



# **GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

## **Round 12 Applications**

***DUE DATE: 8 March 2017, 4 pm***

Alabama A&M University  
Auburn University  
Tuskegee University  
The University of Alabama  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
University of Alabama in Huntsville  
University of South Alabama

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# **ALABAMA EPSCOR GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

## **Overview**

Graduate students who represent the next generation of researchers and innovators are critical to the advancement of Alabama's high-tech human resource capacity. To assist our institutions of higher education in training this next generation of scientists and engineers, investments are required to attract the brightest and best scholars who will contribute to the state's vision of economic growth and prosperity. The Graduate Research Scholars Program (GRSP) is designed to strengthen and enhance the research capacity of member institutions of the Alabama Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

The specific goals of the GRSP are: 1) To position Alabama's research institutions to be more competitive in attracting eminent senior faculty; 2) To encourage interdisciplinary training and research; 3) To establish a resource base for attracting distinguished faculty and researchers; and, most importantly, 4) To address the economic need for a highly trained workforce to ensure the growth of emerging technology companies. Funds are appropriated by the legislature to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and allocated through the seven EPSCoR research institutions to qualified graduate students.

The Alabama EPSCoR GRSP was established in 2006 with funding through the Alabama State Legislature to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). Initially the funding was targeted to support graduate students contributing to the research of the four (4) Centers of Excellence funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Infrastructure Improvement Award (RII). Due to the initial success of the program and with continued legislative funding in FY 2007-2008, the program was expanded to include qualified students at all Alabama EPSCoR universities whose research and field of study were part of EPSCoR research programs funded by NSF, the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Currently, Alabama is not eligible for EPSCoR related programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) because of Alabama's success in attracting non-EPSCoR NIH funding to the state.

While the GRSP is an investment in Alabama EPSCoR universities, students who receive support through the GRSP do not incur employment obligations by the State of Alabama. Alabama is best served, however, if graduates from the program pursue further studies or careers in this state within disciplines relevant to EPSCoR funded science and technology programs. For this reason, an applicant's commitment to a career in science and technology in Alabama is one important criterion in the EPSCoR evaluation process.

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Alabama EPSCoR invites all students who meet the eligibility requirements to submit applications for Round 12 GRSP Awards. This program supports study at the seven EPSCoR member institutions: Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, Tuskegee University, The University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the University of South Alabama. Proposals must have the GRSP Scholar engaging in research that is supported with NSF, DOE, NASA, or USDA EPSCoR funding.

Guidelines for GRSP applications are provided below, and any additional inquiries regarding the GRSP should be addressed to each institution's GRSP Campus Coordinator (See Page 8).

### ***Eligibility Requirements for Round 12 GRSP Awards***

To be eligible for GRSP funding, a student must satisfy three criteria: EPSCoR Relevance Criteria, Institutional Criteria, and Academic Criteria.

1) **EPSCoR Relevance Criteria:** The proposed research must be directly related to a current EPSCoR federally funded project, and the GRSP advisor must currently be receiving federal EPSCoR funds from one of the following: NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) grants, NSF EPSCoR co-funding, DOE EPSCoR grants, NASA EPSCoR grants, or USDA (AFRI) EPSCoR grants.

#### **2) Institutional Criteria:**

The student must be:

- a) A full-time graduate student who remains eligible (i.e., remains in good standing over the course of the funding period) enrolled at an Alabama EPSCoR voting member institution.
- b) Working with a Faculty Advisor receiving federal EPSCoR funds as described above who is also in full compliance with previous final reporting requirements. See "Duties and Responsibilities of GRSP Recipients" on page 6; the "Responsibilities of the Campus Coordinators" on page 7, and the "Responsibilities of Faculty Advisors" on page 7.

3) **Academic Criteria:** An applicant must be a graduate student with a graduate GPA of 3.0 on the 4.0 scale.

### ***Grant Applications***

Applications for the GRSP may be submitted at any stage of the applicant's graduate career or upon acceptance to a participating school's graduate program. Applications are submitted to the Campus Coordinator of the Alabama EPSCoR institution of choice. See Appendix A on page 9 for Content and Format of Proposals.

