NASA Florida Space Grant Consortium
2026-27 Dissertation and Thesis Improvement Fellowship (DTIF)

Program Announcement for Academic Year 2026–2027

ABSTRACT

The NASA Florida Space Grant Consortium (FSGC) invites proposals for the **2026–2027 Dissertation and Thesis Improvement Fellowship (DTIF)** program. The DTIF program provides **supplemental funding** to support enhancements to ongoing **Master's thesis and Doctoral dissertation research** in areas aligned with NASA's mission priorities. All proposed research must align with **one or more of NASA's five Mission Directorates** (see Appendix A). DTIF awards are intended to improve or expand existing research effort and **cannot be used to fund salaries or tuition**.

Eligibility is limited to **U.S. citizens**. Permanent residents are **not eligible**.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

DTIF awards provide partial, one-year support for thesis or dissertation research in **space science, engineering, and related disciplines** of interest to NASA. The maximum award amount is **$5,000 per fellowship**, and **indirect costs are not allowed**.

DTIF funds are intended to support **research enhancement activities** that are not normally available through the student's home institution or existing funding sources. Awards are **not intended to cover the full cost** of a student's thesis or dissertation research.

Allowable Costs

Allowable uses of DTIF funds include, but are not limited to:

- Travel to specialized research facilities or field sites
- Travel to **domestic** professional conferences or workshops
- Use of specialized research equipment or facilities
- Laboratory supplies, services, and materials not otherwise available
- Hiring field or laboratory assistants
- Software licenses or journal subscriptions (valid only during the fellowship period)
- Rental of environmental chambers or specialized facilities
- Textbooks, dissertation preparation, or reproduction costs

Unallowable Costs

- Salaries or wages
- Tuition or tuition-related fees
- Indirect or overhead costs
- International travel

AWARD INFORMATION

- **Award Type:** Standard Grant (Fellowship)
- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 7–8
- **Anticipated Total Funding:** $40,000
- **Maximum Award Amount:** $5,000 per fellowship
- **Award Duration:** Up to one year

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Who May Submit Proposals

Eligible applicants must:

- Be **U.S. citizens** (permanent residents are not eligible)
- Be enrolled at an **FSGC-affiliated institution** (see Appendix B)
- Be enrolled in:
    - A **doctoral program** and have advanced to Ph.D. candidacy, or
    - A **Master's program with a thesis option** (non-thesis programs are not eligible)

A signed statement verifying **Ph.D. candidacy** or **Master's thesis enrollment**, from the department chair, graduate dean, or equivalent administrative official, is required.
Proposals must be submitted **by the dissertation or thesis advisor on behalf of the student** through normal institutional channels.

Student Role

The **graduate student must be the principal author** of the proposal, with minimal assistance from the faculty advisor. Submission of the proposal constitutes certification by both the student and advisor that the student was the principal author.

Principal Investigator (PI)

- The **dissertation or thesis advisor must serve as the PI**
- Funds will be awarded to the PI
- The PI **is not required to be a U.S. citizen**

Eligible Fields of Study

Eligible research areas broadly include **space-related science, engineering, and policy**, such as:

- Aeronautics and Astronautics
- Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
- Remote Sensing
- Space Science and Earth Observing Science
- Space Life Sciences and Space Medicine
- Astronomy and Astrophysics
- Space Engineering and Technology
- Space Facilities and Applications
- Space Policy, Law, and Education

All proposals must align with **one or more NASA Mission Directorates** (Appendix A).

Proposal Limits

- **Per Organization:** No limit
- **Per PI or Student:** Maximum of **two (2)** proposals

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation

Proposals must be single- or double-spaced on standard **8.5 × 11-inch** pages, using a **minimum 12-point font**, **1-inch margins**, and an easily readable font (e.g., Times New Roman, Helvetica). All pages must be numbered.
Over-length proposals or supplemental materials will not be reviewed.

Required Proposal Components

1. **Cover Page** (1 page maximum)
    - Project title reflecting the student's thesis or dissertation
    - Name of student
    - Name of dissertation/thesis advisor (PI)
2. **Project Summary** (maximum 250 words)
    - Project title
    - Student name

- Faculty advisor's name
- Relevant NASA Mission Directorate

3. **Project Description** (maximum 1,000 words, excluding figures, tables, and references)
   - Overview of the thesis or dissertation research
   - Scientific or technical significance
   - Description of the proposed improvement supported by DTIF
   - Identification of the most relevant NASA Mission Directorate
   - Description of current funding sources (e.g., RA, TA, fellowships)
4. **Budget and Budget Justification**
   - Total request not to exceed **$5,000**
   - Detailed justification of all requested costs
   - Matching funds are encouraged but not required
   - No indirect costs allowed
   - Domestic travel only (conference name and estimated costs must be specified)
5. **Student Resume**
6. **One Letter of Recommendation**
   - From dissertation/thesis advisor or committee member
7. **Candidacy/Enrollment Verification Statement**
   - Signed and dated by department chair, graduate dean, or equivalent official
8. **Most Recent Academic Transcripts**

