

FAQ:

Do I have to be a planetary science, geology or atmospheric science major or be currently carrying out research in these areas to apply to this program?

No. In fact, we encourage students who are not majoring in, and who do not have a background in, planetary science, the geosciences, atmospheric science, or their associated subfields to apply. **We specifically encourage students who are pursuing graduate degrees in the broader STEM fields such as chemistry, mathematics, physics, biology, engineering, and computer science, and who'd like to gain experience applying their expertise to planetary science problems for the first time, to apply.**

I have a B.S. in a STEM field and am now pursuing a graduate degree in STEM but have never taken a geology, planetary science, or astronomy course. Is this program for students like me?

Yes! We work hard to ensure that our student projects do not require coursework in, or background knowledge of, planetary science, geology, or astronomy. While the projects in this program are planetary-science focused, they are specifically designed so that STEM students with no planetary science, geology, or astronomy coursework can successfully carry them out with mentorship from Dragonfly team members.

Must I be enrolled in a large research university in order to participate in this program?

No. We strongly encourage students who currently attend or have obtained their undergraduate degrees from universities that have not commonly participated in NASA Planetary Science Division (PSD) funded activities such as small colleges and universities and minority serving institutions (MSIs), including but not limited to, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, to apply. Furthermore, as part of a multi-pronged strategy to address the underrepresentation of historically marginalized groups in STEM, we encourage applications from students that hail from institutions which have not commonly participated in NASA missions, and we encourage students who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields to apply.

In order to be eligible to apply, must my graduate research be Titan-focused or focused on planetary science?

No. In fact, we strongly encourage applications from students who would be new to both planetary science research and to conducting planetary mission work.

Does my faculty advisor/faculty mentor need to already be involved with the Dragonfly mission?

No. This program is intended specifically for students whose faculty advisors aren't involved with Dragonfly or other NASA missions. Faculty advisors do not have to be geologists or planetary scientists and should not be involved with Dragonfly or other NASA missions.

Does my faculty advisor/faculty mentor need to have a background in planetary science or geology?

No. In fact, since we encourage applications from students who are pursuing graduate degrees in the broader STEM fields such as chemistry, mathematics, physics, biology, engineering, computer science, etc., there is no expectation that faculty advisors have backgrounds in planetary science, geology, atmospheric science, or related fields.

Where can I find the listing of Dragonfly Guest Investigator mentors and projects?

Dragonfly mentors and associated projects are listed on the bottom of the Student Opportunities page [<https://dragonfly.jhuapl.edu/Student-Opportunities/>]

How do I indicate which Dragonfly mentor I am interested in on the application?

An interested qualifying student will apply directly to a project of interest. In addition, applicants should upload a cover letter under “other attachments” which describes their interests by June 10, 2024. All projects are listed on the Dragonfly website [<https://dragonfly.jhuapl.edu/Student-Opportunities/>]. If an applicant already submitted their application without a cover letter, they can modify their application before the deadline. For questions about how to modify your application, email Ms. Latonya Robinson [Latonya.Robinson@jhuapl.edu]

Can I apply to more than one project?

Yes, but separate applications must be submitted for each opportunity.

Does this opportunity cover tuition or health insurance?

Funding does not cover tuition or health insurance. The program covers 30% of the student’s time, i.e., 3.6 months per year, over the 2-year period (nominally equivalent to two back-to-back summer internships, distributed as appropriate over the 2-year period). Additional funds will cover yearly travel to the team meetings and registration and travel to present research results at one relevant conference each year (if presenting at a virtual conference, funds will cover the registration fee).

Are students who will complete their M.S. or Ph.D. prior to the end of the 2-year period eligible to apply? In other words, is the opportunity only for graduate students, and not postdoctoral fellows?

