

NOTE: Template/exemplar only. FAQs below are for the FALL 2021 admission cycle. Please check back later for an updated version instructions for the Fall 2022 application for admission.

FAQs for Applicants to the RGGS Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology and the RGGS Graduate Fellowships

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The internet links in the instructions do not open. What should I do?

Copy and paste the link that does not open to a new web browser and press Enter. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the most compatible browsers with our system.

I cannot upload my documents. What should I do?

You will not be able to view or upload the required documents until you submit the completed online application form through Step 8. If you submit the application at Step 8 and still cannot upload your documents, contact us at admissions-rggs@amnh.org.

I received an email message that I am a “duplicate.” What does that mean and what should I do?

That means your name appears in our system as someone who applied previously to this or another program at the Richard Gilder Graduate School. We are automatically notified of duplicates and we will clear your record and inform you within 1-2 days that this is done. You will then be able to continue to submit your application.

I want to apply to both the PhD Program in Comparative Biology and the Graduate Fellowship program. Are there two separate applications?

No, there is a single application which you can access via the Comparative Biology application webpage; on the application cover page you may select one or both programs.

What additional documents can I submit in the “Supporting Documents” section?

We will accept any documents that you think useful in support of your application (e.g., publications), however, please do **not** submit a 4th letter of recommendation. All supporting documents must be compiled into a single pdf document.

ELIGIBILITY

What is the minimum required GPA to apply?

There is no minimum requirement.

My TOEFL or IELTS exam score is below the minimum required. Can I still apply?

For the Comparative Biology PhD program, RGGS will only consider applicants who achieve the minimum stated required score on the IELTS or TOEFL exams. However, students applying for partner institution Graduate Fellowships should comply with the score minimums set by the partner institution where they hope to enroll. Test score minimums may differ at each institution. You can retake the exam and submit a new score if it will be received by us by January 15.

I am an international student (not from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada or Commonwealth Caribbean countries) and I am currently enrolled in a college/university program in the USA (or in one of those countries). Is that enough to demonstrate my English Language proficiency?

No, you must have both studied and earned a degree in one of those countries. If you have not yet earned a degree, you must take the TOEFL or IELTS exam.

ENTRANCE EXAMS

Is the GRE test required?

No. RGGS has eliminated the GRE test requirement for Comparative Biology PhD admissions and partner institution Graduate Fellowships. GRE test scores will not be accepted or considered in the application review process

I just took the TOEFL/IELTS exam. What is the deadline to submit my scores? OR I'm not happy with my test score. Can I take the exam again and will you accept the new score?

We must have the scores by January 15 to proceed with your application; we will accept an unofficial copy by that date, with the official copy due by January 15.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

My reference is away and cannot submit the letter of recommendation by the deadline. What should I do?

We must have your letters of recommendation by January 15 at the latest. If your recommender cannot make that deadline, chose another recommender to write on your behalf.

Can I have an AMNH curator/professor write a letter of recommendation for me?

It is highly preferable that letters come from faculty or other experts beyond the AMNH curatorial faculty. If it is impossible for a third recommender from outside the Museum curatorial faculty submit a letter of recommendation on your behalf, you may have an AMNH curatorial faculty member do so.

Can I submit a fourth letter of recommendation?

No

Did you receive my letters of recommendation?

Return to the online application document center and go to "View Previously Submitted Documents;" there you can see if your letters have been received. They are numbered 1 – 3, in the order in which you entered the names and emails. You will not be able to open and read the letters but you will be able to see if they have been received.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY?

I submitted my application; when will I hear back?

The earliest we will notify you will be by mid to late January if you have been selected for an interview.

INTERVIEWS

**When are the interviews? What if I am not available then or cannot travel to New York?
Will accommodations be provided and the cost of travel covered?**

Special Update 2020-2021 admissions:

Due to travel restrictions related to the COVID19 pandemic, admissions interviews will be held remotely via teleconference in late January to mid-February. If you absolutely cannot attend during the scheduled interview dates, we will seek to arrange for alternative dates if possible.