PERFORMANCE PERIOD

- Maximum performance period: **One year**
- Earliest allowable start date: **August 3, 2026**

KEY DATES

- **Notice of Intent (optional):**
  Email project title and 250-word abstract to **fsgc@ucf.edu** by **April 17, 2026**
- **Full Proposal Deadline:**
  Electronic submission by **May 29, 2026**
- **Anticipated Award Announcement:**
  July 31, 2026

Hardcopy submissions are **not required**.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicants must register for an online account at:
www.floridaspacegrant.org
Registration requires a **university email address** and creation of a username and password. All proposal materials must be uploaded electronically.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A **final report (maximum three pages)** is due within **30 days of the end of the performance period**. The report must include:

- Summary of technical work supported by the fellowship
- Conference or workshop presentations
- Publications resulting from the fellowship

All publications must acknowledge support from **NASA through the Florida Space Grant Consortium**, and copies must be provided to FSGC.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding this solicitation, please contact:

Dr. Jaydeep Mukherjee
Director, NASA Florida Space Grant Consortium
jaydeep.mukherjee@ucf.edu

CSTUDENT EVALUATION SURVEY

The Florida Space Grant Consortium (FSGC), in partnership with NASA, is committed to understanding the educational experiences, professional development, and career trajectories of students supported through Space Grant programs. As part of our **annual reporting requirements to NASA**, FSGC must submit a comprehensive program evaluation assessing the outcomes and impacts of its research and fellowship awards.

Completion of student evaluation surveys is a condition of all FSGC awards. Student participants will be required to complete a brief online survey at both the **beginning and conclusion** of their Space Grant-supported activity. These surveys are a critical component of FSGC's evaluation process and provide essential data for assessing program effectiveness, student outcomes, and alignment with NASA's STEM workforce development goals.

Given the heightened accountability requirements for federally funded programs, **full participation is mandatory**. NASA requires evaluation of all supported activities, and student feedback is the primary mechanism for demonstrating measurable outcomes. The surveys require only a few minutes to complete but are vital to maintaining compliance and ensuring the continuation of Space Grant funding that directly benefits students across Florida's colleges and universities.

The surveys will be administered directly to student awardees by the FSGC program evaluator, **Dr. Bonnie Swan**. The FSGC office will notify each student of the evaluation requirement via email, with the faculty advisor or Principal Investigator copied on the communication. Faculty are asked to reinforce the importance of timely and complete survey participation and to ensure that students are informed of the **specific FSGC award type** they have received (e.g., Fellowship, Scholarship, or Research Award).

A Proposal submitted to NASA Florida Space Grant Consortium
For the AY 2026-27 Dissertation and Thesis Improvement Fellowship (DIF)

Proposal Title:

Nominator's Name and Email: _____

Nominees's Name: _____

Department/University: _____

Address: _____

_____

Nominator's Email: _____ Phone: _____

Budget Request: [See instructions.]

BUDGET REQUEST

NASA	Institution	TOTAL

Please identify which category is applicable to your project (check one most appropriate):

___ Science Mission Directorate (SMD)
___ Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD)
___ Space Operations Mission Directorate (SOMD)
___ Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)
___ Aeronautics Mission Directorate (ARMD)

Beginning Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

_____
(Signature) Nominator

(Signature) Department Head

_____
Name:

Name:

_____
Title:

Title:

_____
Date:

Date:

_____
(Signature) University Official*

_____
Name

_____
Title:

_____
Date:

The University certifies the authenticity of the supporting documents and of the commitment to the institutional fund matching for the fellowship.

Appendix A. Strategic Framework for NASA

I. NASA Mission Directorates

NASA's Mission to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research, draws support from four Mission Directorates, each with a specific responsibility.

- Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD): Research conducted by ARMD directly benefits today's air transportation system, the aviation industry, and the passengers and businesses who rely on aviation every day. ARMD scientists, engineers, programmers, test pilots, facilities managers and strategic planners are focused on aviation's future. They design, develop and test advanced technologies that will make aviation much more environmentally friendly, maintain safety in more crowded skies, and ultimately transform the way we fly. NASA's aeronautics research is primarily conducted at four NASA centers: Ames Research Center and Armstrong Flight Research Center in California, Glenn Research Center in Ohio, and Langley Research Center in Virginia (https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/armd/)

- The Science Mission Directorate (SMD) The Science Mission Directorate (SMD) is an organization where discoveries in one scientific discipline have a direct route to other areas of study. This flow is something extremely valuable and is rare in the scientific world. NASA Science missions circle the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, Mars, and many other destinations within our Solar System, including spacecraft that look out even further into our universe. (https://science.nasa.gov/)

- The Human Exploration and Operations (HEO)
  Please note that NASA has organized its Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate into two areas: Exploration Systems Development (https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/exploration-systems-development) and Space Operations (https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/space-operations-mission-directorate).

