

VETERINARY STUDENT SCHOLAR

Application Process and Guidelines

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Morris Animal Foundation Veterinary Student Scholar (VSS) program is a competitive program that provides veterinary students the opportunity to become involved in mentored research that advances the health and/or welfare of dogs, cats, equids, or wildlife. The VSS program awards stipends up to \$5,500 to veterinary students who are selected by their institution to participate in clinical or basic animal health research.

Morris Animal Foundation is committed to training the next generation of veterinary researchers. These awards are competitive, and each institution is encouraged to select and submit the strongest student projects based on scientific merit, potential animal health impact, and opportunity for the student scholars to develop veterinary research skills. All proposals must adhere to Morris Animal Foundation's guidelines and mission.

SPECIAL TOPIC OPPORTUNITY: For VSS applicants interested in research using genetic and phenotypic data from the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study, a Foundation-sponsored workshop on genome-wide association studies (GWAS) will be available to VSS awardees. During the workshop, participants will use genetic and phenotypic data from the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study to learn how to perform a GWAS. All participants will perform an analysis together utilizing the same phenotype and will then potentially have a chance to explore their own individual phenotypes of interest. The workshop will be hosted by the UC Davis Department of Population Health and Reproduction. It is tentatively scheduled for fall 2024. The awardees participating in this opportunity can then use these techniques in their VSS research project. If you are interested in this opportunity, you must reach out for more details about how to complete your application by emailing: grantapplications@morrisanimalfoundation.org.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

- Up to two (2) VSS applications per institution may be submitted to this Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Applicants must be currently enrolled in an accredited veterinary medicine program through the duration of the grant contract period (this does not need to be AVMA accreditation). Students enrolled in a combined DVM/PhD degree program are not eligible for this RFP.
- Applicants who have previously received a VSS stipend are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants must have the support of a mentor qualified to guide the proposed research project.

PROJECT CRITERIA

- **Mission Adherence:** Projects must advance the science of canine, feline, equine, or wildlife health. Projects oriented toward human health and production animal health do not fall within Morris Animal Foundation's mission and are not accepted.
- **Health Study Policy:** Projects must adhere to Morris Animal Foundation's [Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research](#). The Foundation will not fund projects that include euthanasia of animals for research purposes. All Foundation-funded research must demonstrate consideration of animal sentience and full regard to animals' physical and psychological needs and welfare in the study design. Proposals recommended for funding by scientific reviewers are reviewed separately and must be approved by animal welfare and ethics experts prior to funding.
- **Budget:** This grant is intended as a stipend to help the student focus on their research and education by providing monetary support. There is no budget form to complete. The applicant can request up to \$5,500. Funds can be used only for student support during the research project. Funds cannot be used for project expenses such as equipment, supplies, testing, publication costs, or indirect costs.
- **Duration:** Project duration is typically 2 – 3 months.
- **Parachute Science:** Morris Animal Foundation discourages the practice of parachute science. Research projects occurring in a different country to that where the student is enrolled **must** involve a mentor in that country.
- **Office of Foreign Assets (OFAC) Disclaimer:** The Foundation is committed to full compliance with U.S laws and regulations establishing trade and economic sanctions. The Foundation will not fund any proposal where individuals, activities, or financial transactions occur within Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, or the Crimea Region of the Ukraine. In addition, all individuals and entities involved in the proposal must not be sanctioned under U.S. trade and economic laws or regulations. You can learn more about sanctioned countries, entities and individuals [here](#).

Failure to adhere to the above policies may result in your proposal being declined. For questions about Morris Animal Foundation Policies that are not answered within the proposal guidelines or our [FAQ page](#), contact grantapplications@morrisanimalfoundation.org.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Morris Animal Foundation uses Fluxx to facilitate grant application and management. Visit maf.fluxx.io to create a user account and submit an application.

Both the student and the individual submitting the application (if different from the student) must create an account before applying for funding. Accounts are reviewed and validated by Morris Animal Foundation, which may take up to two business days. Please create an account several days prior to the proposal deadline.

More information on Fluxx is available in our [Fluxx Applicant User Guide](#).



Morris Animal Foundation grant applications have two components: an online application and a full proposal attachment. **Applications must be received by 4:59 PM ET** on the designated due date. To submit a proposal, please complete the following:

1. The **Online Application** in the Fluxx database with contact information for the investigator(s) and institution, and key project information.
2. Full Proposal document using the proposal outline below, uploaded to the Fluxx portal.

You will be notified as to the status of your proposal approximately three-four months after the proposal submission deadline. All proposals recommended for funding are reviewed by the Foundation's Animal Welfare Advisory Board (AWAB), and reviewers may query the lead proposal author about aspects of the study protocol relating to animal care and use. On occasion, a proposal may be turned down at this stage. Proposals undergoing successful AWAB review move forward for contracting. This process can take several more weeks to complete. VSS grants must be used to fund research starting within 6 months from the date the grant is contracted. There are two RFPs offered for VSS grants each year, please visit the [Morris Animal Foundation Apply for a Grant Webpage](#) to view the RFP calendar. This RFP is scheduled to start contracting in approximately September 2024.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Carefully review and adhere to these proposal guidelines, including page length. Deviations from these guidelines may result in the rejection of your proposal. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on [this rubric](#).

Proposal Format:

- Proposals must be completed using the proposal outline below, including the use of outline number and headings. Do not remove any headings or sections from [the template](#). If there is information that does not apply to your proposal, enter "Not Applicable" in that section.
- Font must be single-spaced or greater and no smaller than Times New Roman 11-point. Margins must be 0.75 inches or greater.
- Technical terminology should be defined on first usage. Acronyms and abbreviations may be used subsequently.
- The proposal must be converted to a single PDF document for submission.

Proposal Outline:

- A. Title Page** (one page limit): Name, institution and email address of student and mentor(s)
- B. Project Summary** (three-page limit): **This section must be written by the student.** Please include the headings outlined below:
 - i. Project Overview:** Describe the project and the experimental approach intended to meet the objectives.
 - ii. Potential Impact for Animal Health:** Describe how the project will advance animal health.

- iii. **Student's Role:** Describe student's specific role in the project and research skills to be learned.
 - iv. **Career Vision:** Describe student's career vision and how this award will assist in progress toward those goals.
 - v. **Program Resources:** Describe research resources available, such as research facilities, animal care and use committee, research seminars, grant-writing support, etc.
 - vi. **Cited References:** Include citations referenced numerically in the project summary.
- C. **Animal Involvement Justification Form** (no page limit): Include the required Animal Involvement Justification form provided in the proposal template in ALL proposals, regardless of live animal use.
- a. **Client Consent Form:** If your study involves client owned animals, attach your Client Consent Form following the Animal Involvement Justification form involvement.
 - b. **Permits:** Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any federal, state or local requirements. Please attach a copy of appropriate applications or approved protocols and permits with the proposal application.
- D. **Institutional Letter:** A letter from the institution providing a statement of the student's good standing in the professional curriculum.
- E. **Mentor Letter** (two-page limit per mentor): A letter is required and should:
- i. Address the student's accomplishments, perceived strengths, motivation, academic abilities and potential as a future veterinary researcher.
 - ii. Describe the research project and the student's specific role in the study, including specific skills to be learned.
 - iii. Describe mentor's current relationship with the student and the mentoring and training plan for this project.
 - iv. Describe the research environment with regards to mentor qualifications, facilities, laboratory space, field research, etc.
- F. **Student Biosketch** (two-page limit): Include your name, position/role on the project, education/ training (degrees, institution, year of graduation, field of study), previous positions, research experience and honors.