



SME Ph.D. Fellowship Grant Guidelines and Selection Criteria



Overview

The SME Ph.D. Fellowship Grant (the “Fellowship”) is intended to provide financial support to qualified candidates with professional experience, and a desire to pursue an academic career, with the means of acquiring a doctoral degree in the field of Mining or Extractive Metallurgy/Mineral Processing Engineering (EM/MP engineering) at a U.S. accredited university. Fellowship payment is made directly to the student.

Grants receiving complete funding from an individual, company or organization in any given year(s) may qualify for “naming rights” recognizing the individual, company or organization as the Grant underwriter.

Timeline

The Fellowship adheres to the following timeline:

Date	Task
Dec. 15, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025	Applications accepted
March 1	Selection Committee begins review of applications
April/May	Interviews are conducted for top candidates
June	Final approval from SME & SMEF Boards
July 1	Fellowship awardees announced
August 15	First disbursement of Fellowship funds
SME Annual Conference	Recipient(s) recognized at various SME functions

Qualifications

Fellowship applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. The Fellowship is strictly limited to graduate students who are currently enrolled or have been formally admitted in a U.S. academic institution and are/will be majoring in a Ph.D. or D. Engr. degree granting program with emphasis in Mining Engineering or EM/MP.
 2. Must be a full-time graduate student during the duration of the Fellowship and demonstrate satisfactory progress towards degree completion with the intent of accepting a tenure-track academic position at a U.S. academic institution with emphasis in Mining Engineering or EM/MP Engineering.
 3. Must be enrolled in degree granting program that requires an in-residence, doctoral-level research experience.
 4. Candidates currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program must be in good academic standing, as defined by their university, at the time their application is submitted.
 5. Applicants must sign a nonbinding declaration that he/she understands that the Fellowship is intended to support a candidate who is committed to pursuing a professional career as a tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor at a U.S. academic institution as stated above.
 6. Both international and U.S. citizens are eligible to apply for the Fellowship.
 7. Preference will be given to applicants with industry experience.
 8. Must be an SME member in good standing.
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Application Requirements	<p>Interested candidates will submit the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General application form (<i>last part of this document</i>) ○ Curriculum vitae ○ Proof of graduate enrollment ○ Official academic transcript(s) in English (scanned copies are acceptable) ○ 3 letters of recommendation (including one from the student’s academic advisor). Such letters should reference previous academic performance and professional experience. The recommendation from your academic advisor will be submitted by your advisor directly to the selection committee using a provided form. ○ Proof of visa status (if applicable) ○ Applicants will be asked to sign a release form giving the committee permission to contact their advisor to obtain more information as needed during the selection process
	<p>Candidate’s packet of information may be submitted to: SME Academic Grant Program 12999 E. Adam Aircraft Circle Englewood, CO 80112-4167</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-or-</p> <p>scan all documents as a single pdf (8.5 x 11) and email to: AcademicGrants@smenet.org</p>
Recipient Selection	<p>The Education Sustainability Committee “The Committee” will conduct: (1) a review of applications, and (2) a formal interview of the top candidates. Once the final candidates have been selected, their names will be submitted to the SME Board of Directors and the SME Foundation Board of Trustees for final approval. Results of review and rankings are strictly confidential and will not be released.</p>
Award	<p>The Ph.D. Fellowship is intended to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other school related expenses, as well as a stipend for living expenses, at a rate of \$60,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years. Successive grant years are not automatically renewed; awardees wishing to continue the Grant for successive years must submit a written statement of intent along with their semi-annual reports by December 15 and June 15. The semi-annual reports and statement of intent will be reviewed by the Committee and the executive committees of both the SME Board of Directors and SME Foundation Board of Trustees; the recipient’s eligibility to continue will be approved by the Education Sustainability Committee and conveyed to the recipient. The intent of the Grant is to provide the recipient with support towards achieving a Ph.D. and securing a faculty placement. No additional fellowship payments will be made after the final revised version of the defended thesis is submitted and accepted by the academic institution, thereby fulfilling the mission and intent of the Grant.</p>
Recipient Obligations	<p>The awardee will submit a semi-annual report that summarize the following activities from the preceding six months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Courses taken (along with credit hours and grades earned). ○ Statement of research and scholarly activities (publications and presentations). ○ Statement of teaching activities. ○ Major accomplishments, awards and milestones. ○ Timeline for completion of PhD with specific milestones progress--list activities needed and their current status (ie: not started, in progress with % or

complete)

- Letter of intent to continue with the next year of the program.

