REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS
## GRADUATE RESEARCH
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (GRFP)

Office of Contracts and Grants
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

## Registering for the GRFP in FastLane

If you have not already done so, the first step in submitting a proposal for the GRFP is to register yourself in FastLane. Do not wait until just before deadline to register, as the process can take some time. If you already have a FastLane ID (in the form 000123456), you will need to create a separate ID for the GRFP.

To begin the process, go to www.fastlane.nsf.gov, and click on the GRFP link that's highlighted in the teal bar at the top of the image below. Be sure not to click on the link next to it, or any of the links in the darker blue bar just above it: you can only prepare and submit your GRFP application through the GRFP module.

If you have not already registered, then click on the "Register Here" link at the right side of the page, just above the login box.
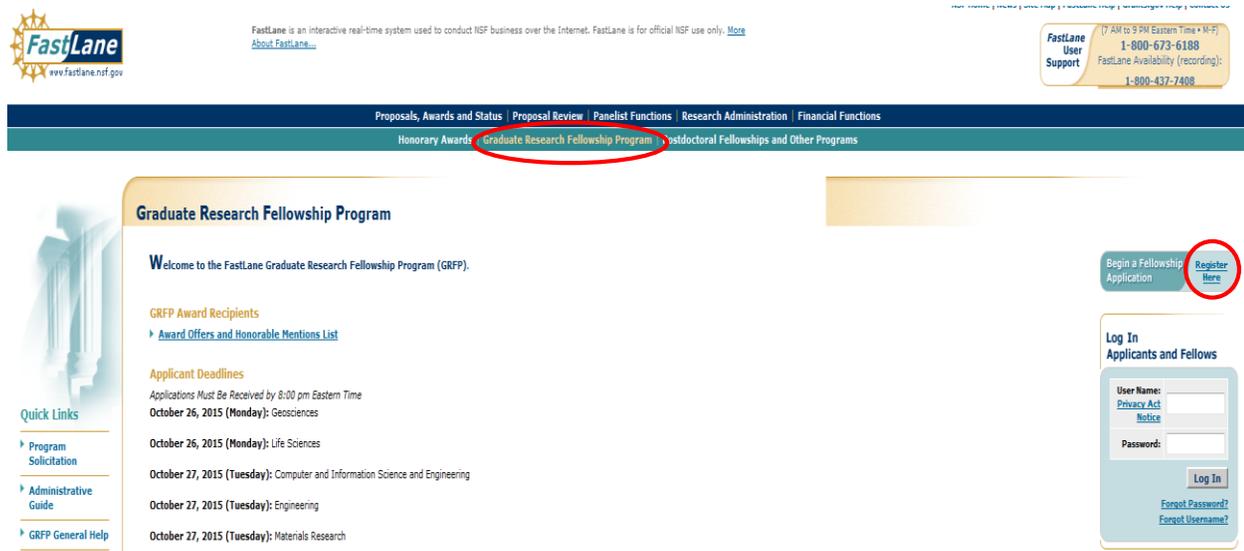
When you click on that link, you'll be taken to a second screen:
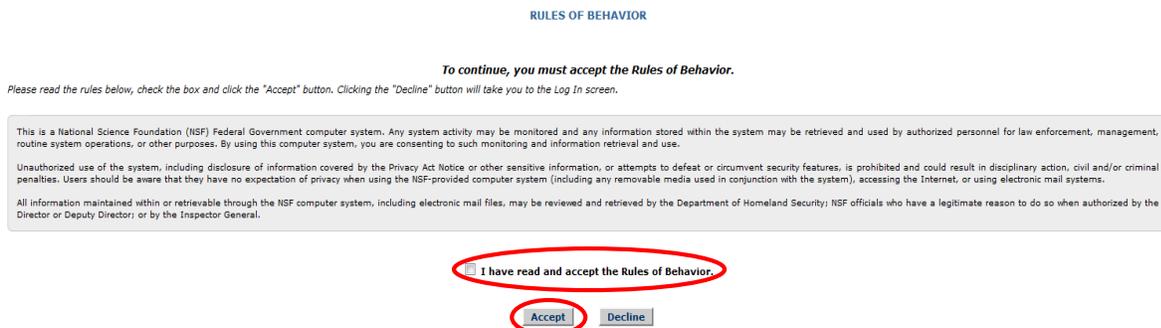
Read the text in the gray box, and click on the box underneath it that says "I have read and accept the Rules of Behavior," then click the "Accept" button.

Doing so takes you to the actual registration screen:

Once you have filled in the required information, click "Submit" to begin the rest of the registration process, which involves updating your profile information and providing answers to several secret questions that will be used to confirm your identity if you should forget your username or your password. Once your profile is complete, you will be taken to the GRFP home page (which will also be the first page you see each time you log in after completing the registration process). It will display the task list associated with your application, and the current data that you have entered.

If you get lost during the registration process, or aren't sure what information to enter in one or more of the fields, use the GRFP FastLane Help module:

https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#2_getting_access1.htm

It will walk you through the process, and also includes information on how to retrieve your username and/or password if you forget them.

Completing your GRFP Application

Once you have registered and are logged in, you'll want to click on the "Prepare Application" task to start entering your information. The link will be removed when your application has been submitted or when the deadline for submission has passed. For help at any time during the application process, check this link:

https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#2_getting_access1.htm

and select the GRFP User Guide that is relevant to the area you're working on from the menu bar at the left of the screen. Or access the GRFP FAQ:

https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/grfp_faqs_applicants.htm

Speaking of deadlines, you must have all of your information, your transcripts, and the two required statements (background and research plan) uploaded to FastLane **and submitted** no later than 6 p.m. Mountain Time (8 p.m. Eastern Time) on the date assigned for your general field of study in the solicitation.