### ***Grant Renewal Applications***

Grant renewals are not automatic. A request for renewal is submitted to the appropriate Campus Coordinator by completing the GRSP application and reinitiating the competitive proposal review process. A student who is making an application for renewal may be eligible for a partial award in order to complete graduation requirements.

## ***Application Deadline***

Deadline for submission of an application to the Campus Coordinator is 8 March 2017 at 4:00 p.m. *Late submissions are not accepted.*

## ***Awards***

Each institution is required to provide final accounting of each GRSP Round 10 student recipient by March 31, 2017 to be eligible for funding during Round 12. The Round 10 Final Expenditure Report should be sent to Charlotte Nix at [cnix@ua.edu](mailto:cnix@ua.edu).

The maximum GRSP award is \$25,000 for twelve (12) months and may be renewed annually. All awards are subject to the availability of GRSP funds. A member institution may supplement a GRSP award. The maximum amount of GRSP funds that can be awarded to a student pursuing a Master's degree is \$50,000. The maximum amount of GRSP funds that can be awarded to a student pursuing a Ph.D. degree is \$75,000. The latter includes funds awarded to an individual while pursuing the Master's degree, if applicable, such that the total award to any individual cannot exceed \$75,000. This rule holds irrespective of whether the student gets one or more degrees at either Master's or Ph.D. level.

## ***Proposal Evaluation Process***

### **Internal Institutional Review**

A preliminary screening of applications will be conducted by a review team at each institution led by the Campus Coordinator and will be based on the following review criteria:

- 1) The academic qualifications of the applicant:
  - i. GPA Scores
  - ii. GRE Scores
- 2) The quality of the proposed research program or plan of study.
- 3) The quality of any publications and presentations of the applicant.
- 4) The strength of the relationship of the proposed research program to EPSCoR Research.
- 5) The interdisciplinary nature of the proposed program.
- 6) The prospects for completion of the project within the allotted time.
- 7) An assessment of the applicant's motivation toward a career in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics in Alabama.
- 8) In the case of an application for renewal, whether the GRSP applicant's Faculty Advisor is 1) in full compliance with previous reporting requirements and 2) be receiving some type of federal EPSCoR grant funding.
- 9) No GRSP faculty advisor is permitted to have more than two (2) students supported by GRSP funds during a single round of GRSP funding.

### **State Level Review and Selection**

Following the preliminary internal review, the Campus Coordinator will forward the rankings as well as PDF versions of the institutional applications to the Alabama EPSCoR Office for tabulation and classification by 8 April 2017. Rankings will be reviewed by the Committee of Campus Coordinators from the seven member institutions. Awards will be based on the criteria described in the Proposal Evaluation Process/Internal Institutional Review section on page 5. *Applicants for the GRSP will be considered for appointment without regard to race, creed, national origin, age, or handicap.*

### **Award Announcement**

Awards will be announced in May 2017 and start at the beginning of the 2017 fall semester.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of GRSP Recipients**

A recipient of an award is expected to:

- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the GRSP funding period.
- Conduct themselves in accordance with performance standards established by the institution.
- Devote themselves to graduate study and research during the tenure of the award.
- Provide photographs and information as required to the Alabama EPSCoR State Office for the annual GRSP publication.
- Whenever possible, make presentations on their GRSP Research at nationally recognized technical meetings and/or Alabama EPSCoR meetings such as the Alabama EPSCoR Annual Open House.
- Mention GRSP support in the acknowledgement section of presentations and publications by the recipient.
- Submit required reports.
  - Status Report. A Status Report must accompany an application for renewal. See Appendix C.
  - Final Report. A final, cumulative report of all GRSP research activities undertaken must be submitted within 15 days of the thesis defense or upon cessation of GRSP funding. See Appendix D on page 14. All reports must be approved by the Faculty Advisor before being sent to the Campus Coordinator.

### **Termination Conditions**

Termination of Award. If the GRSP recipient terminates his/her graduate studies earlier than anticipated, the student's award is terminated. Cessation of GRSP funding triggers the need for a Final Report.

