



National Renewable Energy Laboratory Student Training in Applied Research (STAR) Program

Student and Faculty Fact Sheet

Big Picture

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) Student Training in Applied Research (STAR) internship is a yearlong program that provides undergraduate students from minority-serving institutions a unique introduction to hands-on research in the clean energy industry. Along with the opportunity to conduct meaningful research on clean energy topics, students will be part of a community of like-minded scholars who will be the future leaders of our clean energy transition.

Program Impacts

This is a pivotal moment for the United States to focus on developing the future leaders in the clean energy economy who are studying at minority-serving institutions.

NREL's STAR internship program aims to bridge gaps in education, research, and public service to create career pathways for undergraduate students that

would otherwise not exist and build long-term partnerships with minority-serving institutions to deliver collaborative research opportunities.

Internship Design

The STAR program uses a multipronged approach with two phases: an in-person summer internship and follow-on work during the academic year.

Summer Internship at NREL

The program begins with a 10-week summer internship at NREL where the STAR intern works on a research topic alongside an NREL mentor.

Key dates and benefits

- May 22–July 28, 2023, in Golden, Colorado (or at NREL's Fairbanks Campus for Alaska applicants)
- Benefits cover relocation, housing, professional development, and experiential learning activities as well as a competitive salary.

Academic Year Follow-on Work

Following the summer internship, STAR interns will return to their university and conduct follow-on work guided by their faculty advisors and NREL mentors throughout the 2023–2024 academic year.



Subsequent follow-on work enables students to contribute to cutting-edge research while progressing in their studies at their home universities. Students and faculty will be compensated for their work through subcontracts NREL issues with each participating university.

Mentoring in the STAR program

STAR interns work alongside both NREL mentors and faculty to deliver on joint research objectives and develop professional and technical skills necessary for the workforce or continued education.

Mentor Structure

Mentoring is a layered, complementary system. For this internship program, there is support from both the NREL and university sides.

- **NREL mentor:** Formal mentor with daily hands-on engagement with the intern at the project level during the 10-week summer internship.
- **Faculty advisor:** Faculty mentor who supports the STAR intern from the university side, primarily during the follow-on work portion of the program.



Photo by Werner Slocum (NREL)

Faculty Advisors

The prospective STAR intern should apply to this program with a committed faculty advisor who will guide the intern through follow-on work during the academic year. This faculty advisor's expertise should relate to the research internship their student is

applying for. If selected, the faculty advisor and student will then be paired with an NREL researcher who has similar interests and expertise.

“Throughout the summer, I watched the other STARS take these daunting leaps of faith for the sake of overcoming. I worked with NRELians that were living the NREL mission and better, carving out paths for their own worthy missions. I’ve had the privilege of being supported, inspired, and taught by the most incredible team of empowering women.”

–2022 STAR Intern

Through shared research goals, faculty advisors and NREL researchers can more effectively co-mentor and guide their STAR intern. This technical grouping of NREL researcher, faculty advisor, and undergraduate student was designed to develop long-term relationships built on trust and communication and to foster lasting collaboration and learning exchanges.

Apply to the STAR Program

NREL's University Partnerships Program is currently looking for motivated student and faculty pairs. Student applications will open December 2022. Detailed application instructions are listed on the STAR website. Interested student and faculty pairs should work together to complete the cover letter and letter of recommendation according to application guidelines. Applications that do not contain both the student cover letter and faculty letter of recommendation will not be considered.

Contact

Ellen Morris, Ph.D.

Director, University Partnerships Program
university.partnerships@nrel.gov

Visit the [Student Training in Applied Research internship program](#) web page via www.nrel.gov