2015 Submission Deadlines

- Monday, October 26 for Geosciences and Life Sciences
- Tuesday, October 27 for Computer and Information Science and Engineering, Engineering, and Materials Research
- Thursday, October 29 for Psychology, Social Sciences, STEM Education and Learning
- Friday, October 30 for Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy

You must also identify three persons who are willing to write letters of recommendation on your behalf. These individuals must upload their letters in FastLane by 6 p.m. Mountain Time (8 p.m. Eastern Time) on Thursday, November 5. No late letters will be accepted, and if your application does not have at least three letters of recommendation associated with it by this deadline, it will not be considered or reviewed.

Formatting Requirements

You are allowed a maximum of three (3) pages for your Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals statement, and a maximum of two (2) pages for your Graduate Research Plan. These page limits include any and all references, citations, charts, figures, and lists of publications. Remember, the goal of the program is to support individuals with a "comprehensive holistic plan for graduate education" that shows how "the applicant has **demonstrated potential** for significant research achievements" (emphasis in the original). Make sure that both of your statements combine to make the case that you are such an individual.

These documents must be on standard 8.5x11" pages, with one-inch margins on all sides of the page, single-spaced. (**DO NOT USE** any line space setting other than "Single," as it may not meet the required format, which will result in your application being returned without review.) Body text must be in 12-point Times New Roman or Computer Modern (if you're using LaTeX). No other fonts or font sizes

are allowed. You may use a 10-point font for references, footnotes, figure captions, and text within figures.

Transcripts

You must submit transcripts (either official or unofficial) of all undergraduate and graduate coursework that you have completed as of the date of the application. This requirement does not apply to courses you are taking this fall. If you just started at CU this fall and cannot get an unofficial transcript before the application is due, you may submit a class schedule or enrollment verification form in place of the transcript.

You are encouraged, where possible (though this is not required) to redact personally identifying information (date of birth, your Social Security Number, any personal financial information, home address, home telephone number, and/or personal e-mail address if you did not use it as the contact email for your application) that may appear on your transcripts before uploading them to FastLane. You must provide a transcript from each institution that you entered in the educational history section of your profile.

Letters of Reference

Your application must have at least three letters of reference, from individuals who are not members of your family, associated with it. You are allowed to request up to five. You cannot upload these letters yourself: provide a current email address for each individual you have asked to write a letter on your behalf, and be sure that it is accurately entered: that is the email address FastLane will use to contact the references on your behalf. Be sure to ask for letters of reference well in advance of the deadline (Thursday, November 5, by 6 p.m. Mountain/8 p.m. Eastern). Reference letter writers will be contacted at the email address you provided with instructions for submitting their letters in FastLane.

Each letter is limited to two pages, and should be printed on the individual's institutional or professional letterhead, using 12-point Times New Roman for the body text. The name and title of the reference writer, along with his/her department and institution/organization, should appear below the signature block.

Each letter should address the two review criteria (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts). It should include details explaining the nature of the relationship the writer has with you, comments about your potential for contributing to a globally engaged U.S. science and engineering workforce, statements about your academic potential and prior research experiences (make sure to ask at least one person who has mentored or supervised your research to write a letter on your behalf!), comments about your proposed research, and any other information that would be helpful to the reviewers. Encourage your letter writers to be specific and concise. The best letter is one that succinctly describes the quality of your academic and research work, calls out specific skills, courses, or experiences that will be helpful in carrying out the research plan you've proposed, and provides concrete details about any other relevant factors. If that can be done in one page, great: the writer doesn't need to fill the remaining space with fluff, as that will only disguise the relevant information (and likely annoy the reviewers, who will be reading dozens of applications and potentially hundreds of letters).

Review and Submission

Once you have entered all the required information, made the necessary certifications, provided the names and email addresses of the individuals you've asked to write letters on your behalf, and uploaded your two statements, use the "Check Application Completeness" feature (available as an optional task on your application task list and from within the "Prepare Application" module). The system will then run checks on all the required and optional fields, and return a list of any that have not been completed yet and where they are in the application. If you don't get any errors or warnings, then

proceed to click the Submit Application link on the Prepare Application screen. This will display your entire application on one screen. Review all of the information and verify that it is correct. Be sure to double-check your contact information and the emails for your reference letter writers, as the information in the FastLane system is the only way the NSF has of contacting you or your letter writers.

If everything looks good, click the Continue button at the bottom of the page. (This will do one final completeness check, so be prepared for that.) If not, go back and correct any missing or incorrect information, and then run the completeness check again.

If no new errors show up on the completeness check, click the "Continue" button at the bottom of the screen. This will take you to the screen for certifications and electronic signature of the application. You must check the checkbox above the "Continue to Application" button before it will work. Check all certification check boxes, and then click "Sign and Submit Application." This will submit your application to NSF for review.

Now go back to the application screen and click on the "View/Print Application" link in the application package task list. Print (to paper or a PDF file, or both) a copy of your completed application. This will serve as your record that the proposal was submitted, and also allows you to keep a copy for your files. The view/print link will be disabled shortly after proposals are sent out for review, and once that happens there is no way for you to retrieve or view your application.

Once your application is submitted, you cannot make any further changes. You can still log in to check the status of your application, and to manage your references. You should periodically check to make sure that your reference writers have submitted their letters (though you will not be able to see the letters themselves). If one or more letter writers has not submitted a letter, you can use the Manage References task to send them a reminder email. This email will also contain a link that they can use to access the system and submit their reference.