Termination for Cause. Upon the recommendation of a student's Campus Coordinator, a GRSP award may be terminated by a majority vote of the Campus Coordinator caucus. See Appendix B on page 11.

## **Grant Coordination and Administration**

GRSP grants are administered by the Alabama EPSCoR Office in collaboration with Faculty Advisors and Campus Coordinators from each of the EPSCoR member universities.

### ***Responsibilities of Campus Coordinators***

Campus Coordinators (a list of Campus Coordinators is provided on page 8) serve as points-of-contact for the institution among students, their advisors, and the EPSCoR Office. They are responsible for:

- Disseminating GRSP information to and from the EPSCoR office.
- Collecting, evaluating, and ranking GRSP applications as well as working with the Faculty Advisor to ensure the accuracy of information provided by each student on the application form.
- Presenting student applications for the selection of grant funding.
- Participating in award selection.
- Receiving student reports from Faculty Advisors.
- Accounting for the expenditure of award funds (due date 3/8/2017)
- Working with the Faculty Advisor to oversee the preparation and submission of required reports and documentation.

### ***Responsibilities of Faculty Advisors***

Faculty Advisors are EPSCoR Investigators supervising the GRSP awardees. In order to be a GRSP Faculty Advisor, graduate mentors must hold an official Faculty Advisor appointment or its equivalent status at their respective university. Their responsibilities include:

1. Reviewing student applications for funding.
2. Providing letters of recommendation. The first documents regarding the acceptability of the candidate for the program with a statement of the Faculty Advisor's willingness to supervise the student and the nature of any past or present experience with the student. A second letter of recommendation is also required. Letters are to be addressed to the appropriate Campus Coordinator.
3. Providing oversight for the student completing grant requirements, including reports.
4. Monitoring the GRSP research progress, i.e., overseeing the preparation of all deliverables that the GRSP recipient is required to provide, and approving those deliverables before they are sent to the Campus Coordinator.

In order for a student to be eligible for Round 12 funding, the Faculty Advisor must be in full compliance with previous GRSP reporting requirements and be receiving some type of federal EPSCoR grant funding.

## Management and Administration

The GRSP management team consists of the Alabama EPSCoR Executive Director, Program Administrator, and a GRSP Campus Coordinator from each of the seven participating campuses. Their contact information is as follows:

**Dr. Chris Lawson**  
**Executive Director**  
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### GRSP Campus Coordinators

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### Alabama EPSCoR Steering Committee

**Dr. John Mason**  
Auburn University  
Auburn, AL

**Ms. Lynne Chronister, Chair**  
University of South Alabama  
Mobile, AL

**Dr. Carl Pinkert**  
University of Alabama  
Tuscaloosa, AL

**Dr. Shaik Jeelani**  
Tuskegee University  
Tuskegee, AL

**Dr. Ray Vaughn, Vice Chair**  
University of Alabama in Huntsville  
Huntsville, AL

**Dr. Chris Brown**  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Birmingham, AL

**Dr. Daniel Wims**  
Alabama A&M University  
Normal, AL

**Dr. Elizabeth French**  
Alabama Commission on Higher  
Education  
Montgomery, AL

**Mr. Steve Spencer**  
Economic Development Partnership of  
Alabama  
Birmingham, AL



## Appendix A

### Content and Format of Proposals

#### ***Submission***

The Faculty Advisors are responsible for emailing a single PDF File of the entire Round 12 GRSP Application to the Campus Coordinator by the 4:00 p.m. deadline on 8 March 2017. This single PDF file should include **all information in the application**, including a completed version of the Cover Sheet (with the required signatures from both the Advisor and Campus Coordinator approving the format and content of the application) and scanned versions of the required transcripts, reference letters, and GRE scores (do not submit separate reference letters, transcripts, etc. to the Campus Coordinator, everything should be in the single PDF file). For Renewal Applications, the Status Report should also be completed and attached to the Application PDF file. The PDF filename should contain the name of the applicant.

