

Frequently Asked Questions

General

Who is considered underrepresented in STEM?

Populations historically underrepresented in the sciences include: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Native Pacific Islanders (National Science Foundation, 2017). [Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering](#) and [in ecology, Asian Americans](#) (Kou-Giesbrecht, Sian, 2020. Asian Americans: The Forgotten Minority in Ecology. Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America. July: e01696).

How does this program align with federal priorities?

See National Science and Technology Council, 2018. Charting A Course for Success: America's Strategy for Stem Education. Report by the Committee on STEM Education and E.O. 13985 "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government," 86 Fed. Reg. 7009 (Jan. 20, 2021)

CAST URE

Is it possible to take summer classes in addition to the CAST fellowship?

No. We require a full-time commitment to the summer research experience.

What if the start date for the summer research experience occurs before the end of classes at my college/university?

If selected to participate, we will work to accommodate the academic calendar of your home institution.

Do applicants need to identify as underrepresented to participate in the program?

No. The program, beginning in Summer 2024, is open to all students that will be rising Sophomores (typically graduating in Spring of 2027) and rising Juniors (typically graduating in Spring of 2026). In their application, students should speak to how they advance the goals of the program.

Are students from outside of CASC consortia eligible?

Yes! All students that will be rising Sophomores or rising Juniors in the Summer of 2024 are eligible to apply, regardless of their home institution.

I'm unsure about my eligibility.

If you are unsure of your eligibility, please review your transcript or inquire with your university to determine your academic standing and qualification as a rising Sophomore or Junior in the Summer of 2024.

Do my references have to be academic?

You may choose who provides your references. While they do not have to be academic, we strongly encourage professional references that reflect your potential contributions to the program.

When might my references be contacted?

References for top-ranked applicants may be contacted in February.

Will the webinars be recorded?

Yes, we will record the webinars and they will be posted to our website.

I won't have my transcript by the deadline!

Thanks for your interest in the program! We understand that, for folks who will be rising Sophomores, first-semester transcripts may not be available by the Dec. 30th deadline. That's perfectly fine. We ask that the applicants submit their transcripts via email to casc@usgs.gov. as soon as they are available. Applicants who do not provide a transcript in a timely manner will not be considered by the review panel.