  The Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate defines and manages systems development for programs critical to NASA's Artemis program and planning for NASA's Moon to Mars exploration approach. ESDMD manages the human exploration system development for lunar orbital, lunar surface, and Mars exploration.

  The Space Operations Mission Directorate maintains a continuous human presence in space for the benefit of people on Earth. The programs within the directorate are the heart of NASA's humans space exploration efforts, enabling Artemis, commercial space, science, and other agency missions through communication, launch services, research capabilities, and crew support.

- Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD). Technology drives exploration and the space economy. NASA's Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD) aims to transform future missions while ensuring American leadership in aerospace. STMD develops, demonstrates, and transfers new space technologies that benefit NASA, commercial, and other government missions. https://www.nasa.gov/space-technology-mission-directorate/

Please visit each NASA organization website to find detailed information about current projects and current areas of interest.

II. NASA Research Areas of Interest

NASA research priorities are defined by the Mission Directorates—Aeronautics Research, Science, Human Exploration and Operations, and Space Technology. Each Mission Directorate covers a major area of the Agency's research and technology development efforts. Research priorities for each of the Mission Directorates can be found at the following locations:

Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD)

Researchers responding to the ARMD should propose research that is aligned with one or more

of the ARMD programs. Proposers are directed to the following:

- ARMD Programs: https://www.nasa.gov/aeronautics/armd-solicitations/

Science Mission Directorate (SMD)

Detailed information on SMD research priorities is available at the following URLs:

- NASA Science Strategy: https://science.nasa.gov/about-us/science-strategy/
- Web pages for scientists and engineers who plan to propose or have submitted a proposal to a research solicitation from the Science Mission Directorate. https://science.nasa.gov/researchers
- Funding Opportunities: Grant Solicitations https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/grant-solicitations

Human Exploration and Operations (HEO) Mission Directorate

Please note that NASA has organized its Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate into two areas: Exploration Systems Development (https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/exploration-systems-development) and Space Operations (https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/space-operations-mission-directorate).

For exploration Systems Development programs, please go to https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/exploration-systems-development and scroll down to ESDMD Programs.

For Space Operations programs, please go to https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/space-operations-mission-directorate and scroll down to Areas of Focus.

Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)

For the Space Technology programs, please go to https://www.nasa.gov/space-technology-mission-directorate/ and click on “Program and Initiatives”.

III. NASA’s Technology Transfer Program

NASA's Technology Transfer Program ensures that innovations developed for exploration and discovery are broadly available to the public, maximizing the benefit to the Nation.
https://technology.nasa.gov/

APPENDIX B
FSGC Affiliates

Universities and Colleges

Bethune-Cookman University (Dr. Masood Poorandi) (poorandm@cookman.edu)

Broward College (Dr. Rolando Branly) (rbranly@broward.edu)

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Dr. Aroh Barjatya) (barjatya@erau.edu)

Eckerd College (Dr. Nazarré Merchant) (merchann@eckerd.edu)

Florida Atlantic University (Dr. Frederick Bloetscher) (fbloetsc@fau.edu)

Eastern Florida State College (Dr. Mevlut Guvendik) (guvendikm@easternflorida.edu)

Florida Gulf Coast University (Dr. Michael Fauerbach) (mfauerba@fgcu.edu)

Florida Institute of Technology (Ms. Carolyn Lockyer) (clockyer@fit.edu)

Florida International University (Dr. Berrin Tansel) (tanselb@fiu.edu)

Florida Polytechnic University (Dr. Kais Jribi) (KJribi@floridapoly.edu)

Florida State University (Dr. Alan Hanstein) (alan.hanstein@challengertlh.com)

Florida A&M University (Dr. Charles Weatherford) (charles.weatherford@famu.edu)

Miami Dade College (Dr. Carlos Genatios) (cgenatio@mdc.edu)

St. Petersburg College (Dr. Paul Cutlip) (cutlip.paul@spcollege.edu)

University of Central Florida (Dr. Yunjun Xu) (Yunjun.Xu@ucf.edu)

University of Florida (Dr. Jamie Foster) (jfoster@ufl.edu)

University of Miami (Dr. Qingda Yang) (qdyang@miami.edu)

University of North Florida (Dr. Nirmal Patel) (npatel@unf.edu)

University of South Florida (Dr. Stephanie Carey) (scarey3@usf.edu)

University of West Florida (Dr. Amrita Gautam) (amishra1@uwf.edu)

Other Organizations

Astronauts Memorial Foundation (Mr. Thad Altman) (taltman@amfcse.org)

Kennedy Space Center (Ms. Patricia Gillis) (patricia.j.gillis@nasa.gov)

Orlando Science Center (Ms. Jill Goddard) (JGoddard@OSC.ORG)

Space Florida (Mr. Trevor Jones) (tjones@spaceflorida.gov)

SpaceTEC Partners, Inc (Mr. Steve Kane) (stevekane@spacetec.us)