



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Grain Legumes

Legume Scholars Program

Nomination Package

November 2014

Deadline for Submissions – 19 December 2014

Materials Included:

1. Request for Nominations for Legume Scholars Program
2. Checklist for Submitting Nominations
3. Guidelines for Letters of Interest
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Request for Nominations for Legume Scholars Program

Graduate Degree Scholarship Awards

The **Legume Scholars Program** is requesting nominations of candidates for PhD and MSc graduate program scholarships. This new program will support the graduate study of promising young scientists from developing countries with a commitment to pursuing research careers in disciplines and thematic areas involving grain legumes. The ultimate goal of the Legume Scholars Program is to strengthen the capacity of strategic research institutions in developing countries to contribute to the growth and development of the grain legume sectors.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Be a scholar or student with high academic potential and interest in pursuing a career in grain legume research
- Be a citizen of a developing country in Africa, Asia or Latin America with significant production of one or more grain legumes
- Be early in one's professional career, preferably under 35 years of age (greater age flexibility for female candidates)
- Possess English language proficiency adequate to satisfy admission requirements of U.S. universities
- Be committed to returning to the home country and pursuing a career on legume research with a national agriculture research organization (NARO), agriculture university or a CGIAR center
- Be nominated by and have a strong recommendation from a scientist conducting research on one or more of the targeted legumes in a USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab (e.g., the Legume Innovation Lab, Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab), the CGIAR (e.g., CIAT, ICARDA, ICRISAT, IITA) or in a developing country NARO or agriculture university

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CHARACTERISTICS

1. Opportunity to pursue a MSc or PhD degree at a U.S. university, preferably under the supervision of a USAID Innovation Lab scientist, in a program area that contributes to the development of the targeted legume sector and strengthens the research capacity of an institution in the candidate's home country. Potential areas of study may include agriculture economics, crop physiology, food science, gender studies, nutrition, plant breeding and genetics, plant protection, soil science, and the social sciences. (Note: One or two scholarship recipients may be placed in an advanced non-U.S. university if a suitable graduate program is not available and/or the English language requirement for admission cannot be met.)
2. Scholarship benefits for the MSc or PhD program include:
 - Full tuition and living expenses for 1.5 – 2 years for MSc and 3 – 4 years for PhD programs
 - Medical insurance coverage
 - Round-trip airfare and related travel expenses
 - Personal computer

- Field research at a CGIAR Center or in a developing country research institution
 - Participation in leadership and professional development workshops
3. Compliance with USAID “Participant Training” regulations; all trainees will be given assistance in applying for a J-1 Visa with requirement to return to home country for two years following graduation. The J-1 Visa application process will be handled by the Legume Scholars Program Office at Michigan State University, not by the university where the student will be placed. USAID strongly discourages dependents from accompanying trainees.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE

1. Nomination packages for Legume Scholars Program candidates should be prepared by eligible scientists in consultation with interested developing country candidates. The following documents should be included in the nomination package:
 - **Nomination Form** (completed by the nominating scientist)
 - **Evaluation of Candidate Form** (completed by the nominating scientist)
 - **Letter of Interest** (prepared by the candidate expressing interest in pursuing a graduate degree program and stating commitment to return to home country/region following graduate study to pursue a research career at an agriculture research institution, focusing on grain legumes. (See “Guidelines for Letters of Interest” document.)
 - **Curriculum Vitae** (current CV of the nominated Legume Scholar candidate)
 - **Transcript(s) of academic records** (BS and MSc if completed—including grades for course work completed)
 - **Records of grades** obtained from English Language Proficiency (**TOEFL**) and Graduate Record Examinations (**GRE**) exams. (Note: Nomination packages may be submitted without TOEFL and GRE grades. Selection of Legume Scholars Award recipients, however, will be contingent upon obtaining satisfactory grades on these exams since they are required for admission to graduate programs at U.S. universities. Financial assistance is available to cover the costs of these exams.)
2. Nomination forms and associated documents can be downloaded from http://legumelab.msu.edu/news/legume_scholars_program_award. Questions regarding eligibility or the application and selection process can be directed to the Legume Scholars Program Office (legumescholar@anr.msu.edu), the Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab (Dave Hoisington, Director, davehois@uga.edu) or the CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes (Noel Ellis, Director, N.Ellis@cgiar.org).
3. Completed nomination package documents must be submitted electronically in PDF format as attachments to an email to legumescholar@anr.msu.edu on or before Friday, **December 19, 2014**, for an August/September 2015 start of the graduate program. Review the CHECKLIST document before sending.

SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION PROCESS

Nomination packages will be reviewed and evaluated after the closing date for submissions. A Selection Committee with representatives from the sponsoring programs and USAID will be responsible for reviewing nominations and selecting Legume Scholars Program award recipients. Interviews will likely

be conducted with short-listed nominees. Nominees will be informed as soon as possible of selection decisions. Selected scholarship recipients will be expected to cooperate with the Legume Scholars Program Office at Michigan State University in completing the TOEFL and GRE exams, admission applications to university graduate schools, visa applications, and arrangements for international travel.

SPONSORING PROGRAMS

CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes

<http://grainlegumes.cgiar.org/>

The CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes is a collaborative ten-year research program that focuses on improving chickpea, cowpea, common bean, faba bean, groundnut, lentil, pigeonpea and soybean crops grown by poor smallholder families in five target regions to combat poverty, hunger, malnutrition and environmental degradation.

The Program is a global research for development collaboration involving scientists at four member institutions of the CGIAR Consortium with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) as the lead center along with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) CIAT, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) along with several public and private institutes and organizations, governments, and farmers worldwide.

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Grain Legumes (Legume Innovation Lab)

www.legumelab.msu.edu/

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Grain Legumes (Legume Innovation Lab) is a research and institutional capacity strengthening program (2007–2017) funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by Michigan State University. The program contributes to economic growth and food and nutrition security through knowledge and technology generation that strengthens grain legume (e.g., bean, cowpea, etc.) value chains in developing countries of Africa and Latin America. To achieve its objectives, the program supports multidisciplinary collaborative research between U.S. universities, National Agriculture Research Organizations (NAROs), agriculture universities and the CGIAR in twelve USAID Feed the Future focus countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Peanut Productivity and Mycotoxin Control (Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab)

<http://pmil.caes.uga.edu/index.html>

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Peanut Productivity and Mycotoxin Control, the Peanut & Mycotoxin Innovation Lab (PMIL) for short, is supported by USAID and administered by the University of Georgia. The mission of the PMIL is to apply leading innovative U.S. science to improve peanut (groundnut) production and to improve food safety by mitigating the negative impacts of contamination of peanut and other crops from toxins produced by soil-borne fungal pathogens (known as “mycotoxins”) in developing countries. PMIL collaborative research and institutional strengthening projects are focused in five Feed the Future countries: Ghana, Haiti, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

Checklist for Submitting Nominations to the Legume Scholars Program

Please send scanned (PDF) or WORD copies of all of the following required documents to the Legume Scholars Program Office (legumescholar@anr.msu.edu) by December 19, 2014; PDF documents are preferred but WORD documents are acceptable if you do not have access to Adobe Acrobat:

- **Nomination Form** (completed by the nominating scientist)
- **Evaluation of Candidate Form** (completed by the nominating scientist)
- **Letter of Interest** to be a Legume Scholar (completed by nominated candidate)
- **Curriculum Vitae** of nominated candidate
- **University Transcript(s)** (academic records of BS and MSc, if completed—including grades for course work completed for nominated candidate)
- **Records of Grades** obtained from the Test of English Language as a Foreign Language (**TOEFL**) and Graduate Record Examinations (**GRE**) exams. If TOEFL and GRE exams have not been taken, please indicate. If candidate is selected as a finalist for a Legume Scholars Program Award, arrangements will be made to take the exam and fees will be paid by program.
- **Passport Identification Page** (provide scanned copy of candidate's current passport)

All requested forms can be downloaded from the Legume Innovation Lab web page (www.legumelab.msu.edu/news/legume_scholars_program_award). If one has questions, please email legumescholar@anr.msu.edu.

