

## **Project SEED**

### **Program Guidelines for Coordinators and Mentors**

This handbook contains the Program Guidelines to manage and run a Project SEED site. All sites that are awarded a fellowship are expected to adhere to the guidelines as part of accepting the funding, so please be sure to read it thoroughly.

If this is your first year coordinating a site, we encourage you to also visit the Project SEED website ([www.acs.org/projectseed](http://www.acs.org/projectseed)) and click on the “[Coordinate a Program](#)” tab. Program timelines are listed at the top, and general information listed beneath it. Need more detail? Click on the expandable sections on that page to read more on how to find mentors, students, details on the fellowship, and training materials.

If you are a returning coordinator, be aware that the program is continuously changing and you should always be prepared for updates. Most notably is that we will use the new online portal all Project Proposal submissions, student applications, and student selection.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask, but also be sure to refer to the website, as many questions may be answered there.

Feel free to navigate through the document using the Table of Contents below (clicking on a topic will take you to that section)

**NOTE: If special circumstances suggest departure from the guidelines, please email [projectseed@acs.org](mailto:projectseed@acs.org) with supporting documentation as needed.**

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## PROJECT SEED STUDENT GUIDELINES

### Student Eligibility

- All students must be currently enrolled full-time in high school or have graduated during the summer of their participation (preferably a rising junior, senior, or recent graduate).
- All students must have taken and completed at least one chemistry course
- All students must complete and submit an online application
- All students must meet the eligibility criteria below

### Student Financial Eligibility

The student must be recognized as economically disadvantaged. Preference will be given to students whose maximum family income does not exceed 200% of the current Federal Poverty Guidelines based on family size (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty>). An economically disadvantaged student applicant who is physically disabled **must** be considered on the same basis as any other applicant and may not be discriminated against in any way.

**Students cannot start working until the online Student Application form and proof of family income (IRS 1040) are received and approved by the ACS Project SEED office.**

ACS reserves the right to deny funding for any student who does not meet the guidelines described above unless prior approval is obtained by the ACS Project SEED. ACS will not be liable for funds distributed to students not previously approved by Project SEED.

Please refer to the most recent Poverty Guideline Table on the Project SEED Website for a quick guide to see the likelihood of your potential student being approved to participate.

### Location

The student should be a commuting student. With additional permissions from the ACS Project SEED staff, the institution (college, university, industry, or government lab) can provide room and board and appropriate supervision at no cost to the student. ACS must be notified in order to assure that liabilities are properly accounted for and that parental permissions are obtained.

### Fellowships and Duration of the Program

Summer I and II students will receive a competitive fellowship with the minimum for each program determined by the Project SEED Committee of the ACS. **The 2023 Summer I (first-time participating students) and Summer II (returning students) fellowships are \$4,000 and \$4,000, respectively.** The costs of supplies or laboratory materials cannot be deducted from student fellowships. Both programs expect at least 8 weeks of participation at approximately 40 hours per week.

### Orientation Sessions

All SEED students are required to attend SEED orientations which will be provided by the ACS National team. There will be three short sessions that are a part of the orientation which cover professionalism and conduct, what to expect during the SEED program, and college readiness.

### ACS National Webinars

During the summer, webinars will be made available to the SEED students. The webinars will be focused on various topics related to chemistry, careers in the chemical sciences, ACS resources and tools, and college readiness.

### Payments, Surveys, and Final Reports

Each site is required to provide payment information to the ACS Project SEED office. **Personal bank accounts of individual persons are not allowed under any circumstances.** It is the expectation that the funds are received by an institution, organization, or ACS Local Section. Mentors who disburse funds to the students before the receipt of approved funds from ACS Project SEED do so at their own risk. The ACS Project SEED office will send **one ACH deposit** to the institutional sponsor or the ACS Local Section officer for disbursement to the student(s). This will be a combination of all agreed upon matching funds. It is standard practice to withhold the final \$500 per student until they have completed their evaluation survey and have submitted their written report at the end of the summer.

