

# **NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program: *What Panelists Look For?!***

**Tess Moon, Ph.D.**  
*Department of Mechanical Engineering*  
*University of Texas at Austin*

## ***NSF GRFP Panelist Responsibilities***

- Assemble in Washington (~early February) for the evaluation process
- Examine information available in the applicants' files
- Rate the relative merit of applicants using NSF's 2 Merit Review Criteria
- Place each of the applicants into Quality Groups

## ***NSF's 2 Merit Review Criteria for the GRFP***

### ***Intellectual Merit Criterion***

Intellectual merit includes intellectual ability and other accepted requisites for scholarly scientific study, such as the ability

- (1) to work as a member of a team as well as independently;
- (2) to communicate; and
- (3) to plan and conduct research.

### ***Broader Impacts Criterion***

The broader impacts criterion includes contributions that

- (1) effectively integrate research and education at all levels;
- (2) encourage diversity, broaden opportunities, and enable full participation;
- (3) enhance scientific and technical understanding; and
- (4) benefit society.

**2003 NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS**

**Rating Sheet**

APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_

PANEL: \_\_\_\_\_

FIELD: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>INTELLECTUAL MERIT CRITERION</u>	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Less Competitive	Insufficient Basis for Judgment
<b>Proposed Plan of Research:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Previous Research Experience:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Academic Record:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reference Reports:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>GRE Tests Scores:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<u>BROADER IMPACTS CRITERION</u>	Strongly Demonstrated	Demonstrated	Not Demonstrated
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*Past, current, and future efforts to:*

<b>Foster integration of research and education:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advance diversity in science:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Enhance scientific and technical understanding:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Benefit society:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

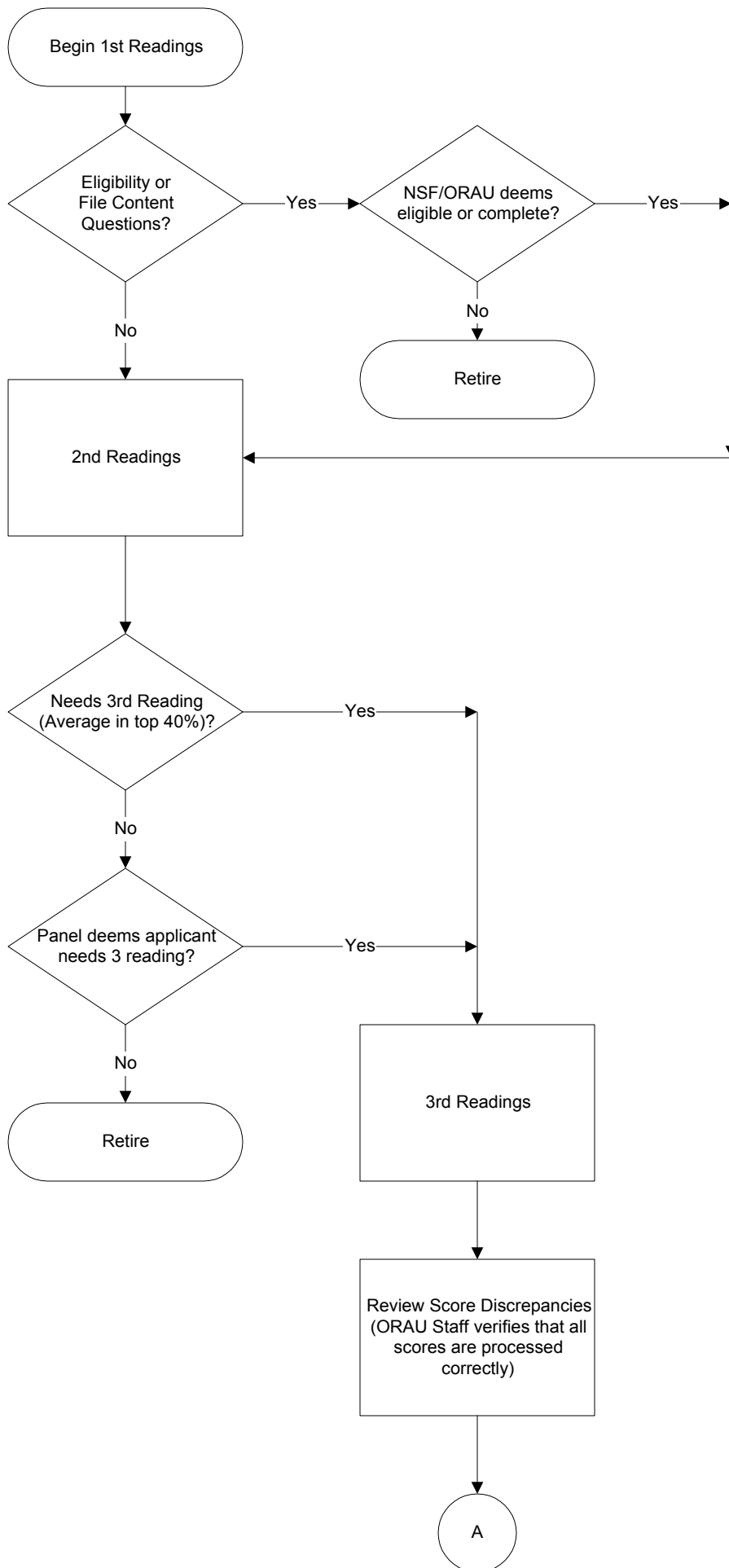
COMMENTS TO APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

