

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension Service****Food and Agricultural Sciences
National Needs Graduate Fellowship
Grants Program**

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is giving notice that a competition for new graduate fellowship grants will not be held during Fiscal Year (FY) 1998. CSREES is also announcing the availability of supplemental grants for Special International Study or Thesis/ Dissertation Research Travel Allowances for FY 1998. Applications for supplemental grants are invited from recipients of currently active Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants to support special international study or thesis/ dissertation research experiences for current Fellows.

DATES: Supplemental grant proposals must be received by February 16, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Howard Sandberg, USDA/Higher Education Programs, 202-720-2193, hsandberg@reeusda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Food and Agricultural Sciences
National Needs Graduate Fellowships
Grants/1998 Supplemental Grants for
Special International Study or Thesis/
Dissertation Research Travel
Allowances Determination**

On December 30, 1994, CSREES published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 68072-68078) a Final Rule on the Administrative Provisions (7 CFR part 3402) for the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program.

The Administrative Provisions (7 CFR part 3402) for this program specify that, based on the amount of funds appropriated in any fiscal year, CSREES will determine whether a new competition for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances will be held during that fiscal year, and publish that determination as part of the annual program announcement.

CSREES has determined that a new competition for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances will be held during

FY 1998, and hereby solicits proposals for competitive supplemental grants.

Authority

Under the authority contained in Section 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6)), and in accordance with the Administrative Provisions for the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program (7 CFR Part 3402.5(e)), CSREES will award supplemental grants, on a competitive basis, for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances for existing USDA Graduate Fellows. Institutions eligible to receive supplemental grants are those that have active National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants (awarded in FY 1997 or earlier).

Eligibility

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to any current Fellow with sufficient time to complete the international experience before the termination date of the fellowship grant under which he/she is supported. Before the international study or thesis/dissertation research travel may commence, a Fellow must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by the institution, under the fellowship appointment and arrangements must have been formalized for the Fellow to study and/or conduct research in the foreign location(s). All national needs areas previously supported under the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowships Grants Program are eligible for the supplementary grants for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances.

Available Funding

CSREES has determined that no FY 1998 appropriations will be targeted to supplemental grants supporting special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances; rather, no-year funds drawn from expired fellowship grants with unspent funds remaining will be used to support such supplemental grants. Estimated funds for supplemental grants in FY 1998 are approximately \$60,000.

For each travel allowance, the institution may request up to \$5,000. Travel allowance monies may be used only to pay travel and living expenses for the Fellow while the Fellow is on the specific international assignment as proposed in the application for the special international study or thesis/

dissertation research travel allowance. No limitation is placed on the number of applications an institution may submit. Awards will be made to the extent possible based on availability of funds. To the extent possible, all applications associated with one CSREES grant number should be submitted at the same time in order to facilitate the award of these supplemental grants and minimize accounting activity at the grantee institution.

Application Information

A separate application must be submitted by a fellowship grant project director at an eligible institution on behalf of each Fellow for which a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance is requested. Applications for the special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance supplemental awards may be submitted on or any time prior to February 16, 1999. However, to allow time for CSREES to process the applications, proposals should be submitted at least three months prior to the proposed beginning date of the international travel experience. Applicants are urged to submit their proposals early.

Each application must include an "Application for Funding," Form CSREES-661, and a "Budget," Form CSREES-55. To provide the office of Higher Education Programs (HEP) with sufficient information upon which to evaluate the merits of the requests for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance, each application for a supplemental grant must contain a narrative which provides the following: (1) The specific destination(s) and duration of the travel; (2) the specific study or thesis/dissertation research activities in which the Fellow will be engaged; (3) how the international experience will contribute to the Fellow's program of study; (4) a budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the travel; (5) summary credentials of both the U.S. and international faculty or other professionals with whom the Fellow will be working during the international experience (summary credentials must not exceed three pages per person; "Summary Vita—Teaching Proposal," Form CSREES-708, may be used for this purpose); (6) a letter from the dean of the Fellow's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the Fellow's travel request and certifying that the travel experience will not jeopardize the Fellow's satisfactory progress toward degree completion; and

(7) a letter from the fellowship grant project director certifying the Fellow's eligibility, the accuracy of the Fellow's travel request, and the relevance of the travel to the Fellow's advanced degree objectives.