ACS will make all payments by direct deposit. Your institution or university will use this payment method by filling out the Authorization of Direct Deposit Form that is available in the appendix of this handbook and sending it to [projectseed@acs.org](mailto:projectseed@acs.org). ACS will not send a check unless prior discussion and approval with Project SEED office.

If this procedure is in conflict with the institution's administrative practices, other appropriate action can be considered.

### Program/Student Termination

If the student terminates the program prior to completion of his/her obligation, the ACS Project SEED office must be notified immediately by email AND student must be unassigned to the mentor on the [Coordinator Dashboard](#). The disbursed

award will be prorated, and the unused funds must be returned to the ACS Project SEED before the end of the institution's program.

Unused funds can be sent by check to:

ACS Project SEED Program  
1155 16th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20036

## PROJECT SEED COORDINATOR/MENTOR GUIDELINES

The American Chemical Society supports and promotes the safe, ethical, responsible, and sustainable practice of chemistry coupled with professional and inclusive behavior. Safety is a core value of ACS. As such we are especially concerned for the safety of participants in programs involving minors.

### ACS Code of Conduct

As part of the program all project SEED coordinators and mentors are required to review and sign an ACS Volunteer policy agreement to abide by the ACS Code of Conduct as well as disclose whether they have been accused of or investigated regarding alleged unethical conduct, sexual harassment or other improper illegal workplace conduct by a student, colleague or third party.

### ACS Background Checks

ACS is in the process of creating a comprehensive policy addressing this issue, however, until the policy is finalized for the Project SEED program, we will require background checks for all Mentors and Coordinators.

## FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

### Fellowship awards

The Project SEED Committee determines the total fellowship funding for each approved site. The initial amount of the award letter may vary and will be subject to the final number of participants who complete the program. If the total number of participants decreases *after* the award letter is issued and received by the institution, the amount of approved funds will be reduced accordingly.

Fellowship funds provided by ACS are only valid during the year that they are approved. Any unused balance cannot be carried over to a future program year and must be returned to the American Chemical Society.

### Matching Funds

Available funds will be distributed across the programs based on the percentage matching funds and size of the program. A matching fund of **40%-50% of the total stipend, or \$1600 to \$2,000 per student**, is required from each returning program. **First-time participating sites are exempt from this requirement** but are welcome to provide matching funds if they are able to do so. Matching funds enable the Project SEED program to increase the number of participating students by supporting additional sites unable to provide full match amounts.

### Supplemental Funding from SEED Sites and Participating Institutions

Sites are more than welcome to supplement the stipend amount to be commensurate with local minimum wage, to cover enhancement activities such as career panels, trips, tours, or social activities, or to cover additional expenses such as overhead, poster printing, lab consumables, supplies, and replacement parts/glassware in the event that anything is broken or damaged. Sites very frequently collaborate with other sites to increase this pool of funds or seek sponsorship by nearby corporations or organizations. If you would like assistance in putting together solicitation letters for such sponsorship, please contact the Project SEED office.

### Returning ACS Funds

Checks should be written out to **ACS Project SEED Program** and addressed to:

American Chemical Society  
Accounts Receivable  
1155 16<sup>th</sup> ST NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Somewhere on the check or enclosed in the envelope should be a note stating that the check is intended for "Accounts Receivable; Project SEED Refund" with institution name and reason for refund.

## **RESEARCH AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### Program Content

The intent of Project SEED is to provide students with the opportunity to perform *meaningful research*. Students should not solely participate as a lab dishwasher, observer, or do extremely repetitive and rote tasks. The project should allow the student to learn about and employ the scientific method in a research context but should also bear in mind that high school students will have different capabilities. Be sure to adapt the project as needed to the students' comprehension and ability levels. The program implies no employee/employer relationship.

### Research Project Limitations

**Any change in project must be approved by the ACS Project SEED committee** by submitting the project changes in the online platform and documented in a direct email to [projectseed@acs.org](mailto:projectseed@acs.org).

