

Sam Nunn Security Program Fellowship

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is the deadline for the Academic Year 2019-2020 Fellowships and are applications accepted on a rolling basis?

The deadline for next year's fellowships is 5PM on **Monday, 1 April**. All applications are considered at the same time (i.e., no rolling admissions.)

2. What is the Sam Nunn Security Program Fellowship?

This Program prepares a select group of engineers, scientists, computer scientists, and social scientists to bring their backgrounds to bear to develop and implement policy to help solve problems of national and international importance. The Program examines grand challenges at the intersection of science, technology, and security, such as nuclear proliferation, arms control, proliferation, biosecurity, counter-terrorism, intelligence, climate change, energy security, global public health, resource scarcity, military transformation, infrastructure protection, technological innovation, economic development, and the potential for nefarious use of emerging technologies. Achieving solutions to these problems requires individuals with both technical understanding and



insight into the political, economic, and strategic realities of crafting and proposing policy. The fellowship awards a small stipend and covers expenses for two field trips, including a week in Washington DC during the spring semester.

3. How many fellows are accepted each year?

A class of 8-12 fellows are admitted each fall.

4. How many of the fellowships go to pre-doctoral candidates?

The majority of fellows are doctoral students, with typically no more than one to two post-docs, GTRI, and/or faculty fellows per year. For pre-doctoral



candidates, one of the letters of recommendation must be from your primary lab or dissertation professor. Letters of recommendation from former fellows are acceptable, but no more than one such letter per application is allowed.

5. *What is the ideal time in my course of study to apply?*

Most Sam Nunn fellows are third or fourth year PhD students. First year PhD students are often better served by deferring application until they have completed their qualifying exams.

6. *Is the procedure for post-doc, GTRI, or faculty applications the same as for pre-docs?*

The process is similar, but potential post-docs and faculty fellows are encouraged to speak with the Program Director before applying to discuss what opportunities are available and whether there would be a mutual benefit to their participation before they invest too much time in the application process. **The Program is typically unable to support full funding of post-docs.**

7. *Do I have to participate in both semesters (fall and spring) of the graduate seminar?*

Yes, generally an applicant who is only able to complete part of the graduate seminar (e.g., graduating in December of the fall semester) would be ineligible.

8. *Do I have to register for both semesters of the graduate seminar?*

If you are a graduate student, you will need to register for both sessions, but you will not need to register if you are a post-doc, GTRI researcher, or faculty fellow.

9. *Can I take the seminar if I am not selected as a fellow?*

Seminar registration is by permit only and is limited to the fellows.

10. *Do you accept distance learning candidates from GT Savannah or other distance learning centers?*

Currently we do not accept fellows that are unable to attend most of the seminars in person. The seminar is interactive and draws heavily upon guest speakers, and we are presently unable to achieve these objectives via distance learning. We have had fellows from institutions



other than Georgia Tech, e.g., Emory, CDC, or Oak Ridge National Lab, but they are expected to attend the seminar sessions.

11. Do you accept foreign nationals into the program?

Yes, we have foreign fellows in the program.



12. Does my participation in the Sam Nunn Fellowship Program exclude me from participating in other fellowships or assistantships?

Not on our end. Our Program does not make any exclusive claims on your time besides the three hours per week graduate seminar, the field trips, and the time needed to complete the project and exercises associated with the seminar. From our perspective, stipend funds are considered supplemental to any awards you may already receive. This stipend will not replace a GRA or TA.

13. I am a pre-doc who is participating in another Fellowship or government-funded program that will not allow me to take stipend money from other sources, what affect will this have?

This typically will not factor into the decision making to accept you as a fellow one way or another. The Program usually offers support in the way of conference travel funds or reimbursement for research-related expenses to fellows who cannot take stipends up to a maximum of the value that would have been paid in stipend. It is highly recommended that you make certain that any other funders/fellowship programs you participate in will allow you to concurrently participate in our program before you invest too much effort in applying.

14. If I am not accepted and am sent a letter suggesting I reapply for a later year, is it worth doing so?

Yes. Absolutely. We always have had a number of fellows who have been admitted on a subsequent submission. Typically, those who receive a suggestion to reapply are considered promising candidates, but, given the limited number of slots and many qualified candidates, they may not have been selected based on factors unrelated to their merit as a candidate (e.g., deference given to applicants that are less likely to be able to reapply in later years and attempts to have a broad set of academic programs represented.)

15. Besides scholarly merit, what factors are considered when making determinations about applications?

The applicant's merit, as displayed in his or her CV, letters of recommendation, and cover letter are central to the decision making process. However, there are always more promising candidates than slots, and a number of other factors may be taken into consideration. As mentioned, students at later stages in their program may be favored as they are less likely to be able to reapply, and they are likely to have a better idea of the level of additional effort they are capable of performing. All else being equal, there is a preference towards representing a diverse cross-section of engineering and scientific disciplines in the SNSP each year (and, this may result in applicants being rank ordered within their school/department/lab, as well as against the overall body of applicants.)

16. And finally, what do our alumni say about the program?

- **85%** of alumni surveyed indicated that the SNSP was either **“extremely helpful”** (40%) or **“very helpful”** (45%) **to their career.**
- Almost half reported that **the SNSP influenced their career development “a great deal”** (46%). Of the remaining respondents, the SNSP **“provided direction”** (29%) or had **“some influence”** (24%) on their career development.
- **84% would “enthusiastically” recommend participating in the SNSP.**

Further questions should be addressed to
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