

Q&A from the November 20, 2020 SLSTP Information Session

<https://arc.cnf.io/sessions/tqn1#!/dashboard>:

1. If we wanted the full experience on-site and in person, are we able to do the program again or is it a one-time opportunity?
 - a. It is a one-time opportunity to be an SLSTP Research Associate, but you can apply to come back the next year as a staffer. There are other opportunities – refer to <https://intern.nasa.gov/>
2. Given the virtual nature of this year’s program, will facility tours and other typical recreational activities be possible?
 - a. In 2020, there were virtual tours. These are dependent of the schedule (mentor-driven project and group project). We plan on having virtual tours for 2021.
3. Are applicants with research experience outside of space sciences (other life science disciplines) encouraged to apply?
 - a. Yes
4. Due to the virtual transition, is practical laboratory experience still of significant value, or are programming skills a greater focus?
 - a. Some of the projects call out programmatic, computation, coding, etc. skills. Prior knowledge and background in practical laboratory experience may be beneficial; dependent on the project(s).
5. What is the expected workload for the summer? Is it equivalent of a full-time job or is it considered part-time or does it vary?
 - a. Full-time (40 hrs/week), with expected support over the weekend (e.g., group project, virtual trips, other). Work-life balance.
6. Could you please elaborate further on the requirements to participate in a conference (with respect to the Program Requirements Questions)? My confusion arises from the idea that working with a mentor in this context implies that any abstract for submission for the ASGSR must be approved by the mentor. I am also unsure whether the mentoring that would take place throughout the summer would result in the mentor being a co-author to the RA’s paper.
 - a. Your mentor will work closely with you to develop your project and abstract. They will work with you throughout the program. The goal is to get your research presented at a conference, and potentially have a publication.
7. Can students graduating this fall that are continuing to graduate school also apply?
 - a. Yes, as long as you are entering into graduate school (1st year going into fall 2021).
8. Can this opportunity be given to recent graduates, especially if it has been less than a year?
 - a. Yes, as long as you are entering into graduate school (1st year going into fall 2021).
9. If we have qualifications that are applicable to more than one project, can we write them multiple times?
 - a. Yes, as applicable. Your project choice statements should be written with the project of interest in mind (make each statement stand out).
10. If our application is denied for the 2021 SLSTP, can we still apply for the 2022 SLSTP?
 - a. Yes, as long as you meet the requirements.
11. What about PhD applicants?
 - a. Yes, as long as you meet the requirements.

12. Given the virtual nature of the program, could age requirement be dropped to 16?
 - a. Case-by-case basis. Consider the GL4HS program for those under 18 - <https://genelab.nasa.gov/internships/GL4HS>.
13. How would you suggest demonstrating interest in space if you have no space research experience?
 - a. Most of our applicants do not have space research experience. Speak to your interests in space, how it may apply to your future career/goal, etc.

WebEx chat during information session:

1. Are permanent residents able to apply to SLSTP?
 - a. *Citizens of US territories Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern Marianas are U.S. citizens. Permanent Resident foreign nationals, Legal Resident Aliens, Work Permit holders, and Illegal Immigrants are not eligible.
2. What is the expected notification date?
 - a. We anticipate extending offers mid/late February 2021 for the summer 2021 session.
3. Do NASA labs also host NSF REUs or is SLSTP the only undergrad internship program?
 - a. Check out <https://intern.nasa.gov/>
4. Can you upload unofficial transcripts?
 - a. Yes, unofficial transcripts are requested. You may be required to provide an official transcript later.
5. Are mentors aware of the ranking that you select?
 - a. Yes, mentors are aware of the ranking you select.
6. What is the length of these statements about why you want to choose each project?
 - a. You can make them as long or short as you would like. You are encouraged to include all relevant research/lab/class experience that relates to the project. Also make sure to include why you are passionate about that project.
 - b. Be mindful of the researchers reviewing your application. Demonstrate your excellent writing skills in terms of conveying your message regarding your interest and applicable skills for each of the choices.
7. Will mentors have access to our personal statements when reviewing our application?
 - a. Yes, mentors will have access to your personal statements.
8. I am interested in the backgrounds that the alumni had at the time they first applied. How much lab experience, any NASA experience, astro coursework...?
 - a. Alum Jordan - I studied Biology and International Studies in undergrad, and worked in a lab researching the evolution of antibiotic resistance in hospital pathogens. I had also just joined a student engineering team where we constructed a Mars-style rover for life detection in a desert environment. So in short, I had two years of lab experience, no NASA experience, and no astro coursework!
 - b. Alum Ama – The more experience the better. Any experience related to the research of interest, and demonstrated interest in space is helpful.
 - c. Alum Tristan – Worked on high altitude balloon missions, but never had direct lab or biology experience. Anything relevant (e.g., experience, extracurriculars) to the project should be captured in your application.
9. Advice for current high school students who hope to be SLSTP interns?

- a. Incoming undergraduate junior/senior, or first year graduate students (starting in fall 2021) are eligible. High school students are not eligible for SLSTP. However, another program GL4HS is a NASA internship geared towards high school students. please refer to - <https://genelab.nasa.gov/internships/GL4HS>. GL4HS is virtual in 2021.
10. Is this a paid internship?
- a. Yes, this is a paid internship.