*Incomplete applications will be disqualified from consideration for GRSP funding. Late submissions are not accepted. **Questions regarding the proposal process should be directed to the Campus Coordinator.***

The content and format of the Application is provided in the checklist below:

#### ***GRSP Proposal Checklist*** (details on following page)

- Application/Cover Sheet
- Abstract
- Description of Proposed Research
- Relevance to Current EPSCoR Research
- Interdisciplinary Nature of Research
- Completion Timetable, Schedule, and Milestones
- Plans to Pursue a Career in Alabama
- Personal References (two required, one should be from the Faculty Advisor)
- Resumes of Applicant and Faculty Advisor
- Copy of Transcript
- Copy of GRE Scores
- For renewals and/or previously funded GRSP students, a separate, GRSP Status Report must be included, as described in Appendix C.

#### ***Reporting Compliance***

**To be eligible for GRSP funding, the Faculty Advisor for the student applicant must be in full compliance with all previous GRSP reporting requirements and be receiving some type of federal EPSCoR grant funding.**

## ***Explanation of Requested Items for All Applicants of GRSP Funding***

The length of the proposal for items 2-7 below is a maximum of 5 pages, (references / endnotes are not included in the 5-page limit). The document should include the following sections, clearly marked with the section headings listed below.

1. **Cover Sheet:** See Appendix B (new applicants) or Appendix C (renewal applicants)
2. **Abstract:** An abstract not to exceed four hundred (400) words should describe the *objectives* of the proposed research program and the methodology to be used.
3. **Description of Proposed Research:** A full statement prepared by the student which identifies and relates the key elements of the proposed research and plan of study is required. For previously funded GRSP applicants, it is not necessary to repeat the description of previously performed research that will be contained in the GRSP Status Report (item 12 below) unless it helps the applicant to describe their proposed research. A few technical references may be included in this section.
4. **Relevance to Current EPSCoR Research:** Describe the relevance of this research to current EPSCoR funded research. Include the EPSCoR related program and EPSCoR funding Agency and EPSCoR Grant Number.
5. **Interdisciplinary Nature of Research:** This section should describe the interdisciplinary nature of the research.
6. **Completion Timetable, Schedule, and Milestones:** The GRSP applicant's research and graduation timetable and milestones should be described, including a realistic expected date for completion of the formal degree program. This section should also describe the prospects for completion of the proposed research within the allotted time.
7. **Plans to Pursue A Career in Alabama:** This section should describe the motivation and prospects of the student to pursue a career in Alabama.
8. **Personal References:** The EPSCoR Faculty Advisor must provide a recommendation as to the acceptability of the student for the program, a clear statement of the Faculty Advisor's willingness to supervise the student, and the nature of any past or present experience with the student. A second letter of recommendation must also be provided. The letters should be addressed to the Campus Coordinator, but provided to the student's Faculty Advisor to scan and attach to the PDF file of the application.
9. **Resume:** A brief resume (2 pages) of the applicant and the Faculty Advisor must be included with the proposal, with a short summary of education, training and accomplishments.
10. **Transcript/GRE Scores:** A copy of the most current official transcript must be attached.
11. **GRE Scores:** A copy of the student's official GRE scores must be attached.
12. **Status Report:** A Status Report must accompany a renewal application (See Appendix C).

**Appendix B**  
**GRSP Round 12**  
**Application/Cover Sheet**

Alabama EPSCoR, Graduate Research Scholars Program

Submit proposal to: Campus Coordinator of member institutions

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last/First /Middle Initial)

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street/City/State/Zip)

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street/City/State/Zip)

Permanent Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Local Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Current University Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_ County/City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate University \_\_\_\_\_ GPA \_\_\_\_\_ Scale \_\_\_\_\_

Major/Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate GPA \_\_\_\_\_ Scale \_\_\_\_\_ GRE Scores: Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Quantitative \_\_\_\_\_

Target Degree (Ph.D., M.S., M.A.) \_\_\_\_\_ Discipline/Major \_\_\_\_\_

If the Target Degree is a Ph.D., have you passed all Ph.D. qualifying exams and been approved for Ph.D. candidacy (answer "Yes", "No", or "N/A" for M.S. degree students) \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation Date (this is important information that needs to be as accurate as possible)