PLEASE NOTE

1. All nominated candidates will be contacted and informed of their status by the end of January 2015.
2. An initial group of candidates will be selected (a short list) for follow-up interviews, completion of TOEFL and GRE exams and determination of admissibility to university graduate programs.
3. Interviews with Selection Committee members may be conducted either electronically or face-to-face.
4. If not previously completed, short-listed candidates must take an English language proficiency test and a GRE exam (paid for by the Legume Scholars Program Office), that will be used for the selection of Legume Scholars Award finalists and determination of admissibility to graduate programs at specific universities.
5. Although preferences of universities and of major professors are requested in the Nomination Form, ultimate placement of Legume Scholars in specific graduate programs will be determined by the Legume Scholars Program. Placement will be a function of identifying a U.S. professor (preferably an Innovation Lab scientist) willing to advise the Legume Scholar, the quality of the graduate program in the area of interest, and admissibility to the university.
6. Finalists will be informed of their status and will need to cooperate with the Legume Scholars Program Office for further processing.
7. Finalists will be required to undergo a medical examination. *Please see the [USAID Guide for Medical Fitness Standards for Applicants](#) (A-1382).*
8. Legume Scholars Award recipients will need to obtain a U.S. J-1 Visa for graduate study at a university in the United States of America. Due to U.S. policies regarding students on J-1 Visas, scholarship recipients are strongly discouraged from bringing dependents. More information may be found in the [USAID Conditions of Sponsorship form \(A1381-6\)](#).
9. The award recipients should be available for travel by August or September 2015 for Fall 2015 semester/quarter enrollment.

Guidelines for Preparation of Letters of Interest For Legume Scholars Program Scholarship Award

Nominated candidates for Legume Scholars Program Awards are required to prepare and to submit a “Letter of Interest” to accompany the nomination package.

The Letter of Interest should present the candidate’s personal views on the following topics:

- Personal statement of professional goals, including the motivation for pursuing an MSc or a PhD degree program.
- Experience in working in the production, processing or marketing of grain legumes, or in conducting research on grain legumes (provide specifics about this experience and how it influenced one’s professional goals).
- Identify a disciplinary area of interest for graduate study (e.g., agriculture economics, crop physiology, food science, gender studies, nutrition, plant breeding and genetics, plant protection, soil science, the social sciences, etc.) and a potential topic of interest for research focus (illustrative examples of potential research areas might include biological nitrogen fixation, sustainable seed systems, markers for resistance genes to abiotic or biotic stresses, impact assessment, climate change effects on insect pests and integrated control strategies, gut microbiome health, etc.).
- Personal assessment of qualifications to successfully complete a research-intensive graduate program.
- Commitment to pursuing a professional career focused on research on grain legumes, if chosen as a Legume Scholar.
- Commitment to returning to one’s home country following graduation to pursue a career in a National Agriculture Research Organization, an agricultural university or at a CGIAR Center within one’s home country/region.

The Letter of Interest should be typewritten in English using WORD (Times New Roman, 11 pt font, 1.15-inch spacing, 1-inch margins) and not exceed two pages (8.5” x 11”) in length. A signed copy of the Letter of Interest should be scanned (in PDF format, if possible) and included in the Nomination Package submitted by the nominating scientist.

Legume Scholars Program Nomination Packages (See CHECKLIST) should be sent in PDF format as attachments to an email to the Legume Scholars Program Office at legumescholar@anr.msu.edu by Friday, December 19, 2014.

