

USGS Mendenhall Research Fellowship Program

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) began the Mendenhall Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program (now called Mendenhall Research Fellowship Program) in 2001 in honor of Walter C. Mendenhall, the fifth Director of the USGS. The Mendenhall Program provides an opportunity for recent PhD graduates (within five years since completion of the doctoral degree) to conduct concentrated research in association with selected members of the USGS professional staff. The Program is intended to provide research fellows with experiences that enhance their personal scientific skills and accomplishments. Through the Mendenhall Program the USGS acquires current expertise to assist in the advancement of its scientific goals.

Mendenhall Fellowships are 2-year appointments with competitive salary and benefits. Mendenhall Fellows are typically granted project expense funds appropriate to the scope of research to be conducted. Postdoctoral research projects under this program have spanned a wide range of scientific topics of interest and relevance to the mission of the USGS. For additional information, please consult the **Project Profiles** section of the Mendenhall Program web site at the following URL: <http://geology.usgs.gov/postdoc>.

What is it like to be a USGS Mendenhall Fellow? Check out the FAQ section of the program web site for some informative quotes from previous Mendenhall Fellows. Another way is to find out directly from a Fellow -- Project Profiles contain their contact information.

Mendenhall postdoctoral research opportunities are advertised through the Program web site. The current set of opportunities will be open for application through September 20, 2013. We anticipate being in a position to make offers (pending availability of funds) late this year.

Program contacts:

Overall Program and Science - Dr. Rama K. Kotra, 703-648-6271, rkotra@usgs.gov,

Human Resources - Ms. Susan Fong-Young, 916-278-9402, sfyoung@usgs.gov

Program Web Site: <http://geology.usgs.gov/postdoc>

Frequently Asked Questions about the Mendenhall Program

Q: Is United States citizenship required?

A: U.S. citizenship is not required for applying for a Mendenhall postdoc position; however those with U.S. citizenship are given priority. More information is available through the Mendenhall Program website.

Q: How many Mendenhall Fellows are hired each year by the USGS?

A: This varies as it is a function of available funding. We aim to hire 15-20 per year.

Q: How many applications are received each year?

A: This varies as a function of the number of Research Opportunities (projects) advertised. It is not unusual to receive over 100 applications in a given year.

Q: Can Mendenhall Program research be done jointly with universities or other institutions?

A: Yes. Scientists at universities and other institutions have been and will continue to serve as Research Advisors (mentors) on Mendenhall projects. Joint funding is an avenue that can be explored.

Q: If the project does not fit neatly into 2 years, can a Mendenhall Fellowship be extended?

A: Mendenhall Fellowships are 2 year appointments. The scope of the project is expected to be appropriate for a 2 year effort. However, it is not unusual for Mendenhall Fellows to secure funding to continue with postdoctoral research at the USGS beyond 2 years (maximum is a total of 4 years).

Q: What is a “reasonable” budget for a Mendenhall postdoctoral project?

A: The budget for a Mendenhall project is expected to be appropriate for the research to be conducted. Project operating expenses span a wide range.

Q: What role do the potential Research Advisors (mentors) of the Fellow have in the selection process?

A: Research Advisors have a role in the review of applications for their Research Opportunity. They provide one assessment of the merit of the applications. A panel of scientists provides another independent assessment. A selection panel utilizes the input from the Research Advisors, the panel of scientists, and adds their own review of applications to choose Mendenhall Fellows.

Q: When will applicants learn about the outcome of their application?

A: The USGS utilizes a two panel application review process. Our goal is to complete application review within 60 days after the application deadline. Applicants will be notified after this.

Q: Will the Mendenhall Fellowship lead to a permanent position with the USGS?

A. No. The Mendenhall Fellowship does not confer any special status in the search for a permanent position with the USGS. Mendenhall Fellows typically obtain permanent USGS positions through a national level public competition.

Q: Are Mendenhall Fellows required to publish papers or give presentations on their work at professional society meetings?

A. Yes. As the postdoctoral fellowship period is the last stage of preparation prior to a fully independent career in research, it is critical for Mendenhall Fellows to take advantage of opportunities to present their work at conferences and it is a primary responsibility to document the results of their research through scientific publications.