Questions

Questions regarding the SME Ph.D. Fellowship may be directed via email to AcademicGrants@smenet.org.

**SOCIETY FOR MINING, METALLURGY & EXPLORATION
INC.
Ph.D. Fellowship Program
Guidelines and Selection
Criteria**

In accordance with its tactical mission, the SME Education Sustainability Committee (ESC) has sought to identify the prominent challenges threatening the long-term viability of U.S. academic programs offering degrees which emphasize Mining and Mineral Processing/Extractive Metallurgy, as well as formulate meaningful, actionable recommendations to mitigate these challenges. One of the paramount issues of immediate concern is the absence of a viable means (pipeline) to address the current number of faculty vacancies and the looming labor deficiencies associated with retirements over the next decade.

The challenges associated with faculty scarcity is cumulative and extends from recruiting appropriate candidates with a desire for pursuing a career in academia and the ability to successfully complete a Ph.D. degree, through the tenuous process of achieving tenure at a given academic program. To address this threat, SME and the SME Foundation are supporting a two-fold initiative: (1) the development of a 4-year graduate fellowship for qualified Ph.D. students who are committed to pursuing careers in academia and (2) the awarding of Career Development Grants intended to assist new faculty in establishing research and publication records necessary to achieve tenure and promotion.

This document provides an overview of the program guidelines and selection criteria for the SME Ph.D. Fellowship program:

Program Structure

This program is intended to provide financial support to qualified candidates with professional experience, and a desire to pursue an academic career, with the means of acquiring a doctoral degree in the field of Mining or Extractive Metallurgy/Mineral Processing Engineering (EM/MP engineering) at a U.S. accredited university. The SME Ph.D. Fellowship (the “Fellowship”) is intended to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other school related expenses, as well as a stipend for living expenses, at a rate of \$60,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years. However, successive grant years are not automatically renewed.

Ultimately, the success of the Fellowship program will be measured by the number of doctoral students that succeed in finishing their degree programs, accept tenure-track academic positions at U.S. institutions with accredited mining or EM/MP engineering programs, and achieve tenure. While this is a long-term metric, specific stages of the program will be assessed annually, including the academic performance of Fellowship recipients, graduation rates relative to the time required for degree completion, and successful employment in an academic department.

Eligibility Guidelines

- The designated name of the award is the “SME Ph.D. Fellowship”.
- The Fellowship is strictly limited to graduate students who are currently enrolled or have been formally accepted in a U.S. academic institution and are/will be majoring in a Ph.D. or D. Engr. degree granting program with emphasis in Mining Engineering or EM/MP engineering.
- Applicants must be a full-time graduate student during the duration of the Fellowship and demonstrate satisfactory progress towards degree completion. The term “full-time” and “satisfactory progress” will be defined by the policies of their academic institution and annually verified and approved by SME.
- In addition, all applicants must be enrolled in degree granting program that require an in-residence, doctoral-level research experience in order to be deemed eligible. This requirement will effectively prohibit doctoral students who seek to earn their degrees on-line from qualifying for the Fellowship.
- Candidates currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program must be in good academic standing, as defined by their university, at the time their application is submitted.
- As part of the application process, potential applicants must sign a nonbinding declaration that he/she understands that the Fellowship is intended to support a candidate who is committed to pursuing a professional career as a tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor at a U.S. academia institution with

accredited undergraduate degrees programs with emphasis in either mining engineering or EM/MP. This declaration does not, in any way, establish a legal obligation for the Fellowship recipient but is merely intended to clearly emphasize the program objectives.

