



Guidelines for Preparing Short-term Fellowship Proposals

The following information is intended to help applicants prepare their proposals. Note that incomplete applications, or those that fail to follow the guidelines, will not be considered.

Financial support is provided to carry out short-term research projects in the tropics in areas of STRI research, under the supervision of STRI Staff Scientists. STRI Research Associates may also serve as co-advisors or consultants, in collaboration with a staff scientist.

- Maximum duration is 3 months; extensions are awarded only in exceptional circumstances.
- Smaller projects that are part of a larger thesis or dissertation are encouraged. In which case the specific proposal should also briefly sketch how the research project fits into the broader study.
- Exceptional exploratory projects or pilot studies with well-defined goals and methods will be considered.
- Most fellowships are awarded to graduate students, but awards are occasionally made to outstanding undergraduates.
- Fellowships may provide a modest stipend to cover living expenses while at STRI (currently \$1,250/month, a total amount of \$3,750); may provide a modest research allowance, NOT to exceed \$2000; and may provide a round-trip coach airfare. Applicants are encouraged to seek additional sources of funding. Partial awards are often given.
- The deadlines for submitting applications are the **15th of February, June and October**.

Before submitting a formal application, all applicants are **highly encouraged** to consult with the proposed primary mentor and/or those who will serve as potential co-advisors. When corresponding with advisors we strongly encourage applicants to ask for advice on the scientific merit of the proposed research, methodology and logistics, and for written comments on preliminary drafts of the proposals.

Main advisors **MUST** be members of the STRI scientific staff, list available at: <https://stri.si.edu/people>. STRI Research Associates may act as co-advisors.

A complete application must include the following components, compiled in the following order:

1. Application through SOLAA (*Smithsonian Online Academic Appointment system*)

Follow these steps:

- Go to: <https://solaa.si.edu>
- Select "New to SOLAA? Complete the information to create an account."
- Once you create your account and provide the information required, you can select the type of appointment. Choose as follows:

Program Type: "Fellowship"

Unit of interest: "Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute"

Program: "STRI Short Term Fellowship"

- Fill in the application questions
- Upload the required documents
- Request the reference letters, giving sufficient time for referees to submit them. It is your responsibility to send the email request to your recommenders and check in the system that the letters have been submitted.

2. A non-technical **abstract** of not more than 250 words.

3. A **research proposal** with a narrative of not more than 1,500 words, plus a bibliography that is not included in the word count. Longer proposals will be eliminated. The narrative should include a description of the research to be undertaken at STRI, including a general introduction to the research topic, the methodology (including potential statistical analyses) to be used, and expected results. In preparing your narrative, be aware that diverse research fields are represented on the Academic Board, so the use of field-specific jargon in the proposals should be avoided.

4. A detailed 3-month **timetable** for the proposed research.

5. Research **budget** and justification. Do not include airfare and stipend in the research budget. The Fellowship program will not pay airfare for assistants and will not consider financial support for assistants.

5. **Curriculum vitae.**

6. A **diversity statement** (a statement that reflects your views and experience in working to the goal of promoting a diverse, inclusive, collegial, and rigorous scientific workplace). A diversity statement is a document explaining your experiences and commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA). When you are writing your Diversity Statement, please consider describing your past experience and activities, and also make sure to include your future plans to advance DEAI. If you consider you may not have extensive past activities, it is recommended to focus on future plans and activities in your statement.

7. Copies of most recent academic **transcripts** (undergraduate or graduate, depending on current academic level).

Proposals received after the application deadline will not be considered. Applicants usually will be informed of results approximately 8-10 weeks after the deadline. **Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.**

Applications are evaluated on the scientific merits of the proposed research relative to its costs; the applicant's ability to conduct the proposed research in the time available (3 months); and the relevance of the proposed research to STRI research programs and interests. Availability of space at the particular facility will also be considered.

Proposals usually receive two or three written evaluations—at least one of which is from a named advisor. These evaluations form part of the application packet evaluated by STRI's Academic Board. In preparing your proposal, be aware that diverse research fields are represented on the Academic Board, so the use of field-specific jargon in the proposals should be avoided. **Make sure to include how you are going to analyze the data in your proposal.** If you plan to collect or export specimens during your proposed tenure, you must take into consideration that Panamanian laws require that you complete the proper permit applications. The processing of these permit requests by the Panamanian authorities takes a minimum of approximately three months.

STRI adopts the University of Oxford's definition of plagiarism: *"Plagiarism is presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. It is a breach of academic integrity. Plagiarism is unethical and can have serious consequences for your future career; it also undermines the standards of your institution and of the degrees it issues."*

At the Smithsonian Institution, plagiarism is taken very seriously. If it is identified that an internship or fellowship application or any of its components has been plagiarized, the applicant will be disqualified immediately or even rescind fellowships/internships once awarded.

Inquiries should be sent to:

E-mail: STRIFELLOWS@SI.EDU