

For opportunities with rolling deadlines, can you defer your start date if needed?

For the NPP, it is possible to defer a start date, but this depends on the advisor and the NASA Center, so they should be consulted about the start date and whether it is flexible.

Unfortunately for the Knauss Fellowship you cannot defer your start date.

How specific should you get about your research in the research statement?

NSF GRFP – Ideally, it is detailed enough to convey broad ideas, knowledge gaps, and methods without being so technical that only a specialist in your subdiscipline would understand it.

The NPP application includes a 15 page research proposal, and it should be very specific about the research being proposed. The outline is given by USRA here: <https://npp.usra.edu/apply/proposal/>

For the Knauss Fellowship I would explain your research in the context of its broader importance and how the work you are doing will impact management in policy. Explain your research and the important it has to advance knowledge and society.

Is there Veteran's Preference for any of these opportunities?

NSF GRFP – No, not that I am aware of...but you could still feature your experience in your application (in fact, I know of several veterans who have showcased their military experience in their personal statements). Here is NSF GRFP's official take: "The program goals are: 1) to select, recognize, and financially support, early in their careers, individuals with the demonstrated potential to be high achieving scientists and engineers, and 2) to broaden participation in science and engineering of underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, **and veterans**. NSF especially encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, persons with disabilities, **veterans**, and undergraduate seniors to apply."

I'm not sure if this is available for the NPP, contact info for asking USRA is here:

<https://npp.usra.edu/about/contacts/>

There is not Veteran's preference for the Knauss Fellowship.

For the GRFP, if you apply once as a Master's student, can you reapply as a PhD student, or is the application limited to one application while in graduate school?

Check <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2019/nsf19081/nsf19081.jsp> for detailed eligibility rules.

Under the geoscience subdisciplines, there was not a listing for planetary science/planetary geology. If this is where your research lies, should you instead try applying under physics and astronomy if your research does not include many terrestrial applications?

I think it is definitely worth considering applying under the physics/astronomy discipline. You will probably end up with a better suited review panel. NSF GRFP guidelines say “Because your primary field will determine your panel, you should select the field of study that most closely matches the content of your application.”

Do previous NASA mission collaborations make your application more favorable?

Mission collaboration is a great opportunity to meet and work with NASA scientists and engineers. For example, it was through collaboration on the Curiosity rover mission that I met my NPP advisor years before I applied. It gives students a chance to demonstrate their ability to conduct research and collaborate with teams. But it isn't easy to get on a mission team, so not having mission experience won't diminish the application.

For the NASA NPP, can you clarify what you mean by you can apply once per cycle? How do you define a cycle? If you apply in March and get denied, can you apply again in July?

For each March, July, and November application deadline, an applicant can only apply to one research opportunity. In other words, the applicant cannot apply to an opportunity at Johnson Space Center and an opportunity at the Jet Propulsion Lab both for one deadline. If you are denied in March, yes you can apply again in July or November.

Is there a particular NPP date (March/July/November) that is generally preferred?

Not that I'm aware of. The best date to apply should be arranged with the potential advisor.

Can you apply if the state you go to graduate school is in isn't coastal but you are from a Sea Grant state and want to work there in the future?

Yes, you can apply if the state you go to graduate school in is not a Sea Grant state. You need to email oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov and let them know your interest in applying and that you are not from a coastal state, and they will help you find a Sea Grant program to apply to. If you want to work with the Sea Grant from your home state, I would recommend reaching out to them now and getting involved with any opportunities they may have.