- Both international and U.S. citizens are eligible to apply for the Fellowship. Responsibility for compliance with visa and immigration regulations regarding the ability to legally study and work in the U.S. is solely that of the Fellowship recipient. Proof of a valid student visa will be required for international students as part of the application process.
- Preference will be given to applicants with industry experience.
- Despite the program's objectives, SME is not responsible for the placement of Fellowship recipients upon the completion of their degree nor does SME in any way guarantee employment in an academic position upon graduation.
- The Fellowship is awarded entirely at the discretion of SME and the availability of funding. This includes any implied obligations associated with the continuation of Fellowship awards after the first year; successive grant years are not automatically renewed.

Recipient Obligations

- Fellowship recipients must remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress towards the completion of their degree, as defined by the policies of their university for a full-time graduate student.
- Each awardee will submit a semi-annual report by December 15th and June 15th that summarizes the following activities from the preceding six months:
 - Courses taken (along with credit hours and grades earned).
 - Statement of research and scholarly activities (publications and presentations).
 - Statement of teaching activities.
 - Major accomplishments, awards, and milestones.
 - Timeline for completion of PhD with specific milestones progress--list activities needed and their current status (ie: not started, in progress with % or complete)
 - Letter of intent to continue with the next year of the program (June report only).
- Recipients will be asked to sign a release form giving the committee permission to contact their advisor to obtain more information as needed during the semi-annual review process
- Funding ends after 4 years or when the final revised version of the defended thesis is submitted and accepted by the academic institution, whichever occurs first. Funding will not be extended beyond the four years or after a PhD is earned.
- Successive grant years are not automatically renewed; awardees wishing to continue the Grant for successive years must submit a written statement of intent along with their semi-annual reports by December 15th and June 15th (see above). The semi-annual reports and statement of intent will be reviewed by the Committee and the executive committees of the SME and SMEF Boards; the recipient's eligibility to continue will be approved by the Education Sustainability Committee and conveyed to the recipient. The intent of the Grant is to provide the recipient with support towards achieving a Ph.D. and securing a faculty placement. It is emphasized that the Fellowship Grant is not extendable beyond the date the defended thesis is submitted and accepted by the academic institution.
- In the event a Fellowship recipient fails to maintain good academic standing or achieve satisfactory progress in a given academic period (semester or quarter), a one semester/quarter grace period will be automatically given to rectify the situation. If the student's performance is still unsatisfactory at the conclusion of the grace period, the Fellowship will be forfeited. The student may appeal this forfeiture to the Committee which may extend the grace period by another semester/quarter if the Committee believes it is warranted. The Committee's decision of whether to extend this additional grace period is final.
- In the event a Fellowship recipient goes on and off academic probation repeatedly, each grace period will be viewed as an independent event as long as the student is making satisfactory progress towards degree completion in the opinion of the Committee.
- Each Fellowship recipient must be a member of SME and is strongly encouraged to attend the SME Annual Meeting and participate in the Foundation Dinner, Trustees meeting, and the Educators Forum. Recipients will be strongly encouraged to also participate in conference programming and become involved in professional activities and service.

Fellowship Disbursement

- As with other SME student scholarships, the Fellowship will be disbursed directly to the recipient in order to mitigate restrictions on how these funds are used and the imposition of administrative fees levied by a university. As structured, no administrative fees will be allocated from the Fellowship to the student's home department or university.
- Fellowship funds will be disbursed in equal amounts around August 15th and January 15th.
- For continuing Fellowship recipients (graduate recipients rolling from one year to the next), confirmation of academic standing and compliance with the terms of the Fellowship will need to be performed prior to the disbursement of funds in subsequent academic periods.
- While the Fellowship is intended to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other school-related expenses, the individual financial needs and circumstances of graduate students vary widely. As such, a given recipient may use these funds for living expenses, insurance, research, childcare, and "other expenses that are not directly required for enrollment". By Federal regulation, these latter expenses may be considered as non-qualifying and subject to federal tax. It will be the responsibility of the Fellowship recipients to comply with these IRS regulations and seek professional assistance if necessary. Under no circumstances shall SME or the SME Foundation assume any tax liabilities that stem from the awarding of these Fellowships. Whenever possible, SME will provide information to Fellowship recipients on the potential tax ramifications incurred as a consequence of accepting the grant (IRS Publication 970) but will not assume any substantive role or responsibility for this tax liability.
- As previously outlined, SME reserves the right to reduce or eliminate the financial allotment associated with each Fellowship for any reason, including insufficient resources to fund the Fellowship obligations.