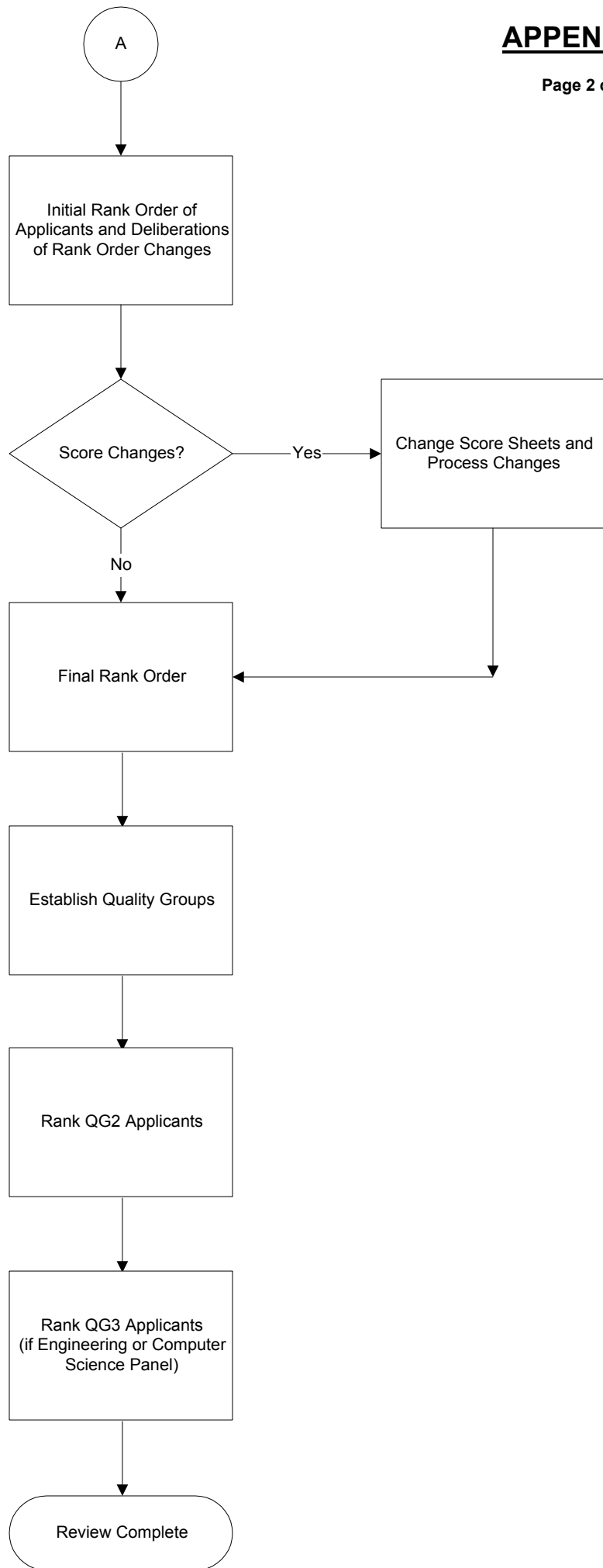
Reviewer comments to the applicant on this rating sheet should be constructive and reflect the two NSF merit review criteria. Upon request, NSF will send the applicant a copy of this rating sheet without the name of the reviewer. Maximum protection will be given to the reviewer's identity subject to the policy stated above and the Freedom of Information Act, 5 usc 552.	
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Panelist Code: <input style="width: 150px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>SCORE CHANGE 1</b>	<b>SCORE CHANGE 2</b>
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SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# NSF Graduate Fellowship Application Review





