



Undergraduate Research in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, AK

Funded by the U. S. National Science Foundation since 2008, the Polaris Project trains future leaders in Arctic research and informs the public about the Arctic and global climate change. During the annual field expedition to the Yukon Kuskokwim (YK) Delta, Alaska, undergraduate students conduct cutting-edge investigations that advance scientific understanding of the ecological impacts of climate change on tundra ecosystems.

Undergraduate Application Instructions

Students interested in participating in the Polaris Project expedition during summer 2023 should complete their application by **January 9, 2023**. To be eligible to apply, you should currently be an undergraduate student attending any U.S. college or university (preference will be given to students in their sophomore or junior year).

The **2023 expedition is scheduled for approximately July 1 - August 1** and will include two weeks of intensive fieldwork in the YK Delta, followed by two weeks of analysis and synthesis at the Woodwell Climate Research Center (Woodwell). **Participants are required to attend a field safety course at Woodwell on April 8-9, 2023** (all travel expenses will be covered for travel within the United States) **and to participate in bi-weekly or monthly online meetings before the field expedition**. Participants are expected to read relevant scientific papers that will be provided before the field expedition and are encouraged to attend the American Geophysical Union meeting in December 2023. All participants are required to get a physical examination, to provide a detailed medical history prior to the expedition, and to have received all recommended vaccines & boosters for COVID-19.

Expenses associated with travel, room, and board will be covered by the project. There are no tuition or fees, and each student will receive a \$3750 stipend. A portion of this stipend (\$750) will be provided before the field expedition for students to purchase required field gear; the remainder will be provided upon completion of the expedition.

We seek a diverse, mature, synergistic and cooperative group. Our values as a team are centered on practicing and engaging in equitable, inclusive, and empowering forms of behavior. We will be camping in a remote location for two weeks—in close quarters and away from phone and Internet access—conducting scientific investigations under conditions that will be physically and intellectually demanding. Previous camping or field research experience is not required; however, we are looking for evidence that students have the commitment and capacity to overcome obstacles and face challenges with determination, while working effectively as part of a team. We are especially interested in students who are planning to attend graduate school and are open to the possibility of focusing their graduate studies on the Arctic.

The application consists of two letters of recommendation, a concise resume/CV, and answers the questions outlined below. Your answers should reflect your own interests and experiences and should provide evidence that you have the level of desire and commitment to be a successful member of the Polaris Project.

Please answer the following questions. Each answer should require roughly one-third to half a page, two pages maximum for all five (including the optional Question 5).

Question 1: Please describe a specific experience or experiences that helped clarify or strengthen your interest in the environment and/or climate change. What made this experience (or experiences) special?

Question 2: How do justice, equity, and inclusion relate to the ecological impacts of climate change? Please address each one and provide examples.

Question 3: What personal characteristics and/or experiences make you well suited to contribute to the Polaris Project program, particularly in the context of the expedition conditions and values described in the application instructions?

Question 4: What previous scientific research experiences have you had, either through independent research or as part of a course? Briefly describe the research question/objective and findings, and specify your role in the research activity.

Question 5: What additional information (not already addressed from previous questions) do you wish to share with the Polaris Project Program review committee (e.g. short-term and long-term professional goals, something about you that relates to the Polaris Project, or something unique that sets you apart from other applicants)? Answering this question is optional and please be brief.

To apply:

- Complete the online **Application Form** here
 - Attach your Resume/CV into the online application form.
 - Attach your answers to the Essay Questions into the application form.
- Arrange for two **Letters of Recommendation** to be sent to: polaris@woodwellclimate.org. The letters should be written by somebody that knows your intellectual potential and can attest to your ability to work and live with a group of people under these conditions. At least one of your letters should be from a faculty member. To your letter writers:
 - Describe relevant academic or personal experiences you have had with the applicant that lead you to recommend them for the Polaris Project.
 - Provide some detail on the applicant's intellectual ability, motivation, potential for a career in research, and, importantly, ability to work as part of a collaborative team.

All application materials, including the Letters of Recommendation, are due January 9, 2023.