Application Process

- Notice about the Fellowship will be distributed through *Mining Engineering* magazine, SME eNews, email correspondence, the SME website, and other appropriate social media.
- Interested candidates will submit a hard-copy application package through the mail, or a digital copy via email, that includes the following information:
 - General Application Form (below)
 - Curriculum Vitae.
 - Proof of Graduate Enrollment.
 - Official academic transcript(s) in English (scanned copies are acceptable).
 - SME PhD Fellowship Release Form (below)
 - 3 Letters of Recommendation (including one from the student's academic advisor). The recommendations will be submitted by your references directly to the selection committee using the forms provided below.
 - Proof of Visa Status (if applicable).
- SME and the Selection Committee reserve the right to request additional information from applicants as needed.
- The selection process is comprised of two fundamental stages: (1) committee review of applications, and (2) a formal interview with the top candidates. Once the awardees have been selected, their names will be submitted to the SME Board of Directors and the SME Foundation Board of Trustees for final approval.
- Fellowship finalists may be subject to routine background and credit checks.
- Candidate selection will be performed by a simple majority vote of all participating members. In the event of a tie, the SME Foundation President will serve as the tiebreaker. The results of this voting process will be held in strictest confidence.
- The specific criteria used in the selection process will include but is not limited to the candidate's previous academic performance, professional experience, research/teaching interests and experience, potential to graduate, career interests/ambitions, and reputation.
- While it is imperative for the success of the program that the Fellowships are awarded to the best available candidates, the Committee will be cognizant of the distribution of awards between the two academic emphasis areas (Mining Engineering and EM/MP engineering) and strive for an equitable balance between them.
- In the event that the Committee believes that the applicant pool does not possess viable candidates, the Fellowship can be withheld and not awarded in a given year.

- Verification of enrollment and other pertinent information for each of the Fellowship finalists will be performed by SME Staff.
- The selection process will be confidential.

Application Schedule

The application acceptance period will open December 15, 2024 and close January 31, 2025.

- Dec 15: Fellowship advertisement is released via the SME website, social media, electronic media, *Mining Engineering*, and email notifications to academic departments and student chapters.
- March 1: SME Fellowship & Career Grant Selection Committee begins review of applications.
- April/May: Interviews are conducted for top candidates.
- June: Final approval from SME and SME Foundation Boards.
- July 1: Fellowship Grant awardees are announced.
- August 15: First disbursement of Fellowship funds.

Questions

All communications and/or questions regarding the SME Ph.D. Fellowship Grant may be directed via email to AcademicGrants@smenet.org.

SME PhD Fellowship Grant General Information Form

Note: Completed form should be submitted as a PDF.

Responses to questions are restricted to the size of the field. Font size should not go below 11 points, and the number of pages submitted is limited to 15 pages; not including attachments.

Section I. General Information:

Personal Information

Legal Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Family/Last/Surname

First

Middle

Gender: Male Female

U.S. Academic Institution of Education: _____

Department: _____

Advisor Name, Phone, email: _____

Department Head Name, Phone, email: _____

Are you currently enrolled in a PhD program? Yes No

If No, are you admitted into a PhD program? Yes No If so, when is the intended starting point: Fall _____ or Spring _____

Contact Information

Cell phone: _____ Office phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Education

#	Degree:	Institution/University:	GPA	Date: (mm/yyyy)

Note - Add more as an attachment, if needed

Professional History

Name of Company	F/P/I	Responsibilities

Note - Add more as an attachment, if needed; 1. Full time, Part Time or Internship

Residency

U.S. Citizens – In which state do you currently hold legal residency status: _____

Do you hold dual citizenship in another country? No Yes If yes, which one? _____

U.S. Permanent Residents – Country of Citizenship: _____

International Applicants – Country of Citizenship: _____

If you are not a US Citizen/Permanent Resident, what is your Visa Status?