Students must be actively enrolled in an M.S. or Ph.D. program for the entire 2-year duration that they participate in the Dragonfly Student and Early Career Investigator Program. For the current cycle, this means that they must be enrolled in an M.S. or Ph.D. program until August 2026. Furthermore, we do not expect to accept any students for which there would be a substantial lag time (> 1-2 months) between the completion of their graduate degree(s) and the end of their second year as a participant. This opportunity is not open to postdocs at the current time.

Are graduating seniors eligible to apply?

Yes, as long as students will be entering into a STEM M.S. or Ph.D. program in Fall 2024 at the time of application, they are eligible to apply to this program. Indication of acceptance into STEM M.S. or Ph.D. programs should be submitted in the form of a 2-3 sentence statement of support from the prospective graduate advisor. Please see below for the elements that must be included in the statement of support. Students who are rising seniors, i.e., students who will begin their senior year of undergraduate study in Fall 2024, are **not** eligible to apply to this cycle. However, rising seniors who are accepted into graduate programs for Fall 2025 may apply to next year’s cycle.

I am graduating in May 2024 and will be entering an M.S. or Ph.D. program in Fall 2024. For the purposes of my application, who should I list as my faculty advisor?

In this case, your prospective faculty advisor at your graduate institution should be listed and your application should include a 2-3 sentence statement of support from them. If you have not chosen your graduate faculty advisor yet, then the statement of support should come from the director of graduate programs or from the department chair of the program in which you will be enrolled in Fall 2024. Please see below for the elements that must be included in the statement of support.

I am currently enrolled in a combined B.S/M.S. program in which I will complete my M.S. in one year at the end of my fifth year of study. Can I still apply to this program?

At this time, only students that would be enrolled in an M.S. or Ph.D. program for their full tenure as Dragonfly Guest Investigators are eligible to apply. In this case, an accelerated M.S. student would be eligible to apply to this program after completion of their fourth year of study when they are officially designated as a graduate student, but only if they are able to extend their M.S. studies for an additional year to ensure that they are enrolled in graduate study for the entire 2-year duration of their

participation in this program. Accelerated M.S. students planning to enroll into a Ph.D. program or another M.S. program the semester after completing their accelerated M.S. would also be eligible to apply provided that they are able to provide a 2-3 sentence statement of support from their new graduate advisor with their application. **In this case, students would need to include two (2) separate statements of support**, one from their current advisor, and another from the prospective graduate advisor of the program they have been accepted into. (In cases where students have not yet selected their faculty advisor, the chairperson of their graduate department or the director of their departmental graduate program may submit the statement of support.) Please see below for the elements that must be included in the statement of support.

I am currently pursuing my M.S. but plan to apply to a STEM Ph.D. program. If selected for the Dragonfly Guest Investigator Program, I would only have one year of M.S. studies left. Can I still apply to this program?

At this time, only students that would be enrolled in an M.S. or Ph.D. program for their full tenure as Dragonfly Guest Investigators are eligible to apply. In this case, an M.S. student would be eligible to apply to this program if they are able to extend their M.S. studies for an additional year to ensure that they are enrolled in graduate study for the entire 2-year duration of their participation in this program. Or if they plan to enroll in a Ph.D. program, they must also provide an additional 2-3 sentence statement of support from their prospective PhD advisor with their application. **In this case, students would need to include two (2) separate statements of support**, one from their current advisor, and another from the prospective graduate advisor of the program they have been accepted into. (In cases where students have not yet selected their faculty advisor, the chairperson of their graduate department or the director of their departmental graduate program may submit the statement of support.) Please see below for the elements that must be included in the statement of support.

What must be included in the faculty advisor's 2-3 sentence statement of support?

The statement of support will be a 2-3 sentence statement in which the faculty advisor states that: (a) their advisee has their approval to apply to the Dragonfly Student and Early Career Investigator Program (b) the faculty advisor is willing to attend the Student and Early Career Investigator Program Kickoff Meeting with their student if the student is selected. This is a short orientation meeting that will be held in Fall 2024 and that can be attended virtually (c) if selected, they will ensure that their student has the necessary support at their home institution to work on their project and to communicate with the Dragonfly team during their 2-year tenure as a Guest Investigator. Here, we define institutional support as providing the selected student with a designated workspace, internet access, facilities, etc.

