.nasa.gov/index.htm>). To facilitate your selection, review the "Mapping of Fellowship Programs to Leadership Model Performance Dimensions" section on Pages 10 - 11 of this guide. When selecting a program, be sure to consider potential scheduling conflicts and logistics. For example, is this program offered at a time that will conflict with your other work or personal commitments? Will your family accompany you? (Please note that NASA funding is only provided for the employee.)

#### **Step Five: Complete Your Application**

Complete NASA Form 1793 and obtain all of the required signatures. It is important that you have the support of your Supervisor for participation in the Fellowship Program. In order to complete your application package, the Supervisor's recommendation (NASA Form 1793A or 1793B) must be included.

Develop a plan for applying and sharing the learning that you will acquire from your Fellowship Program. This should include how new knowledge and skills might be used in your current role, in near term future roles, and contribute to Center, Mission, or Agency goals and objectives. You can refine this plan following the Fellowship experience to better fit your actual learning experience. NASA's position is that the learning gained through a Fellowship must be quickly applied and shared in order for the Agency to gain maximum return on investment. A training transfer strategy is 25 points (see page 13 or 14) of your total score and you will not be able to successfully compete without clear evidence that your Office leadership is fully supportive and involved in your plan.

## Eligibility

1. The applicant must be a full-time permanent civil servant, **with at least 2 years of experience at NASA.**
2. The applicant has not received a Fellowship within three years.
3. The applicant has not received a Fellowship designated as Long (L) (see Page 10) within five years.

The start of the waiting period is assumed to begin at the end of the calendar year in which the Fellowship was attended. For example, if an employee attended a Short, Agencywide Fellowship Program from April 2006 to November 2006, the three-year waiting period would be 2007, 2008, and 2009, making the individual eligible to reapply for a Fellowship in 2010.

## Requirements

The following requirements are important factors that the selection panel uses in its evaluation. To be considered, the applicant must:

1. Complete the NASA Fellowships - Agency Leadership Development Program Application, (NASA Form 1793, APR 10).
2. Have line management and Center-level sponsorship; obtain the required signatures and ensure that his/her Supervisor completes the appropriate supplemental application (NASA Form 1793A for long programs or NASA Form 1793B for short programs).
3. Complete the self-assessment (<http://leadership.nasa.gov/Assessment/Overview.htm>) on the NASA Leadership Model for his/her leadership level and demonstrate how the specific Fellowship Program he/she selected fits into his/her individual development plan and the results of this self-assessment (use worksheet on page 9 as a guide).
4. Demonstrate how his/her development links to the Center or Agency's Vision, and/or Strategy.
5. Have taken full advantage of appropriate Center and Agency opportunities for development. Applicant must include documentation of training and development experiences to date. **A minimum of two NASA leadership development courses (Center or Agency level) within the last 5 years is strongly recommended to receive full consideration.**

In addition, the applicant's management must commit to, and actively support, a training transfer strategy that fosters applying and sharing the knowledge and skills gained. For Fellowships designated as "Long," there must be a plan for the applicant to contribute to the Agency through new and broadening assignments that will leverage the learning acquired following the Fellowship experience. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY A PROMOTION.

## Your Management's Role in the Process

Applying for a Fellowship is part of an overall development strategy that should not be undertaken alone. Applicants should work with their supervisor, Center Fellowship Coordinator, and, if available, a mentor/coach to complete the pre-work and the application process. The Fellowship experience is developmental; it begins long before you actually attend the Fellowship Program and continues long after you return. The more you and your management work together, the more rewarding and valuable the experience will be for you and for NASA.

## For Your Manager

Each applicant's manager and management team plays a critical role in the application and development process. Although the applicant typically takes the initiative to complete the self-assessments, fill out application forms, and do the research around Fellowship programs, the manager's input, guidance and active support are critical to an employee's selection. Managers need to work jointly with the applicant to complete the application process. Managers also have specific responsibilities in the following areas:

- Assisting the applicant with analyzing their development needs.
- Determining how the Fellowship experience fits into the applicant's total career development strategy.
- Selecting the Fellowship that is right for the applicant (not necessarily the one the manager went to).
- Determining how the Fellowship experience will be used in the applicant's current job and in near term future roles.
- Determining how the Fellowship experience will be used to fulfill NASA, Center and/or Mission strategic goals and objectives.
- Determining how the Fellowship experience will be applied and shared with others outside the workgroup.
- Jointly completing the application form.
- Completing and signing Fellowships – Supplemental Applications NASA Form 1793A for a long program or 1793B for a short program to endorse the applicant.**
- Executing a meaningful training transfer strategy.