### Students/Mentor Ratio

For a majority of high school students, this opportunity is their first time working in a research lab. Safety is of the utmost and primary concern for each participating student. As such, a mentor should work with **no more than two SEED students** during the summer. Please take advantage of additional support from other lab members. Graduate student, post-doctoral fellow, and undergraduate student support is adequate to ensure that there is sufficient supervision.

### Accident Insurance

ACS provides accident insurance coverage for Project SEED students, faculty members or chaperones. All participants **must be registered** prior to the start of the program. The period covered is limited to the 8–10-week program each year. **The insurance company will administrate the plan on an excess basis, paying only eligible bills that remain unpaid after all other coverages have been exhausted.**

The insurance coverage is not extended beyond the ACS Project SEED summer activity. The activities covered are limited to scheduled, sponsored, and/or supervised activities of ACS Project SEED. This insurance does not cover any conditions for which the insured is entitled to benefits under any Worker's Compensation Act or similar law. The ACS accident insurance policy coverage does not extend to damage or loss of personal property of the ACS Project SEED participants. Although ACS purchases accident insurance annually for Project SEED for the duration of the program, it is the mentor's duty to ensure that the student works in an environment in which all necessary and usual safety precautions have been taken. The student must understand both the precautions taken and the reasons for such precautions. A guideline booklet, "Safety in the Academic Chemistry Laboratories" for faculty and students, will be provided to mentors and Summer I students. Students should be equipped with basic personal protective equipment in the laboratory at all times, including safety goggles/glasses, lab coats, and gloves as needed.

### College and Career Counseling

The mentor should give college and career counseling to the student. Sites are welcome to host professional development activities. This includes career panels, inviting financial aid representatives to talk to students about scholarships and loans, college campus tours, writing workshops to complete college application essays, and more.

ACS will also provide students with details on scholarships and additional opportunities within ACS for high school students.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

### The Student Report

The student must write a final report of the summer's work (three to five pages are adequate) and submit using the online platform. This will be digitally sent to the mentor, who **must cosign this report** in order for the requirement to be marked as complete. Copies should be sent to the student's high school and to any other sources from which the student received financial support.

The pre and post Evaluation Survey, designed for the program's assessment and improvement, must also be completed online by the student no later than the established deadline. Coordinators will be able to track completion of these requirements, and only after both tasks have been completed, should the student be paid the final \$500 installment.

### The Mentor and Coordinator Reports

The mentor should complete a brief survey sent by email at the end of the summer. This survey will inquire about the student performance and the overall outcomes of the summer program.

Coordinators must should also complete a brief survey sent by email at the completion of the summer. This survey will inquire about the program performance, and experience interacting with the ACS Project SEED Office.

We also ask that coordinators provide any pictures, blogs or news stories on their program to the [projectseed@acs.org](mailto:projectseed@acs.org) email.

Mentors/coordinators should publicize their programs as broadly as possible. The quality of the publicity should be carefully monitored by the mentor/coordinator with respect to content and detail.

### Role of the ACS and Participating Institutions

ACS coordinates Project SEED and conducts the national-level fund-raising activities. Acting under the authority of the participating institution, the local ACS Project SEED coordinator usually works with the mentor(s) to select the student(s) and to operate the program in accordance with the financial and academic guidelines set out above by ACS. The participating institution bears primary responsibility for the proper selection of eligible students within the guidelines of the program. ACS is responsible for the administration of the program and the approval of applications for students whose eligibility is outside the guidelines set for Project



SEED.

#### Publication of Project SEED Research

Any publications resulting from the student's research should acknowledge support from ACS and the Project SEED endowment.

## SITE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REMINDERS

#### Policies for minors on-campus

Note that institutions may have very strict and specific policies on working with minors. It is not uncommon for background checks and/or additional training to be required by each person in contact with the minor student. In some instances, there may be a requirement that minors are accompanied at all times (even outside of the lab). Be sure to consult with your institution to learn these requirements and take the necessary precautions as needed prior to submitting a proposal.

#### Work permits for students under age 16

Note that some states may require work permits for students under the age of 16. Consult with your institution's Human Resources office for any required paperwork. If necessary, you can limit participation to students over age 16. Dates of birth will be provided for each student application you view.

