



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

**DELAWARE  
ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE**

***DENIN Environmental Fellows: Bridging Science and Society***  
**2021 Program Description and Application Information**  
**Deadline: April 30, 2021**

The Delaware Environmental Institute (DENIN) is accepting applications for the DENIN Environmental Fellows Program, an opportunity for doctoral students carrying out environmentally relevant research at the University of Delaware. The deadline is Friday, April 30, 2021.

The goal of the program is to help prepare students whose environmentally-relevant scientific research and interests demonstrate a clear link to societal need and benefit. We anticipate that, over time, Fellows will pursue diverse careers across academia, the public and private sectors.

DENIN Fellows are selected to function as a team for two years, and will work together in ways that complement their primary academic programs. Fellows will participate in and lead a select number of DENIN events and activities each year, including symposia, seminar series, meetings, outreach events, career roundtables and networking with leaders from academia, the public and private sectors. For more about DENIN, visit the DENIN website, at <https://www.denin.udel.edu/>

Fellowships include a \$30,000 annual stipend. Fellows will also receive 20% tuition coverage and access to up to \$1,000 per year to assist with research supplies or research-related travel. Fellowships are provided for two years, as long as the Fellow remains in good academic standing, and is able to carry out a select number of DENIN activities over the two-year period. Fellows are selected by a committee of reviewers with diverse backgrounds.

Approximately four to five Fellows will be selected. Fellowships begin September 1, 2021.

**How to apply, in brief:**

**Proposal Narrative and Resume:**

Submit a proposal narrative and resume via the online application form. The proposal narrative and your resume are assembled into a single PDF file for online submission. You will also be required to provide contact information for up to 3 references.

**Letters of Reference:**

Request letters of recommendation from your academic advisor and a second reference. You have the option to include a third letter, such as an external partner.

**Eligibility:** UD doctoral students who will have completed at least two academic years of environmentally focused doctoral study when the fellowship begins are eligible. Faculty advisors must be DENIN Affiliates. Students in natural and physical sciences, social sciences and engineering are eligible.

**Limitations:** Only one student per faculty research group may apply. Students should confer with their advisors prior to applying.

**Focal areas of interest and funding sources:** Several fellowships will be funded through Delaware's NSF Project WiCCED, focused on research and solutions to challenges involving water quality and water security in changing coastal environments. Proposals relevant to this topic are encouraged.

One fellowship will be supported by funds from generous DENIN donors. Thus, a broad array of environmental topics will be considered, including but not limited to biogeosciences, food security, climate, habitat & biodiversity, environmental monitoring, and human dimensions of the environment, including environmental policy and environmental justice. Environmental resilience and amelioration of environmental damage are also of importance.

Solutions-oriented research that may result in new technology, policies or processes that will be of use to others is of interest. Likewise, research expected to result in effective environmental policy, intellectual property, training or outreach, or a product or service that can be used in the near future to help resolve societal issues, is also of interest.

**Societal need:** All applications must show a clear link between the environmental research and the resolution of a significant societal need.

#### **Application Instructions:**

**All applications are due by 5:00 PM, April 30, 2021.** Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Please note that letters of reference are submitted separately. Applications are submitted through an online form. When an application is submitted, references will receive an email with instructions for how to upload a letter. Letters from references are due by Friday, May 7, 2021.

#### **Online submission form:**

<https://www.denin.udel.edu/students-page/denin-environmental-fellows/denin-environmental-fellows-application/>

Follow page limits as noted. Crisp, succinct writing is encouraged. The page limits are guidelines for *maximum* length. You can save your application while you work on it, before final submission.

#### **Application Elements:**

Proposals should include the following elements. Note the page specifications below for the narrative and other sections; text in these sections should be single-spaced, at least 11-pt font, with 1-inch margins.

##### **1. Contact Information and Bio/Abstract**

Information you will need includes:

- a) Applicant contact information and demographics. Advisor contact information. Name, address and email of your department's grant administrator/financial manager.
- b) Names and emails of your references.
- c) Bio/abstract

Provide a non-technical, one-paragraph abstract that describes your biographical information, current research focus, and how your research will impact society. Discuss your post- doctoral

plans, such as further study and longer-term career interests. You may mention leadership positions, experience communicating science or experience with mentoring. The bio/abstract should be non-technical, and understandable to an educated general audience. It should be suitable for use in public reports, on websites, and reports to funders.

**The next section of your application is the Proposal Narrative and a 2-page resume. Upload these documents as a single .pdf file.**

## **2. Proposal Narrative (7 pages maximum)**

When preparing this narrative, please keep in mind that DENIN Fellowships fund high-potential future leaders, and are not exclusively focused on the technical, scientific content of your application. We welcome discussion of the larger context of your research, within your lab group, and more broadly. Please also bear in mind that the fellowship review panel will represent several disciplines in environmentally-related research, as well as non-scientists. To be a more competitive applicant, ensure that your proposal is understandable to a well-educated, but diverse audience. Please note that the narrative should be no more than 7 pages long. We welcome well-written proposals that are less than 7 pages long.