Select both Month and Year: Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Source of Qualifying EPSCoR funding for GRSP Advisor (EPSCoR Agency, and EPSCoR grant number)

EPSCoR Agency: (NSF, DOE, NASA, USDA) \_\_\_\_\_ EPSCoR Grant No: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please verify with your Faculty Advisor)

Area of study/proposed thesis or dissertation topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor (EPSCoR PIs only) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department Name (no acronyms) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor's E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Campus to which this proposal is being submitted (select only one):

Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to determine the degree to which members of the diverse segments of the population are reached by this announcement, so that all persons are afforded an equal opportunity for consideration, Alabama EPSCoR requests that you fill in the appropriate block(s). Completion of this part of the application is voluntary.

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Minority Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that I am or will be a full-time graduate student at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of institution) during the period covered in the Round 12 application. As a recipient of this award I understand that continuance of the award is dependent upon my meeting the performance standards established by the department within the institution for which I am conducting or will conduct research in compliance with-all applicable policies of the institution I am attending, including but not limited to, policies of the Graduate School, any Student Code of Conduct, any Honor Code and policies regarding academic misconduct or, if applicable, any employment policies of that institution.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*I have reviewed this GRSP Student application, agree to the requirements described, and approve this application.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Campus Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C

### GRSP Round 12 Status Report Cover Sheet (Renewal Applications only)

GRSP Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Report Submitted to Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Last/ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

***The GRSP Status Report accompanies a renewal application.***

GRSP Status Report Requirements: **(headings have to be in this order and clearly marked)**

- Cover Sheet (Signed when approved by Faculty Advisor then by Campus Coordinator)
- Abstract
- Description of GRSP Research/ Progress to Date (references and endnotes are not subject to the 5-page limit)
- Documentation of Accomplishments: publications, seminars, poster presentations, oral presentations, awards and honors
- Anticipated/Expected Graduation Date
- Employment or Career Plans

The length of the report is 5 pages plus the cover page. Please include your name and designate the period of support (either Round number or dates) on every page of your report.

*I have reviewed the above report and it complies with the format described above.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Report Approved by Faculty Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Campus Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Report Approved by Campus Coordinator

#### List of GRSP Campus Coordinators

Alabama A&M University

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Auburn University

Dr. Frank (Skip) Bartol

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Tuskegee University

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University of South Alabama

Dr. John Steadman

jsteadman@southalabama.edu

Reports will not be accepted by the Alabama EPSCoR office until approved by the GRSP Campus Coordinator.

**Appendix D**  
GRSP Round 12 Final Report Cover Sheet

GRSP Student's Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Report Submitted to Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Last/ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected or Actual Date of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_

***The GRSP Final Report should cover the total GRSP research experience, and is due 15 days from the defense of the thesis or upon termination of GRSP funding.***

Final Report Requirements: **(headings have to be in this order and clearly marked)**

- Cover Sheet (Signed when approved by Faculty Advisor then by Campus Coordinator)
- Abstract
- Description of Cumulative Research/ Progress to Date (references and endnotes are not subject to the 5-page limit)
- Documentation of Accomplishments: publications, seminars, poster presentations, oral presentations, awards and honors
- Anticipated/Expected Graduation Date
- Employment or Career Plans

The length of the report is 5 pages plus the cover page. Please include your name, date, and "Final Report" on every page of your report.

*I have reviewed the above report and it complies with the format described above.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Report Approved by Faculty Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Campus Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Report Approved by Campus Coordinator

List of GRSP Campus Coordinators

Alabama A&M University

Auburn University

Tuskegee University

University of Alabama

University of Alabama at Birmingham

University of Alabama in Huntsville

University of South Alabama

Dr. Chance Glenn

Dr. Frank (Skip) Bartol

Dr. Mahesh Hosur

Dr. John Wiest

Dr. Chris Lawson

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Reports will not be accepted by the Alabama EPSCoR office until approved by the GRSP Campus Coordinator.