Academic Standing

For current PhD Students: How long have you been in the current institution: _____

Number of credit hours completed: _____

What is your status of progress towards your degree:

Just started

Completed qualifying exam, outcomes:

Completed comprehensive exam (thesis proposal defense), outcomes:

Thesis proposal approved (all but defense), outcomes: _____

How long before you can defend your thesis/dissertation: _____ Years _____ Months

Do you feel you have sufficient mentorship towards your thesis: Yes No Not sure

Do you have financial support: Yes No (Note: Answering Yes does NOT disqualify the applicant)

For prospective PhD Applicants: Do you have admission for PhD program: Yes No

If No, You are not qualified to pursue this Fellowship.

If Yes, please provide the details of the advisor, program/degree, and institution if different than above.

What are your most critical challenges?

What are your short-term career objectives?

What are your long-term career objectives?

What are the motivating factors that are encouraging you to seek a career in academia?

Have you researched the general requirements necessary to achieve tenure as an Assistant/Associate Professor? Yes No

Section II. Teaching:

Have you ever taught or were you a TA for a course? Yes No If Yes, please fill the following table.

Courses Taught:

#	Title:	University/Dept:	Explain duties:	Role ¹

Note: 1. define the role, i.e., instructor, grader, lab assistant, guest lecturer, etc.

Please describe your experience and philosophy in regard to mentoring and teaching effectiveness:

Section III. Research:

Areas of specialty or research interests:

Explain your current research (if started) or your intended research area and how it will contribute to the industry/field in general:

Section IV. Publications:

Provide Totals and include a complete list in an appendix.

Category:	Totals:
Published books or book chapters	
Published peer reviewed journal papers	
Published conference papers	
Invited presentations	
Other presentations	

Note: the appendix should be a complete list including a description of your role as a co-author, e.g.: *Luttrell, G. H., Kiser, M., Yoon, R.-H., Noble, A., Rezaee, M., Bhagavatula, A. and Honaker, R.Q., 2019. A Field Survey of Rare Earth Element Concentrations in Process Streams Produced by Coal Preparation Plants in the Eastern United States. Journal of Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration 36(5), 889-902. Role: Provided funding and analytical support; 10% Responsibility. IF = ???.*

Section V. Experience in Mining and Mineral Industry:

How has your professional work experience influenced your decision to pursue a career in academia? What has your industry experience taught you that will help in your academic career?

Section VI. Service Activities:

Professional society memberships:

Name of the Organization:	Service Period: MM/YY To YY/MM	Committees or Assignments:

Outreach activities:

Name of the Organization:	Time / Duration:	Description of Activities:

Other professional or public service activities? Please explain:

Section VII. Planned Activities for the Grant:

What topic(s) you will be working on and how does this grant funding affect your ability to earn your PhD?

By submitting this application, you certify that the information provided is accurate. Renewal of the fellowship is on yearly basis and based on positive evaluation of the activities of the recipient. SME reserves the right to stop the fellowship due to budgetary issues or otherwise if it deems the performance of the recipient is unsatisfactory, at its sole discretion.