## For Your Center Selection Panel

The Center Selection Panel plays an important role in ensuring that the individual's development and training transfer strategy align and support the technical and business goals of the Center and the Agency. It is the Center Selection Panel's responsibility to:

- Ensure that the program and timing for each Center applicant supports the Center's Employee Development strategy.
- Ensure that Center applicants possess the requisite skills, experience, and position to leverage their Fellowship learning in support of NASA, Center and/or Mission strategic goals and objectives.
- Provide personal endorsement and support of each Center applicant.
- Ensure that the applicant has the opportunity to effectively apply the knowledge and skills gained through the Fellowship in a broad Center or Agency-wide context.

## Fellowship Development Matrix Worksheet

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION AREA	PUT AN X IN THE BOX BELOW IF THAT AREA RATED LESS THAN 4	AVERAGE SCORE FROM SELF-ASSESSMENT (Enter the Score in Each Box Below)	DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE THAT CLOSES GAPS <i>(Explain How Proposed Program Fits)</i>
<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>			
1. Personal Effectiveness			
2. Discipline Competency			
3. Business Acumen			
4. Managing Information and Knowledge			
5. Leading People			

**Candidates should address (in the third column) how the Fellowship selected will help close any skill gaps they have identified for themselves.**

**Mapping of Fellowship Programs to Leadership Model Performance Dimensions**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Personal Effectiveness	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Discipline Competency	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Business Acumen	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Managing Information and Knowledge	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Leading People
<b>LONG (L) PROGRAMS</b>					
<b>Harvard University Senior Executive Fellows</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Harvard University Senior Managers In Government</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Michigan Business Acumen for High Potential leaders</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>North Carolina Executive Development Institute</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Syracuse Certificate in Public Administration</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

L = Long Program, S = Short Program. The designation of Long indicates that this is considered a high investment program and candidate selection is therefore very competitive. NASA will normally send only one candidate to these programs. Even if nominees are available, NASA may choose not to send any candidate unless their qualifications are exceptional. Candidates for long programs who pass the application review will be invited to interview at NASA HQ. Short indicates less expensive programs that are not as competitive and which NASA normally sends more than one candidate.

**Mapping of Fellowship Programs to Leadership Model Performance Dimensions**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Personal Effectiveness	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Discipline Competency	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Business Acumen	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Managing Information and Knowledge	<b>Leadership Model Performance Dimension</b>  Leading People
<b>SHORT (S) PROGRAMS</b>					
<b>Harvard University Program for Senior Executives in National &amp; International Security (SENIS)</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>International Space University Space Odyssey Institute</b>			<b>X</b>		
<b>Penn State University Aligning Strategy Leadership and Culture</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Penn State University Developing Managerial Effectiveness</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Simmons Strategic Leadership for Women</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Syracuse National Security Management Course</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Tennessee Managing in a Technical Environment</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>UCLA Creativity &amp; Innovation in the Organization</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		

## Applicant Checklist for Fellowship Application

Application Activity	
1. Read and be sure you understand the Fellowship application and eligibility guidelines and process.	✓
2. Review the NASA Leadership Model, Strategic Plan and other applicable NASA, Mission, and Center plans.	
3. Complete the NASA Leadership Model Self-Assessment and assess yourself against the performance dimensions	
4. Work with your management to assess your development needs based on the results of your Self-Assessment. (See Development Matrix, Page 9).	
5. Review the Fellowship Program Summary, <a href="http://fellowship.nasa.gov/fellowlinks.htm">http://fellowship.nasa.gov/fellowlinks.htm</a> , for the program that you have selected, and make sure you meet the University's application requirements.	
6. Work with your management to complete the NASA Fellowships - Agency Leadership Development Program Application, (NASA Form 1793, APR 10) and the Supplemental Application (NASA Form 1793A or 1793B).	
7. Discuss and obtain input on your training transfer strategy from your management, and complete that portion of the NASA Fellowships - Agency Leadership Development Program Application.	
8. Conduct a final review of your application with your manager and obtain management approval, sponsorship, and signatures	
9. Submit to your Center Fellowship Coordinator according to Installation's guidelines and schedule.	

