

# 2025 Veterinary Student Research Fellowship

## Match is optional for this Fellowship opportunity

### Key Dates

Program Open for Application: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 12pm ET

Application Deadline: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 by 5:00 PM ET

Award Notification: April 21, 2025

Anticipated Project Timeline: Summer 2025 – August 2026

Veterinary medicine is critical to addressing global challenges that include nutritional security, environmental sustainability and public health. Several of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals (including 1: No Poverty and 2: Zero Hunger) are unattainable without livestock health programs and research. In addition, research at the interface of food-animal production and the medical sciences is critical to understanding and preventing emerging disease threats.

Veterinarians need to be more involved in addressing challenges ranging from climate change to pandemic prevention; yet veterinary students often have limited opportunities to gain experience in the research approaches that are needed to address these issues. The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) Veterinary Student Research Fellowship (FFAR Vet Fellows program) provides support for veterinary students to gain experience in these areas of research, preparing them for a variety of important careers in science and public service.

FFAR's Veterinary Student Research Fellowship was developed to integrate with existing College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) research student programs and culminate in the widely attended Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) is collaborating with FFAR to design and administer the Fellowship program. This program aims to encourage applicants to gain research experience. Therefore, FFAR and AAVMC strongly encourage applications from students without prior research experience.

## Research Topics Supported

The FFAR Vet Fellows program will support both quantitative and qualitative student research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Advancing animal (i.e., livestock/production animals) welfare. (New)
- Advanced technologies including gene-editing, precision breeding and microbiome/metagenomics in food production.
- Agricultural and environmental economics, socioeconomics, spatial analysis and computational modeling.

- Antimicrobial stewardship (must have a food and agriculture interface).
- Environmental sustainability of agriculture.
- Nutritional security and food access.
- One Health (FFAR & AAVMC recognize One Health as "a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to human, animal and environmental health" described [here](#)). (New)
- Veterinary occupational, health and safety and environmental (OHSE). Zoonosis, injuries, trauma and psychological risks associated with handling and/or working with animals. (New)
- Zoonotic diseases and pandemic prevention (must have a food and agriculture interface).

## Eligibility

The program is open to domestic and international students currently enrolled in a DVM or VMD degree program conducting research with a qualified mentor at an AAVMC member institution. Students enrolled in or who have completed an advanced research or non-research degree such as an MS, MPH or graduate certificate **are eligible** for consideration. However, priority will be given to students with no previous research experience.

Students currently enrolled in or who have completed a PhD are not eligible for consideration. This includes students currently enrolled in dual degree/combined PhD programs.

If you have any questions on eligibility, you may contact Brooklind Norman at [BNorman@aavmc.org](mailto:BNorman@aavmc.org).

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and URVM**

FFAR and AAVMC strongly encourage students from historically underrepresented backgrounds in agriculture to apply. For the purposes of this program, FFAR will use AAVMC's definition of diversity as encompassing "many dimensions, including, but not limited to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, language, cognitive style, nationality, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other forms of differences, both visible and invisible. In defining diversity, it is also incumbent to acknowledge the concept of intersectionality; no single dimension of diversity exists in isolation. We acknowledge that each individual is a reflection of multiple diversity dimensions.

Historically, AAVMC has identified and recognized the presence of specific historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) whose advancement in the veterinary medical profession has been disproportionately impacted due to legal, cultural, or social climate impediments in the United States. The specific dimensions are: gender, race, ethnicity (African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians, and Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage."

### **Application Submission Process**

A letter of support from the Program Director or Department Chair at the mentor's institution will be required as part of the application package. Letters are requested to ensure that applicants are in good academic standing and are integrated into the summer research program at their institution, if awarded. There is no restriction on the number of applicants per institution.

## Program Structure

The Fellowships will provide stipend support for up to 15 students for one year to perform research with a qualified mentor and to participate in the Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). Research may be performed at any time within one year of the receipt of award; it is anticipated that most students will complete their project during the summer months. Participation in the VSS, either the year of or the year following receipt of the award, is required.

Research need not be performed at the mentor's institution. All research must be conducted in accordance with the research compliance requirements (e.g., Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval) of the mentor's institution and the institution where the research is conducted if it is conducted off-site. If human subjects are involved, the student should be trained in culturally appropriate methods to reach the target population, and the mentor must have IRB approval for the project.