I have been accepted into a graduate program but have not yet chosen/been assigned to an advisor. How then, can I submit the statement of support?

In cases where students have not yet selected their faculty advisor, the chairperson of their graduate department or the director of their departmental graduate program may submit the statement of support.

Are there any opportunities for high school students or undergraduate students?

No. The only students who are eligible to apply to this program are students who will be in M.S. or Ph.D. programs in the physical sciences, biological sciences, mathematics, computer science or engineering as of Fall 2024. This includes students who are currently enrolled in these programs and students who will graduate from undergraduate programs in May 2024 and will be enrolling into graduate programs in Fall 2024. Students who will be enrolling in graduate programs in Fall 2024 must include a statement to that effect in their cover letter and must identify their graduate institution, department, and prospective faculty advisor.

Information about other internship opportunities at APL, for which undergraduate students would be eligible, can be found here: <https://www.jhuapl.edu/Careers/Internships>

Can I use my work on Dragonfly towards my MS Thesis or PhD Dissertation?

Yes, if your Thesis/Dissertation advisor agrees.

Would it be possible to continue participating on Dragonfly after the 2-year period of participating in the Guest Investigator program ends?

Potentially, depending on the nature of the work being performed and how it fits with the project schedule.

What is the duration of the program at APL during the summer months?

The breakdown of time between the summer and academic year can be worked out with the Dragonfly mentor.

Are students eligible to receive academic credit for participating in this program?

It is completely up to the student's home institution to arrange this. Students should arrange this with their faculty advisor and their home institution.

Will the work be done remotely or in-person?

The balance of remote and in-person work will depend on the nature of the project. Some work such as modeling or data analysis may be done remotely, but laboratory work or work helping to develop hardware needs to be done in-person. The format of team meetings will adapt to the evolution of COVID-19 concerns. The November 2020 meeting was fully remote, and the November 2021, 2022, and 2023 meetings were hybrid.

When will I be notified of my selection?

We anticipate that successful candidates will be notified by September 30, 2024. Please monitor this page for updates.

What is the role of the faculty advisor/faculty mentor? What are the general expectations of the faculty advisor/faculty mentor?

The faculty advisor ensures that if selected, their graduate student has the necessary support, i.e., provides the selected student with a designated workspace, internet access, facilities, etc. at their home institution to work on their Dragonfly project and to communicate with the Dragonfly team during their 2-year tenure as a Guest Investigator. The faculty advisor is also expected to remotely attend the Fall 2024 Student and Early Career Investigator Program Kickoff Meeting with the selected student. The Kickoff Meeting normally takes place in mid to late October each year.

Can faculty advisors/faculty mentors attend Dragonfly team meetings, working group meetings/telecons or instrument team meetings/telecons?

No. As the goal of the Student and Early Career Investigator Program is to provide opportunities for promising graduate students to gain planetary mission experience by working with the Dragonfly team, the Program is specifically designed for students whose faculty advisors DO NOT have links to Dragonfly or other NASA missions and is not meant to be an on-ramp for faculty advisors to join the mission team or to participate in mission team activities. Home institution advisors are only expected to: (1) attend the Student and Early Career Investigator Program Kickoff Meeting with their selected student (2) ensure that the selected student has the necessary support at their home institution to work on their project and to communicate with the Dragonfly team during their 2-year tenure as a Guest Investigator and (3) provide the 2-3 sentence statement of support during the application process.

I currently receive research funding from a non-NASA source such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Defense (DOD), etc. that restricts funding from other government agencies such as NASA. Would I be able to participate in this program?

Unfortunately, any students who receive research funding from entities with rules in place that prohibit them from also receiving NASA-based funding are not able to participate in this program.