### **a) Context and Research Focus**

Discuss your background, and how you became interested in your research area. What is the larger context and significance of the research area you selected? Why would you like to be a DENIN Fellow? (1 page)

### **b) Intellectual Merit**

Describe the research you are carrying out. State your hypothesis or research question. Discuss the theoretical grounding, existing literature, and plan for research. Discuss why the research is significant. Note areas that you think would be innovative. (1-2 pages)

### **c) Broader Impacts**

How will your research address a societal need, or provide a benefit to society? What are the social dimensions or implications of your work? Describe how the activities of the proposed research can be linked to addressing needs and challenges of government, business or the non-profit sector. Describe what you have already done at UD that benefits the local or regional environment. Each proposal should identify an external contact/organization that might benefit from your research results; a letter of endorsement is not required but will enhance the proposal. (1 page)

### **d) Near-term Benefits**

Discuss whether your research will result in new equipment, technology, advances in theory, guidelines, models or processes that will be of use to others. Discuss whether your research will result in patents or other intellectual property, or a product, service, or model that can be used in the near future to help resolve societal issues. Near-term benefit can also include assisting practitioners who can improve what they do, through your outreach or training. (up to 1 page)

### **e) Communicating Science**

How do you intend to communicate your research findings within the academic and broader scientific communities? As a DENIN Fellow, how could you share the results of your research with the media, decision-makers and the general public? Be specific (e.g., in what journals do you intend to publish or at what conferences will you present). What prior experience do you have in communicating research to non-academic audiences? Similarly, what ideas do you

suggest for future DENIN Fellows to communicate science to non-academic audiences? How might DENIN Fellows continue to enhance the environmental community at UD and beyond? (up to 2 pages)

f) References Cited (1 page maximum)

### **3) Resume: 2 pages**

Provide a resume that includes your education, undergraduate and graduate GPA, work experience, honors, awards and publications. (2 pages)

### **4) Letters of recommendation: no page limit**

Two recommendation letters are required. An additional third letter is optional. Inform your references that they will receive an email from the application software, requesting a letter. This request is emailed out as soon as you submit your completed application. The deadline for letters is Friday, May 7, 2021. Please also ask them to use this convention in the file name: "Yourlastname\_recommendation\_letter"

**4a) Advisor letter:** Your academic advisor's letter should discuss your potential as an environmental researcher who is able to link research (natural, physical, social science or engineering research) to societal needs. In the letter, your advisor should also commit to your support, after the DENIN Fellowship, until your degree is completed. Your advisor should write this statement of commitment in the letter.

**4b) Second recommendation letter:** Request your second letter from a faculty member or other individual who knows you and your work well. The second letter could be from a former research mentor, supervisor, or from a faculty member who knows you well from a class.

**4c) Optional third letter:** If you have a community partner, NGO collaborator, state agency contact, private sector partner, former or potential future employer or another person outside of the UD community who will interact with you as part of your research and to whom you will provide your research results, you have the option to ask this person to submit a third letter of reference.

## **HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL**

To apply, submit your materials on the application site, at: <https://www.denin.udel.edu/students-page/denin-environmental-fellows/denin-environmental-fellows-application/>.

After you have completed all required fields, and have uploaded your proposal narrative and resume as a single .pdf file, hit the Submit button.

When you hit the submit button, your references will receive a request for letters of recommendation.

## **REPORTING AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

As noted earlier, fellowship recipients are funded through several sources, including contributions from DENIN donors, and through external grants, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) EPSCoR RII grant to Delaware, in which DENIN is a partner. Fellows will be asked to complete a brief report annually, and this information will be provided to the National Science Foundation. Fellows may be invited to meet with donors, and to take part in DENIN External Advisory Board meetings. Fellows will also be required to attend the Annual Delaware EPSCoR State Meeting and to make presentations to the DENIN or EPSCoR communities.

**Questions?** Contact Jeanette Miller, Associate Director, Delaware Environmental Institute, at Jeanette(at)udel.edu.

**All of your online application documents are due by 5:00 PM, April 30, 2021.**  
**Your letters of reference are due on Friday, May 7, 2021.**

### **Application FAQs:**

Q: How many students from each lab group can apply for a DENIN Fellowship?

A: One applicant from a given lab group is permitted. Please confer with your advisor about your application.

Q: How are written applications evaluated?

A: A review committee including current DENIN Fellows, DENIN staff, UD faculty, and external members review and score each application, using a rubric. Evaluation factors include:

Clarity and persuasiveness of the written proposal;  
Connection to societal need and solutions to environmental challenges;  
Strength of the letters of recommendation;  
Interest in joining the DENIN Fellows, and creativity of ideas for the group;  
Adherence to application guidelines and care taken with the proposal.

Q: What happens after I submit my written proposal?

A: After letters are received on May 7, the review committee will begin to read and evaluate applications. Finalists for the fellowship will be invited for an interview in summer 2021, which may be conducted virtually. The interview will consist of a brief presentation, followed by Q&A.