Please have the following items submitted directly to the selection committee via email to AcademicGrants@snet.org

1. Three recommendations; one of which from your Advisor, using the attached forms.



303-948-4200
Fax: 303-973-3845
E-mail: sme@smenet.org
www.smenet.org
12999 E. Adam Aircraft Circle
Englewood, CO 80112

SME PhD Fellowship Application Release Form

In exchange for the consideration of this Application by the SME Education Sustainability Committee, I, _____, the Applicant described above, hereby represent and warrant the accuracy of the information provided in this Application. In support of that representation and warranty, I hereby authorize SME, the SME Foundation, the SME Education Sustainability Committee and their respective officers, directors, employees and agents (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the SME Group"), to take such reasonable steps as they deem necessary and appropriate, in their discretion, to confirm the accuracy of such information and otherwise to obtain such additional information that they believe to be relevant to this Application, including my eligibility and qualifications for the Grant ("Confirmations"). Actions taken to obtain Confirmations may include, but are not limited to, making inquiries to any academic institutions that I attend or have attended that are named in the application, including professors, instructors or teachers at such institutions, for additional input.

I acknowledge that I am waiving various rights to privacy that I may otherwise have under various laws and the rules and regulations of such academic institutions, and I hereby authorize the SME Group to inform any persons or entities from which Confirmations are sought of my consent to the Confirmations and my waiver of those privacy protections.

I also release any and all claims I may have now or in the future against the SME Group or any one of them for any injuries, losses or liabilities that I may suffer on account of or related to the Confirmations.

Finally, I indemnify and hold harmless the SME Group against any third party claims ever brought against any one of them related to or arising from the Confirmations.

Signature of Applicant (written or electronic)

Date

SME PhD Fellowship Letter of Recommendation---
To be completed by your Advisor

APPLICANT: Please email this form and a copy of your completed application to your Advisor

Dear Advisor,

Your student is applying for the SME PhD Fellowship. As part of the application process, we are asking you to fill out the following questionnaire and **submit it directly to the selection committee via email by January 31, 2025** at academicgrants@smenet.org. The information you share on this document will remain confidential and will not be shared outside of the selection committee.

If you have any questions, please contact the SME Education Sustainability Committee at the email address above.

Thank you for your input.

Name of Applicant: _____

School: _____

Your Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please confirm that you have reviewed the applicant's application and can confirm its accuracy.

Yes, I have reviewed the application and confirmed its accuracy. _____ Initials

Please describe the candidate's career goals, as you understand them, and your assessment of their potential to reach those goals. Have they expressed a sincere interest in an academic career?

SME PhD Fellowship Letter of Recommendation--- Advisor; page 2

Please describe the candidate's biggest strengths

Please describe any areas for improvement

Can you describe your regular interactions with the candidate and what are your observations of the student in these different settings?

Is there anything you would like the committee to know about the applicant and/or their application?

SME PhD Fellowship Letter of Recommendation---
To be completed by your two other references

APPLICANT: Please email this form to your other two references

Dear Reference,

This faculty member is applying for the SME Academic Career Development Grant. As part of the application process, we are asking you to fill out the following questionnaire and **submit it directly to the selection committee via email by January 31, 2025** at academicgrants@smenet.org. The information you share on this document will remain confidential and will not be shared outside of the selection committee.

If you have any questions, please contact the SME Education Sustainability Committee at the email address above.

Thank you for your input.

Name of Applicant: _____

School: _____

Your Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

What are the applicant's biggest strengths?

What are the applicant's potential areas for improvement?

SME PhD Fellowship Letter of Recommendation--- Other Reference; page 2

In your observation, how well does the applicant interact with others?

Please describe a time where you personally observed the candidate's commitment to growth.

The objectives of the PhD Fellowship Program is to provide financial support to qualified candidates with professional experience, and a desire to pursue an academic career, with the means of acquiring a doctoral degree in the field of Mining or Extractive Metallurgy/Mineral Processing Engineering (EM/MP engineering) at a U.S. accredited university. The SME Ph.D. Fellowship is intended to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other school related expenses, as well as a stipend for living expenses, at a rate of \$60,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years. The success of the Fellowship program will be measured by the number of doctoral students that succeed in finishing their degree programs, accept tenure-track academic positions at U.S. institutions with accredited mining or EM/MP engineering programs, and achieve tenure.

In your opinion, why is the applicant deserving of the SME PhD Fellowship? Please align your comments to the stated objectives of the program.

Is there anything you would like the committee to know about the applicant and/or their application?