Be sure your application is concise and well written. **No additional attachments beyond the required application form will be accepted.** Additional pages will not be given to the Fellowship Selection Panel for rating.

### Selection Process

Applications for "short" and "long" programs are evaluated against the guidelines identified on Pages 13 and 14. After rating and ranking all candidates, the Fellowship Selection Panel makes a preliminary selection. Top candidates for "long" programs are invited to interview. The final decision for candidate acceptance for both "short" and "long" programs is made at the panel decision meeting at NASA HQ.

### Interview Guidance

Specific questions used for interviews are developed annually, however candidates should be prepared to discuss how the Fellowship contributes to their career goals and ability to achieve NASA's mission. Candidates should have a broad understanding of Agency policy, an understanding of the overall mission, and how NASA contributes to National goals. Interviewees should also be familiar with the key issues affecting the Agency, how their program relates to these issues, and be able to explain their strategy for effectively dealing with these issues.

## Rating Guidelines for Long Programs

<b>Points</b>	<b>Question No.</b> (NASA Form 1793)	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Description</b>
0-30	<b>13 through 16</b>	Developmental Preparation	How well is the candidate prepared to make maximum use of this training opportunity? Does he/she have the requisite background, experience and training necessary? Is there a clear link between this Fellowship and the needs of the individual and the Center? Is this the "right" program for this individual at this time?
0-25	<b>17 through 19</b>	Competitive Factors	Has this individual proven to be able to effectively translate their opportunities into measurable results for the Agency?
0-25	<b>20 through 21</b>	Training Transfer Strategy	Does the individual have a clear strategy for effectively using the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained to support the achievement of their organization's goals or their Center's goals? Is there a good plan to enhance the Agency's return on investment? The training transfer plan must state specific actions that the individual's management will support that will enable the participant to contribute beyond their regular duties upon return.
0-5	<b>22</b>	Vision	Ability to articulate a clear personal vision that aligns with the strategic goals of the Agency. Candidates should provide specific examples of how their personal goals and abilities connect to NASA's and what they are committed to accomplishing. Just restating the NASA vision and indicating support is not adequate.
0-10	<b>Supplemental Form (1793A)</b>	Management Support	Does the candidate have support for participation in the selected program from their direct supervisor? Is there clear alignment between the candidate's expected outcomes and his or her supervisor's? How well is the candidate's supervisor able to articulate his or her leadership strengths and development needs?
0-5	<b>N/A</b>	Discretionary	At the discretion of the evaluator, up to 5 points may be added to the above factors, based on the information available. This allows the evaluator the latitude to recognize any exceptional strength and/or to express clear preference for one candidate over others despite the fact that the numerical weighting to that point may have been more or less equal.

## Rating Guidelines for Short Programs

Points	Question No. (NASA Form 1793)	Factor	Description
0-30	<b>13 through 16</b>	Developmental Preparation	How well is the candidate prepared to make maximum use of this training opportunity? Does he/she have the requisite background, experience and training necessary? Is there a clear link between this Fellowship and the needs of the individual and the Center? Is this the "right" program for this individual at this time?
0-30	<b>17 through 19</b>	Competitive Factors	Has this individual proven to be able to effectively translate their opportunities into measurable results for the Agency?
0-25	<b>20</b>	Training Transfer Strategy	Does the individual have a clear strategy for effectively using the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained to support the achievement of their organization's goals or the Center's goals? Is there a good plan to enhance the Agency's return on investment?
0-10	<b>Supplemental Form (1793B)</b>	Management Support	Does the candidate have clear support for participation in the selected program from their direct supervisor?
0-5	<b>N/A</b>	Discretionary	At the discretion of the evaluator, up to 5 points may be added to the above factors, based on the information available. This allows the evaluator the latitude to recognize any exceptional strength and/or to express clear preference for one candidate over others despite the fact that the numerical weighting to that point may have been more or less equal.