Students may be requested to participate in a roundtable discussion with other students organized by FFAR and conducted virtually or at the VSS. All students must complete an AAVMC survey on their experience at the conclusion of the Fellowship.

## Funding

A total of up to \$16,000 USD will be provided to each selected student. Funds may be allocated according to the individual needs of the student, but a general breakdown is as follows:

Fellowship Expenses	Estimated Funding Allocation
Student Stipend	\$10,000 - \$12,000 USD
VSS Conference Costs (lodging, registration, travel expenses) and Research Support Costs (lab supplies and equipment)	\$4,000 - \$6,000 USD

**Matching funds are optional for this Fellowship program.** Funds must be used for student support and any reasonable travel and accommodation associated with access to research sites. Funds cannot be used towards any indirect costs. A breakdown of expenses must be outlined in the Budget Narrative and total costs must not exceed \$16,000 USD.

Funds will be provided at the start date of the award and must be used specifically for the designated student's stipend, research support and participation in VSS (including, but not limited to, registration, travel and accommodations). Funds may be used anytime within one year of the project start date; any remaining funds one year later must be reported back to FFAR. Funds that are remaining are not required to be returned if they are less than 10% of the total funds originally awarded. Funds will be dispersed directly to the institution of the selected student by AAVMC (see Award Administration section below).

# Application Components

Applicants must submit the application using FFAR'S Grant Management System. All information provided will be treated as confidential.

## *Required components*

- Grantee (Organization) Information
  - Geographic location (city, state, congressional district) of the applicant organization.
  - Authorized Organizational Representative (name, affiliation, contact information)
  - Grant Administrator (name, affiliation, contact information)
  - Press Contact (name, affiliation, contact information)
- Fellowship (Contact) Information
  - Program Director (name, affiliation, contact information)
  - Student Mentor (name, affiliation, contact information)
  - Student (name, affiliation, contact information)
  - Student AAVMC Demographic Survey
- Proposal Information
  - Project Title
  - Project Duration (start and end dates, total project duration in months)
  - Geographic location (city, state, congressional district) where the proposed research will be conducted.
  - Project Abstract (Briefly describe your project). [150 words]
  - Research Hypothesis. [50 words]
  - Project Goals. (Describe Project Goals. Goals are specific aims that the project is trying to accomplish each year). [200 words]
  - Project Data Collection and Management. (This is the project methods section. Describe the type(s) of data you will collect and how it will be analyzed.) [100 words]
  - Projected Project Outcomes. (Clearly describe how the project, if successful, will have an impact?) [100 words]
  - Projected Skills Acquired. (Describe the skills that you use and gain throughout the research project.) [100 words]
  - Research Experience. (List and describe any prior research experience.) (Priority will be

given to students with limited research experience). [100 words]

- Project Interest and Career Aspirations. (Describe your career interests and aspirations. Why are you interested in the proposed research topic?) [100 words]
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion & URVM. (If applicable, describe how you will contribute to diversity in the veterinary and/or agricultural sciences.) [100 words]
  - For the purposes of this program, FFAR will use AAVMC's definition of diversity as encompassing "many dimensions, including, but not limited to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, language, cognitive style, nationality, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other forms of differences, both visible and invisible. In defining diversity, it is also incumbent to acknowledge the concept of intersectionality; no single dimension of diversity exists in isolation. We acknowledge that each individual is a reflection of multiple diversity dimensions.
  - URVM Definition: Historically, AAVMC has identified and recognized the presence of specific historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) whose advancement in the veterinary medical profession has been disproportionately impacted due to legal, cultural, or social climate impediments in the United States. The specific dimensions are: gender, race, ethnicity (African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians, and Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage.
- Travel. (Describe whether the project will involve travel, in-person work or be conducted virtually, and any other logistics of which the reviewers should be aware.) [50 words]
- Mentor and Institutional Support. (What is the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution?) [100 words]
- Budget Narrative. (Outline budget category and projected costs.) [100 words]
- Organization Assurances
- Required Attachment: Failure to provide this attachment will disqualify the application.
  - Letter of Support from the Program Director or Department Chair: Letters of Support are requested to ensure that applicants(s) is in good academic standing and are integrated into the summer research program at their institution, if awarded.