The narrative portion of the application must not exceed 10 pages, excluding the summary vita/vitae. The narrative should be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. All margins must be at least one inch.

An application package containing the forms, instructions, and other relevant information needed by institutions to apply for the special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances may be requested from the Proposal Services Unit; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. The telephone number is 202-401-5048. These materials may also be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@reeusda.gov which states that you want a copy of the application materials for the FY 1998 Special International Study or Thesis/Dissertation Travel Allowances Supplemental Grants under the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program. The materials will then be mailed to you (not e-mailed) as quickly as possible.

Evaluation of Applications

Applications for the special international travel allowances will be evaluated as they are received until available funds for the supplemental grants are exhausted. Upon receipt of an application, CSREES staff will first determine the eligibility of the Fellow for whom the application was submitted for an international travel experience. Eligible and complete requests then will be reviewed, using the criteria and weights indicated below, by professional staff from USDA or other Federal agencies, as appropriate. Proposals judged to be worthy of funding will be eligible for supplemental awards. Since awards for supplemental grants will be made as reviews are completed, there is no assurance funds will be available late in the application period for every acceptable proposal.

The evaluation criteria for special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance applications are indicated below. The

points are provided as a guide to the relative importance of each criterion, but all criteria must be addressed satisfactorily.

a. Destination and duration—the degree to which the destination and duration of the travel experience is appropriate for enhancing the Fellow's academic program—10 points.

b. Travel experience activities—the degree to which the specific international experiences contribute to the Fellow's program of study—30 points.

c. Advance preparations—the degree to which the proposed study or research activities are well-planned, including the likelihood that these activities will come to fruition and that the participation of identified personnel will materialize—20 points.

d. Budget—the degree to which the budget for the international experience is justified—10 points.

e. Personnel—the degree to which the personnel, both U.S. and international, involved with the travel experience have the appropriate credentials and experience to direct the Fellow's international experience, and the likelihood that their participation as mentors, trainers, advisors, or teachers will contribute to the educational value of the travel experiences—20 points.

f. Supporting documentation—the degree to which letters from the dean of the college (or equivalent administrative unit) and the fellowship grant project director support the application—10 points.

When and Where To Submit Applications

An original plus six copies of each application must be submitted. Each copy of the application should be stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. Please do not bind the original or the copies of the application. All copies of the application must be mailed in one package. Applications transmitted via a facsimile (FAX) machine will not be accepted. Applications submitted through the U.S. mail should be sent to the following address for delivery on or prior to February 16, 1999: Special International Study; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2245. Hand-delivered proposals, including those submitted through an express mail or a courier service, should be brought to the following address on or any time prior to February 16, 1999: Special

International Study; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 303, Aerospace Center; 901 D Street, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20024. The telephone number is 202-401-5048. Applications may be submitted on or any time prior to February 16, 1999.

II. Applicable Regulations

This program is subject to the administrative provisions found at 7 CFR Part 3402, which set forth procedures to be followed when submitting grant proposals, rules governing the evaluation of proposals, the awarding of grants, and post-award administration of such grants.

In addition, the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations, 7 CFR Part 3019, as amended by 62 FR 45934, August 29, 1997, apply to this program. Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply to this program are identified in the administrative provisions.

III. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.210, Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants. For the reasons set forth in the Final Rule-related notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V, 48 FR 29115, June 24, 1983, when the authority to administer this program resided in the Agricultural Research Service, this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

IV. Paperwork Reduction

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements for this program have been approved under OMB Document Nos. 0524-0022 and 0524-0024.

V. Program Contact

If you have questions concerning the submission of proposals for FY 1998 Special International Study or Thesis/Dissertation Research Travel Allowances under the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program, please contact Dr. Howard Sandberg, Higher Education Programs, Science and Education Resources Development,

CSREES, USDA, at 202-720-2193
(voice), 202-720-2030 (fax), or
hsandberg@reeusda.gov (Internet).

Done at Washington, D.C., this 27th day of
March, 1998.

Colien Hefferan,

*Acting Administrator, Cooperative State
Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

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