### Maximum Points for Long or Short Programs = 100

Candidates do not necessarily have to be supervisors or managers to receive a NASA Fellowship. Qualities that will be considered are: ability to work with and through others, ability to create conditions where people feel empowered, having an understanding of complex issues and/or ability to see the "big" picture.

## **If Selected for a NASA Fellowship**

NASA's Office of Human Capital Management will normally notify Center management within a week of the Fellowship Selection Panel meeting. Applicants should receive notification of results from their Center Fellowship Coordinator or Selection Panel member. Your Center representatives will also have specific feedback for all successful and unsuccessful Center candidates on areas recommended for development. Please refer to the [NASA Fellowship Program Checklist](#) for additional information about what needs to be completed after you have been selected.

## **After Attending NASA Fellowship**

Please refer to the [NASA Fellowship Program Checklist](#) for information about what needs to be completed after the program.

## **Mutual Obligations of NASA and Nominees**

Prior to nomination, candidates must be informed of the requirements of the program they are considering, including the extent of NASA support. Fellowship candidates must sign the "continued service agreement" with NASA (on a 3-to-1 time ratio), which is included on the NASA Fellowships - Agency Leadership Development Program Application (NASA Form 1793), as a condition of their selection. Candidates should understand the program objectives and training transfer requirements. Candidates on Fellowship programs continue to be covered under the Center's Performance Appraisal system.

## **Covered Expenses**

In addition to full tuition support, it is Agency policy to provide assistance with funding for enroute and return transportation between the learning institution and the Home Center, as well as living expenses, consistent with NASA Headquarters and Office of Human Capital Management travel guidelines and policies for extended temporary duty. The participant should be aware that the Government does not reimburse out-of-pocket expenses to the same extent as normally occurs in private industry. In particular, the Agency does not cover expenses for the movement or support of family members or household goods or return trips during the program. Funds to cover tuition and travel costs are based on the criteria outlined in the following sections. Specific funding questions should be directed to your Center Fellowship Coordinator.

## Tuition Costs

Tuition costs include books, materials, class trips, and any required fees such as the Student Association or health insurance. Since these fees vary from program to program, you must research the particular requirements published within the university brochures for those items that are covered. All expenses itemized by the individual brochure as a required expense will be covered under tuition fees by NASA. For example, some programs require the student to purchase a computer and software; in that instance, the participant must surrender the computer to the Agency upon the completion of the program. Some institutions require that the Training Coordinator at the Home Center establish an arrangement with the University in order to pay for books. NASA will not pay for participants' expenses to qualify for the program, such as exams (e.g. GRE).

## Travel Expenses

NASA's preferred mode of travel is air. If any participant wishes to travel via a personally owned vehicle (POV), a cost comparison would have to be completed and the lesser of the two costs would be reimbursed. This regulation is applicable for short or long term tours of duty (TDY). If staying longer than 30 days, participants will receive 65% of the local per diem rate at the city where they are going. Participants must be traveling at least 300 miles per day if going on extended TDY and driving a POV. Participants are authorized to ship up to 350 lbs.

If the participant wishes to fly to the training location, he/she is entitled to airfare, transfers (i.e., taxis) to and from the airport, and shipping up to a maximum of 350 pounds.

Once at the training site, per diem expenses are determined on the basis of the intended length of stay. If the program is:

- 1-30 days, participants are entitled to full per diem. Travel days are at 75% of the per diem.
- If 31-364 days, participants receive 65% of per diem and are authorized one paid trip home per quarter under HQ funding. Your Center can pay for any other home trips you may desire.
- Any TDY under 30 days, HQ will not pay for a home trip. Your Center may pay for it.

These rates include rental of a one-bedroom apartment, rental of furniture, utilities, basic telephone, and basic cable. Additional expenses such as daily commuting expenses, parking fees, larger rental space, change of residence during the program for any length of time, use of an apartment locator, ads in local newspapers, premium cable fees, long distance, internet charges, membership in alumni associations or graduation fees are not considered reimbursable expenses. The only receipts needed for verification (on long term TDY) are the rental receipts.

Per diem rates are listed on the Government Services Administration Web site: (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>)