## How to Apply

All applications must be submitted by the deadline date through FFAR's online application Grant Management System. Applications submitted outside of this System will not be considered.

To start a **new** application, please click [here](#). If you are a new user, register for an account by clicking "Create Account" button located under the email address field on the left side of the home page. Once you log in, you may begin working on your application. Please be sure to save your work often by clicking on "Save and Finish Later." To access a saved application, please do so through your [Grant Management Account](#).

Only applications submitted by the deadline through FFAR's Grant Management System will be accepted and considered eligible for evaluation. To be fair to all applicants, FFAR will not grant extensions to applicants who missed the deadlines posted in the Key Dates section.

## **Review Process**

Applications are reviewed by an ad-hoc advisory committee, which may include program sponsors, on proposal merit, feasibility, and completeness. Final selections are made by FFAR and AAVMC using the advisory committee's recommendations.

All external reviewers must agree to and adhere to the terms outlined in 'FFAR's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). FFAR makes reasonable efforts to ensure that applications are not assigned to reviewers with a potential conflict with the applicant, institution or project personnel. Reviewers with a conflict of interest are recused from evaluating or participating in the related discussions. Each stage of the review is conducted confidentially, and as such, FFAR is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of the contents of the applications.

## **Scoring and Evaluation Criteria**

All applications will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with FFAR policies. Applications then will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Total of 50 points possible

- ***Research Plan (20 points)***
  - In reviewing the project abstract, is the student's project description clear?
  - Is the student's research hypothesis clear, evidence-based and testable?
  - Are the research goals clearly outlined and designed to generate informative data that will test the hypothesis?
  - Do the data collection and management plans accurately describe the proposed research methods and anticipated type(s) of data collected? Are the plans for data collection and analysis appropriate within the confines of a student project (i.e. limited time and expertise)?
  - Will the student gain important skills (including "soft skills") for long-term success?
- ***Applicant Merit (20 points)***
  - Does the student have significant prior research experience? [Priority will be given to applicants with limited research experience].
  - Are the student's career interests and aspirations consistent with the goals of the program to support the next generation of veterinary scientists in agriculture?
  - Did the student effectively articulate how they will contribute to diversity and inclusion in agricultural sciences? [The ad-hoc advisory committee will follow AAVMC's definition of inclusivity and URVM]. ***Informational only, not scored.***
- ***Mentor and Institutional Support (10 points)***

- Are the expertise and relevant resources of the mentor and host institution appropriate for the student and the project?
- Is the budget narrative justified, and does it appropriately allocate fellowship costs?

## **Award Administration**

Selection & Award Notice: Following the application review process, FFAR will send an official Fellowship Award letter via email to the student applicant, mentor, and authorized organizational representative (AOR) regarding their application status. All notifications will be sent by April 21, 2025.

Potential grantees are free to accept or reject the Fellowship Award as offered. Upon award confirmation by the student and/or institution, AAVMC will manage the funding distribution process and send the fellowship funds directly to the grantee's AORs.

FFAR and AAVMC reserve the right to request additional or clarifying information for any necessary

## **Post-award Management**

Final Report Requirements: In lieu of a written report, students are required to attend and present their research at the Veterinary Scholars Symposium (VSS). Students may choose to present the same year as they receive funding or wait until the following year. programmatic contact. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If for any reason the student is unable to attend VSS, please contact Nikki Dutta at [ndutta@foundationfar.org](mailto:ndutta@foundationfar.org).

Scientific Integrity: FFAR strives to advance knowledge and the application of science to address challenges related to food supply and sustainable agriculture. FFAR's ability to pursue its mission depends on the integrity of the funded science projects and programs. All FFAR grants must be conducted with the highest standards of scientific integrity.

## **Contact Information**

For questions related to the online submission system, please contact FFAR's Grant Management team at [grants@foundationfar.org](mailto:grants@foundationfar.org).

For programmatic questions, please contact Nikki Dutta, Scientific Program Officer at [ndutta@foundationfar.org](mailto:ndutta@foundationfar.org).

For fund distribution questions, please contact Brooklind Norman, AAVMC Program Coordinator at [BNorman@aavmc.org](mailto:BNorman@aavmc.org).

FFAR strives to respond to inquiries within two business days, but our response time depends on the volume of questions received and the complexity of the questions asked. Please note that we do not monitor mailboxes on evenings, weekends or federal holidays.