**Essay Question 15:**

**Describe any personal, professional, or educational experiences or situations** that have contributed to your desire to pursue advanced study in science, mathematics, or engineering.

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*A panelist might ask:*

“What’s the applicant’s **MOTIVATION** for graduate study?”

“Is there **TANGIBLE EVIDENCE** demonstrating sincerity of interest?”

### **Essay Question 16:**

**Describe your experiences in the following, or describe how you would address the following in your professional career:**

- Integrating research & education  
*(e.g., participating in and encouraging discovery at various levels);*
- Advancing diversity in science  
*(e.g., contributing to the participation of underrepresented groups);*
- Enhancing scientific and technical understanding *(e.g., sharing scientific knowledge with the general community);* or
- Otherwise benefiting society.

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*A panelist might ask:*

“How does applicant plan to GIVE BACK to society?”  
“Is there TANGIBLE EVIDENCE demonstrating sincerity of intent?”

## **Proposed Plan of Research:**

In a clear, concise, and original statement, describe research topics you may pursue while on fellowship tenure, and include how you became interested in these topics.

Your statement should reflect your own thinking and work, demonstrate your understanding of research principles necessary to pursue these interests, and explain the relationship to your previous research, if any.

Present your plan with a clear hypothesis or questions to be asked by the research.

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*A panelist might ask:*

“Does the applicant develop a *relevant* research hypothesis?”

“Does the applicant develop a *cogent, cohesive* research plan?”

“Does the applicant understand *relevant* research principles & techniques?”

“Does the applicant demonstrate appropriate *intellectual maturity & reasoning*?”

“Does the applicant communicate the *impact & relevance* of proposed research findings?”

### **Previous Research Experience:**

Describe any scientific research activities in which you have participated, such as experience in undergraduate research programs, or research experience gained through summer or part-time employment or in work-study programs, or other research activities, either academic or job-related.

Explain the purpose of the research and your specific role in the research, including the extent to which you worked independently and/or as part of a team, and what you learned from your research.

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*A panelist might ask:*

- “Does the applicant *understand* previous research hypothesis, purpose & goals?”
- “Does the applicant *cogently describe* at least their portion of the research activities?”
- “Does the applicant understand *relevant* research principles & techniques used?”
- “Does the applicant demonstrate independent *intellectual maturity & reasoning*?”
- “Does the applicant communicate their research findings, *incl.* impact & relevance?”

## **Successful Applicants have:**

- Strong—*but not necessarily perfect*—academic records
- Very competitive—*but not necessarily perfect*—GRE scores
- Extremely strong letters of recommendation—*primarily from tenure-track faculty*
- Conducted—*even planned*— “independent” research
- Clear understanding of impact & relevance of past & planned research
- Clear visions of how a Ph.D. fits into their career plans
- *Relevant* research hypotheses & *cogent, cohesive* research plans
- Demonstrable independent, intellectual maturity & reasoning
- Demonstrated leadership in giving back to society