



The University of Texas at Austin

College of Natural Sciences

2026 STENGL-WYER GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Application Deadline: October 6, 2025 at 5:00PM CT

DESCRIPTION

The [Stengl-Wyer Graduate Fellowship](#) funds up to four doctoral candidates pursuing dissertation research on the diversity of life and/or organisms in their natural environments, across many disciplines within the College of Natural Sciences (CNS), including ecology, evolution, molecular and cellular biology, plant biology, neuroscience, marine science, and other relevant areas. 2026 Stengl-Wyer Graduate Fellowship awardees will receive the following:

- A 12-month stipend of \$40,000 beginning September 1, 2026 and ending August 31, 2027
- Full tuition and fees for the one-year appointment
- Health insurance
- A \$2,000 allowance for research and travel expenses

ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATIONS

Eligible applicants must be in candidacy for a doctoral degree in a CNS graduate program pursuing research on the diversity of life and/or organisms in their natural environments at the time of application. Successful applicants should demonstrate independence and creativity in their proposed research projects. Applications that advance research within the [Texas Field Station Network](#) or [UT Biodiversity Collections](#) are highly encouraged given the Stengl-Wyer Endowment's mission to support biological field stations and collections. Applicants must also demonstrate a record of intellectual distinction and scholarly achievement, as evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, presentations at national or international scientific meetings, or other comparable accomplishments. CNS encourages applications from individuals from all backgrounds with diverse viewpoints.

EXPECTATIONS OF AWARDEES

Stengl-Wyer Graduate Fellows are expected to devote themselves full-time to research and scholarship and should intend to commit a minimum of 9 months of the one-year award in the position. Fellows may not serve as Teaching Assistants or accept other UT employment during their fellowship tenure. A Stengl-Wyer Fellowship may not be combined with other university fellowships such as a recruitment or continuing fellowship. Deferment of a Stengl-Wyer Fellowship will not be allowed. Fellows must reside locally and be regularly present on campus (unless fieldwork or other research-related activities require their absence).

Although the bulk of the Fellow's time will be devoted to their own research, analysis, and/or writing, each Fellow is expected to contribute towards the communication of biodiversity science to the public. Suitable contributions will typically require less than one week of time for preparing and carrying out the activity. For example, this might be a talk in the "Science Under the Stars" sequence, organization of a table at "Explore UT", or a similar event. Fellows are also expected to participate in regular meetings covering professional development and research topics with the community of Stengl-Wyer Fellows, Scholars, or guests.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

All application documents should be formatted using 1-inch margins and no smaller than 11-point font. Recommended fonts are Arial, Georgia, Helvetica and Times New Roman. The following documents are all required and must be submitted by the application deadline:

1. **Lay Summary:** In 200 words or less describe for a general audience the proposed project and its potential impact on the understanding of the diversity of life and interactions between organisms and their natural environments.
2. **Research Project Description** (3 pages maximum; including figures, excluding citations): Describe your research project, your progress to-date, and in particular the research activities that will be undertaken during the fellowship year. Emphasize the novel aspects and potential impact of your research project. Briefly discuss how you intend to contribute to the communication of biodiversity science to the public through educational and/or community engagement.
3. **Bibliography/References** (no page limit): List sources in a document separate from your project description.
4. **Short-form Curriculum Vitae** (2 pages maximum): Include a list, with dates and appropriate citations for all publications, talks and presentations at conferences, or talks at other institutions. Provide a list of research, academic, and professional awards and honors, including dates. Provide a list of community engagement and other activities that demonstrate evidence of scientific creativity, productivity, and commitment to leadership and service.
5. **Research Advisor Letter of Support:** The applicant's dissertation research advisor must submit a letter of support confidentially per the Instructions for Research Advisor section below.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All required application documents listed in the Application Components section above (except for the Research Advisor Letter of Support) should be combined and uploaded as a single pdf and submitted by the application deadline.

Applications must be submitted through Competition Space, UT's online submission interface. To apply:

1. Visit <https://utexas.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1984428>

2. Click the “Apply” button on the Competition Space page.
3. This will take you to a login screen. External applicants should create an interface account by clicking the “Register” button toward the bottom of the page. Follow the instructions to create an account. Applicants with an existing UT EID and password should login using the “University of Texas Web Login” button.
4. You will be taken to an online application form. Complete the form and upload the required application components. Click “Submit Application” at the bottom of the page. You also have the option to save a draft and return later to submit your application.

Note: *If this is your first time submitting a proposal through the proposal submission website, you will first need to affiliate yourself with the College before you can submit. To do this, login with your EID and password, then click on the “Hello, [Name]” link at the top right of the website. This will take you to your user profile. In your user profile, under “Primary School or Department,” select “Natural Sciences, College of” and then scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Save Changes button. You will now be able to apply.*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH ADVISOR

The applicant’s dissertation research advisor must submit a letter of support addressing:

- the applicant’s accomplishments, potential for development as an independent scientist, creativity and drive, and their capacity to anticipate and address challenges
- how the proposed project is distinct from the current projects and long-term research program of the research advisor’s lab
- the applicant’s estimated defense and graduation timeline

Research advisors should submit letters of support directly to the Stengl-Wyer Endowment Program via email to Letters.v85l99i4eouih2ay@u.box.com which will automatically upload the letter to a confidential folder. Reference letters should be submitted as a PDF file using the following file naming convention:

ApplicantLastName_ApplicantFirstName_ResearchAdvisorLastName_LOS

Letters of support must be received by the application deadline of **5:00 PM CT on October 6, 2025**. Letters of support should remain confidential, and the applicant must not be copied on this email. Applicant is responsible for communicating submission instructions and deadline to Research Advisors.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by a standing faculty committee using the following criteria:

- **Proposed Research Project:** Consider novelty, creativity, scope, and potential impact of the proposed research project. Evaluate evidence for the applicant’s independence, for example the extent to which the project is distinct from the advisor’s existing projects and long-term research program.

- **Scope of Research:** Proposed research should align with the program’s mission of supporting research into the diversity of life and/or organisms in their natural environments. Projects that advance research within the Texas Field Station Network or UT Biodiversity Collections are highly encouraged.
- **Proposed Educational and Community Engagement Activities:** Consider if proposed activities are discussed in a meaningful and convincing manner.
- **Intellectual Merit:** Consider honors, awards, scholarships, leadership and service activities, and other non-traditional recognition or distinction.
- **Evidence of Research Accomplishments:** Consider publications, presentations at scientific meetings, reports, and other achievements and contributions to research.
- **Letter(s) of Support:** Consider accomplishments, especially in the context of obstacles, and potential for development as an independent scholar.

KEY DATES

Submission window opens: September 2, 2025

Submission deadline: October 6, 2025 at 5:00 PM CT

Announcement of awardees: Early December 2025

Award start date: September 1, 2026

Award end date: August 31, 2027

CONTACT INFORMATION

Program website: <https://cns.utexas.edu/info-graduate-students-postdocs/find-funding/stengl-wyer-graduate-fellowships>

Program questions should be directed to the Strategic Research Initiatives Program Manager: swe@austin.utexas.edu

Application submission interface questions should be directed to CNS Strategic Research Initiatives: CNS_SRI@austin.utexas.edu

The form and timing of Stengl-Wyer Graduate Fellowship awards is subject to change in subsequent years. The content of this announcement is relevant only for 2026 applications and awards.