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATE FOR LEGUME SCHOLARS AWARD

(To be completed by Nominating Scientist)

Candidate's Name:
Nominating Scientist's Name:
Nominating Scientist's Institution:

RELATIONSHIP OF NOMINATING SCIENTIST TO CANDIDATE

Amount of time that nominating scientist has known the candidate (in years):

Relationship between the Nominating Scientist and the Candidate (check all that apply):

Instructor of University course completed by student	
Advised University student in conduct of research project	
Supervised candidate in a professional position (technician)	
Co-workers in same institution	
Professional interaction but in different lab or institution	
Family relationship	
Social acquaintance	
Limited direct interaction	
Other:	

EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATE'S POTENTIAL TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE A GRADUATE PROGRAM AND CONDUCT RESEARCH BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

Please check the number that most accurately reflects your assessment of the candidate compared to peers:

	Excellent 5	Strong 4	Average 3	Weak 2	Poor 1
Ability to complete graduate level coursework					
Quantitative and analytical skills					
Ability to think independently and critically					
Ability to think creatively and solve problems					
Ability to communicate ideas effectively orally					
Ability to communicate ideas effectively in writing					
Ability to work in a team and assist others					
Responsible and follows through on tasks					
High ethical standards for personal conduct					
Potential to develop as a leader					
Openness to new ideas and to changed thinking					
Self-motivation and demonstration of initiative					
Ability to function in a cross-cultural environment					
Maturity in social interactions with others					

ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATE'S COMMITMENT TO OBJECTIVES OF LEGUME SCHOLARS PROGRAM			
Please check the number that most accurately reflects your assessment of the candidate:			
	High 3	Medium 2	Low 1
Experience and demonstrated interest in grain legume research			
Commitment to pursuing a career in agriculture research			
Commitment to returning to home country after graduation			
Commitment to service and contributing to the development of home country			
Commitment to working professionally in a NARO, agriculture university or CGIAR			
Interest in collaborating with private sector groups including farmer organizations			

<p>THE NOMINATING SCIENTIST SHOULD PROVIDE A WRITTEN REFERENCE NARRATIVE (500 WORD MAXIMUM) IN THE BOX BELOW ASSESSING THE CANDIDATE'S ACADEMIC POTENTIAL, ABILITY TO CONDUCT INDEPENDENT INNOVATIVE THESIS RESEARCH AND COMMITMENT TO RETURNING TO HOME COUNTRY AFTER GRADUATION TO PURSUE A CAREER IN GRAIN LEGUME RESEARCH</p>

Nominating Scientist's Signature:	Phone Number:
Nominating Scientist's Email Address:	

Please return a PDF copy of this completed form to:
 Legume Scholars Program Office at Michigan State University (legumescholar@anr.msu.edu)

LEGUME SCHOLARS PROGRAM NOMINATION FORM

DEADLINE: 19 December 2014

NOMINATING SCIENTIST INFORMATION

Surname (family name):		
First Name (personal name):	Second Name:	
Mailing Address:		
Telephone:	Email Address:	
Name of Research Institution where employed:	Position:	Research focus on Grain Legumes:

NOMINATED CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Surname (family name) as it appears on passport:		
First Name as it appears on passport:		
Second name as it appears on passport:		
Age:	Gender (circle): M/F	Country of Citizenship (country of current passport):
Mailing Address:		
Phone (mobile):	Phone (other):	
Email 1:		
Email 2:		
Academic Program for undergraduate degree:	University where undergraduate degree was obtained (include country):	Date of undergraduate degree award:
Academic program for Master's degree (if completed):	University where Master of Science degree was obtained (include country):	Date of MSc degree award:
Desired graduate degree program (MSc or PhD) and focus area for study:		

Preference of U.S. Universities offering graduate degree program and preference of Major Professor		
Preference 1 University: Professor:		Preference 2 University: Professor:
Did nominee take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or IELTS (Yes or No):	Examination Date for TOEFL or IELTS, if completed (leave blank if not taken):	Score received on TOEFL or IELTS (leave blank if not taken):
Did nominee take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (Yes or No):	Examination Date for GRE, if completed (leave blank if not taken):	If GRE completed, what scores were received? <u>Quantitative</u> <u>Verbal</u> <u>Analytical</u>
Signature of Nomination Scientist:		Date:

Please send a PDF copy of this completed form to:
 Legume Scholars Program Office at Michigan State University (legumescholar@anr.msu.edu)