



Graduate Research in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta, Alaska

The Polaris Project is an innovative collaboration among students, teachers, and scientists. 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 YK Delta, undergraduate and graduate students conduct cutting-edge investigations that advance scientific understanding of the changing Arctic.

Graduate Application Instructions

Graduate students interested in participating in the Polaris Project expedition during summer 2017 should complete their application by **January 15, 2017**. Early applications are encouraged. Graduate students studying arctic biogeochemistry or arctic ecosystem ecology at any U.S. university are eligible to apply. Graduate student positions will be limited to 1-3 students per expedition, and graduate students will be expected to assist with mentoring undergraduate research during the expedition.

The 2017 expedition is scheduled for approximately June 28 – July 25 and will include two weeks of intensive fieldwork in the YK Delta, followed by two weeks of analysis and synthesis at Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC). Students will also participate in a pre-expedition weekend field safety course at WHRC and monthly online meetings before and after the field expedition. Each participant will be required to pass a thorough physical examination and provide a detailed medical history.

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 \$3000 stipend. A portion of this stipend (\$500) will be provided before the field expedition for students to purchase required field gear; the remainder will be provided upon completion of the expedition.

The application consists of two letters of recommendation (one from your graduate advisor), a CV, and two essays that answer the questions outlined below. The content of the essays 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.

Essay 1: We seek a diverse, mature, synergistic, and cooperative group. We will be camping together for two weeks under physically uncomfortable conditions, conducting scientific investigations that will be physically, emotionally, 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 physical challenges with determination, while working effectively as part of a team. In this context, how will you contribute to the success of the group? What part of this experience do you think will be most challenging for you, and how will you overcome this challenge? Describe personal characteristics and/or experiences that make you well suited to thrive under these conditions. [one page maximum]

Essay 2: Describe your graduate research plan including your overarching questions/objectives and your general approach. How will a research expedition to the YK Delta contribute to your academic and long-term research goals? Are there any unique resources you would need to accomplish your research goal? Please also briefly describe your experience or interest in mentoring undergraduate students.

[two page maximum]

Once accepted into the program, graduate students and their advisors will be expected to work with Polaris faculty to refine research proposals.

To apply

- Download and fill out the application **Cover Sheet** (available at <http://www.thepolarisproject.org/participate>)
- Complete your application **Essays** as described above
- Please save both files with your last name and first initial as a prefix to the existing file name. For instance, if your name is Robert Crumb, then the files would be named CrumbRNewCover.doc and CrumbREssay.docx
- Email your application cover sheet and essay to apps[at]thepolarisproject.org in an email with a subject heading 'Grad Student Application' plus your name. E.g., 'Grad Student Application CrumbR'
- Arrange for two **Letters of Recommendation** to be sent to: letters[at]thepolarisproject.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 intellectual abilities, potential for a career in research, and motivation of the applicant.

All application materials, including the Letters of Recommendation, are due January 15, 2017.