

## Gulf Research Program Early-Career Research Fellowship

### Environmental Protection and Stewardship Track Application Questions and Review Criteria – Award Year 2024

**This document provides an overview of the application questions and their associated review criteria for this application cycle. We highly encourage our applicants to thoroughly examine both the application questions and the respective review criteria while formulating their responses.**

**Gulf Research Program mission:** Develop, translate, and apply science, engineering, and medical knowledge to enhance offshore energy safety, environmental protection and stewardship, and human health and community resilience in the Gulf region in ways that empower its citizens.

**Track Goal:** Advance scientific knowledge and its application to improve understanding of how climate change, sea level rise, and/or shifting water quality parameters affect organisms, populations, or ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico region.

### Application Questions:

#### 1. **Relevance Essay (1000-word limit)**

Using language for a lay audience, explain How your research has contributed to and will continue contributing to the Environmental Protection and Stewardship Track Goal: “Advance scientific knowledge and its application to improve understanding of how climate change, sea level rise, and/or shifting water quality parameters affect organisms, populations, or ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico.” In your response, include the following:

- Describe or specify spatial and/or temporal scale of the research and include the relevant research subjects (i.e., organisms) and variables (i.e., water temperature, nutrient loading, etc.).
- Describe how your research will contribute to improved regional understanding of the impacts of biologic shifts resulting from climate change, sea level rise, or changing water quality parameters.

**2. Research Essay (2 parts, total 2000-word limit)**

The Gulf Research Program Early-Career Research Fellowship funds people, not projects. Therefore, your research portfolio statement should include information about your research portfolio as a whole, not a specific project. We encourage you to write your research portfolio statement in a way that is understandable to a scientifically literate lay reader and to make the best use of the space provided by utilizing the entire word count, rather than uploading images, diagrams, or figures. The use of references should be minimal and only when absolutely needed. If references are included, they will be counted toward the total word count, and we do not have a preference as to citation style.

- a. A description of your relevant research and projects to date.
- b. A description of future work and the research goals you hope to accomplish in the next two years.

**3. Special Skill Essay (2 parts, total 600-word limit)**

Research that enhances environmental protection and stewardship requires multidisciplinary approaches, broad range of perspectives and strong science communication skill to engage with managers, decision makers and various communities within the region.

- a. Describe your experiences and approaches to collaboration across scientific disciplines and engagement of end-users of scientific information. How did you utilize your science communication skills to complement your research to other disciplines/audiences?
- b. How have you incorporated principles of impartiality, fairness, and equal opportunity, while nurturing a wide spectrum of viewpoints, in your research, academic work, and career?

**4. Personal Growth and Mentoring Essay (3 Parts, 1250-word limit)**

- a. How will the mentoring provided by the fellowship help you to address your career goals and challenges? What is your strategy to be a productive mentee? (400-word limit)
- b. How will you know when you have achieved professional success in your career? What skills or characteristics do you need to work on in order to achieve this success? (350-word limit)
- c. Select one of the following questions to respond to as you reflect on your educational and research journey.
  - i. How have your lived experiences, educational journey, and/or understanding of the world shaped your identity as a scientist and an early-career researcher? (500-word limit)

OR

- ii. If applicable, we invite you to share your lived experiences of overcoming barriers related to your identity in your academic journey, along with the strategies you employed to overcome these challenges. These experiences could

pertain to various aspects such as culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religion. (500-word limit)

## **5. Submission of 5-page CV and Mentor Essay**

# REVIEW CRITERIA

The Early-Career Research Fellowship application review for the Human Health and Community Resilience track will be conducted in two stages. Applications will first go through an eligibility review conducted by Gulf Research Program staff. Applications that are eligible will proceed to the second review stage focused on relevance, merit, and impact and will be reviewed by at least three peer reviewers during this stage.

## Eligibility Review

- Is the applicant a current federal employee?
- Is the applicant affiliated with a non-federal U.S. institution that has a valid tax ID number?
- Did the applicant complete their eligible degree (PhD, ScD, EngD, MD, DrPH, or DVM) on or after January 1st, 2014?
- Does the applicant appear to currently hold a permanent and fully independent position as an investigation, faculty member, clinician scientist, or scientific team lead in industry or academia? (A postdoc is not considered a fully independent position.)

## Relevance, Merit, and Impact Review

### **Relevance (25%):**

- Applicant's relevance essay demonstrates how their prior and future work will contribute to: Advancing scientific knowledge and its application to improve understanding of how climate change, sea level rise, and/or shifting water quality parameters affect organisms, populations, or ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Technical Merit of Current Work (25%):**

- Applicant demonstrates strong technical merit and research skills in past work.
- Applicant demonstrates potential to make a unique or significant contribution to the field of study and/or towards the goal of the track.
- The quality, range, and quantity of publications is appropriate for the applicant's discipline and career stage.
- Applicant demonstrates ability to secure funding through research grants/contracts.

**Potential for Impact, Personal Growth and Resilience (15%):**

- Applicant demonstrates a sense of self as a learner and problem-solver, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.
- Applicant demonstrates initiative within their institution and their field.
- Applicant demonstrates evidence of pursuing or generating opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities; self-reflection over past successes and failures; and awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

**Communication Skills (10%):**

- Applicant communicates complex ideas well in written formats, application materials are well-organized and cogent, and writing is free of grammatical and syntax errors.
- Application materials convey an understanding of context, audience, and purpose; materials are responsive to the questions asked.

**Special Skill (20%):**

- Applicant demonstrates experience and skills in collaboration across scientific disciplines.
- Applicant demonstrates experience and skills in engagement with stakeholders and end-users of scientific information.
- Applicant demonstrates experience utilizing science communication and an understanding on how to use science communication when disseminating their research to broader audience.
- Applicant has incorporated principles of impartiality, fairness, and equal opportunity in their research work.

**Mentorship (5%):**

- Mentor and applicant have shared goals and understanding of applicant's strengths and identified areas for growth.
- Mentoring plan is realistic and feasible; objectives for mentoring relationship are specific and achievable.
- Mentoring plan is holistic and goes beyond the requirements of tenure and promotion.