#### Payment/Employee Considerations for SEED Students

Note that there are some campuses that have requirements of paid personnel. Check with your respective finance office to be sure that none of these requirements are inadvertently missed. In some instances, it may be simpler to facilitate payment of the SEED students through your ACS Local Section rather than an academic institution. Students as part of the Project SEED Summer Program **MUST** be paid for their participation.

#### Project Limitations

Project SEED was designed to help expose students to chemistry-related research and projects. However, some institutions may have strict safety-related limitations on the types of projects a minor can work on. Project SEED accepts project topics that extend beyond the scope of "wet lab" projects, including computational chemistry, chemical education (ie. developing chemistry curriculum), and more. Please feel free to inquire with the Project SEED office for more information.

## APPENDIX

### 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Please see below for a table of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The 200% level and lower is eligible to participate. Those that are 300% and lower will have to be approved by the ACS Project SEED Office. 350% and above will NOT be eligible to participate. Note that there are different thresholds for Hawaii and Alaska; they are listed at the bottom.

Household Size	Poverty Guideline	200%	300%	350%
1	\$14,580	\$29,160	\$43,740	\$51,030
2	\$19,720	\$39,440	\$59,160	\$69,020
3	\$24,860	\$49,720	\$74,580	\$87,010
4	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$105,000
5	\$35,140	\$70,280	\$105,420	\$122,990
6	\$40,280	\$80,560	\$120,840	\$140,980
7	\$45,420	\$90,840	\$136,260	\$158,970
8	\$50,560	\$101,120	\$151,680	\$176,960
9	\$55,700	\$111,400	\$167,100	\$194,950
10	\$60,840	\$121,680	\$182,520	\$212,940
11	\$65,980	\$131,960	\$197,940	\$230,930
12	\$71,120	\$142,240	\$213,360	\$248,920
13	\$76,260	\$152,520	\$228,780	\$266,910
14	\$81,400	\$162,800	\$244,200	\$284,900

## Hawaii

Household Size	Poverty Guideline	200%	300%	350%
1	\$16,770	\$33,540	\$50,310	\$58,695
2	\$22,680	\$45,360	\$68,040	\$79,380
3	\$28,590	\$57,180	\$85,770	\$100,065
4	\$34,500	\$69,000	\$103,500	\$120,750
5	\$40,410	\$80,820	\$121,230	\$141,435
6	\$46,320	\$92,640	\$138,960	\$162,120
7	\$52,230	\$104,460	\$156,690	\$182,805
8	\$58,140	\$116,280	\$174,420	\$203,490
9	\$64,050	\$128,100	\$192,150	\$224,175
10	\$69,960	\$139,920	\$209,880	\$244,860
11	\$75,870	\$151,740	\$227,610	\$265,545
12	\$81,780	\$163,560	\$245,340	\$286,230
13	\$87,690	\$175,380	\$263,070	\$306,915
14	\$93,600	\$187,200	\$280,800	\$327,600

## Alaska

Household Size	Poverty Guideline	200%	300%	350%
1	\$18,210	\$36,420	\$54,630	\$63,735
2	\$24,640	\$49,280	\$73,920	\$86,240
3	\$31,070	\$62,140	\$93,210	\$108,745
4	\$37,500	\$75,000	\$112,500	\$131,250
5	\$43,930	\$87,860	\$131,790	\$153,755
6	\$50,360	\$100,720	\$151,080	\$176,260
7	\$56,790	\$113,580	\$170,370	\$198,765
8	\$63,220	\$126,440	\$189,660	\$221,270
9	\$69,650	\$139,300	\$208,950	\$243,775
10	\$76,080	\$152,160	\$228,240	\$266,280
11	\$82,510	\$165,020	\$247,530	\$288,785
12	\$88,940	\$177,880	\$266,820	\$311,290
13	\$95,370	\$190,740	\$286,110	\$333,795
14	\$101,800	\$203,600	\$305,400	\$356,300