

Norfolk State University Scholarship for Service (SFS) 2019-2024

Overview of SFS Program

The Norfolk State University (NSU) Scholarship for Service (SFS) program is administered and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in cooperation with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Scholarship benefits include full tuition and fees, a cost-of-living stipend, and reimbursement for travel expenses and professional development. Students awarded a scholarship incur a service obligation to a governmental agency upon graduation from NSU and are required to participate in a paid internship during the summer sessions.

Scholarship Funding

- Full tuition and fees
- Annual stipend
 - \$25,000 for undergraduates
 - \$34,000 for graduate students
- Reimbursement for professional development, travel expenses, etc. up to \$6,000 per year
- Scholarship Duration
 - Two academic years (four semesters) for students in bachelors and masters level degree programs

Scholarship awards are contingent upon available funding.

Requirements and Eligibility

The minimum scholarship requirements for our SFS Scholars are shown below:

Undergraduate student selection criteria:

- United States citizen or permanent resident
- Officially accepted into the NSU undergraduate computer science program
- Advanced sophomore standing or completion of first year at a community college partner
- Minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale
- Recommendations from instructing faculty members gauging applicants' ability, professionalism, motivation, time management and communications skills

Graduate student selection criteria:

- United States citizen or permanent resident
- Officially accepted into the NSU graduate computer science program
- Expected graduation with an M.S. degree in computer science within two years
- 3.5 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale
- Recommendations from graduate or undergraduate faculty members gauging applicants' ability, professionalism, motivation, time management and communications skills

All Applicants will be required to submit an application that includes:

- An essay consisting of a minimum of 500 words. This essay should describe why do students wish to be a part of the SFS program and future plans upon graduation.
- Two letters of recommendation
- A Resume
- Official Academic Transcripts from all colleges and universities attended
- Proof of US citizenship (Passport or birth certificate) or permanent residency (Permanent Resident Card)

Scholarship Application Process

Steps to Apply for SFS Scholarship

1. Download [SFS Scholarship Application](#) and complete
2. Complete the 500 Word Essay. This essay should describe why do you wish to be a part of the SFS program and future plans upon graduation.
3. Obtain two letters of reference
4. Update your resume
5. Submit 1- 4 along with an unofficial transcript as a single PDF file to: SFS@nsu.edu

Scholarship Selection

Scholarship recipients will be selected based on:

- Academic performance
- Resume key items
- Letters of reference
- Essay outlining the applicant's objectives as it relates to cybersecurity and a career in the government
- Ability to obtain security clearance
- Interview

We expect that students selected into the program will exceed the minimum selection requirements. The selection committee, consisting of departmental faculty and staff, will review applications and rank candidates based on their applications. The higher rated candidates will be chosen for an interview. Selection of candidates is not only based on meeting the above criteria, but also on their willingness to commit to the National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements. Prospective Scholars will be made aware that they may be required to undergo a background check required to obtain security clearances.

Required NSU Activities and Expectations for SFS Scholars

Based on our experience with the current SFS award, we propose a series of activities to ensure the success of our students and to produce Cybersecurity professionals who can make substantial

contributions to the defense of our nation. The program at NSU will provide the following essential components:

- Each SFS Scholar will be provided with individual faculty mentorship to increase his or her chances of success in the program.
- Students will be involved with cybersecurity research projects with faculty members and where appropriate, with other students.
- SFS scholars will participate in developmental workshops hosted by security experts, faculty and in some instances, other students.
- SFS scholars will make at least one required poster presentation, either internally or externally
- There will be a required cybersecurity information assurance seminar series with weekly meetings. At this meeting students will disseminate the results of their research, interact with information assurance professionals from industry, be exposed to career building and job seeking skills and will gain knowledge from faculty through informal discussions.
- SFS scholars will attend conferences appropriate to their level and visit cybersecurity installations to gain first-hand knowledge of the cybersecurity industry.
- SFS Scholars will complete the service aspect of their scholarship requirements by working with a government agency in the summer after the first year of the program, or in some cases after the first semester. The program PI will assist students in seeking internships and professional appointments.
- The SFS scholars will be required to participate in at least one cybersecurity competition a year.
- At every opportunity, SFS Scholars will participate in the extension services of the NSU IA- REDI, such as the cybersecurity club, participating in mentoring of high school student cybersecurity organizations, Saturday Scientists sessions with cybersecurity components and involvement in other information assurance community outreach programs.
- Each SFS scholar will partake in training activities preparing them to attain Security+ certification. These sessions will be led by Dr. Jonathan M. Graham, PI. Students will utilize funds from their \$6,000 professional development fund to pay for the certification exam. Students will be encouraged to take other cybersecurity certification exams based upon knowledge gained from courses taken at NSU. Based on required cybersecurity courses, students typically have the knowledge to certify in digital forensics and obtain CISSP certification.

Undergraduate Curriculum Undergraduate SFS scholars will pursue the BS.CSC.IAT program. In addition, those students who have not completed their humanities requirements, will be encouraged to take language courses from the group (Arabic, Mandarin Chinese or Korean). These languages and cultures of those speaking these languages are currently of major interest to those tasked with the national defense of the U.S.A. Students will be required to complete their senior seminar research project in a cybersecurity area.

Graduate Curricula Graduate students will pursue the Information Assurance curriculum track of the M.S. Computer Science. In addition, SFS scholars will complete an Information Assurance research project or thesis.

Contact Information

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is the MS Cybersecurity Program eligible for SFS funding?

Answer: **No**

Can students attend on a part-time basis?

Answer: **No**

What happens if I withdraw from the SFS program without completing my obligation?

Answer: **Your scholarship will be converted to a student loan.**

Do students have to attend NSU to be funded by SFS.

Answer: **Students have to be current NSU students to be supported by the NSU SFS program.**

What happens if my GPA falls below the minimum required?

Answer: **You will be placed on SFS academic probation and failure to improve my result in you being removed from the program.**

Can my military service be used to satisfy the required service for the SFS program?

Answer: **No**

See the link below for other frequently asked questions.

<https://www.sfs.opm.gov/StudFAQ.aspx>

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