



Fellowship Agreement & Promissory Note

DIRECTIONS: Teachers selected to receive a Montana State University Noyce Master Teaching Fellowship (MTF) must read this agreement and promissory note and provide the required information and signature. A DocuSign copy of this agreement and promissory note is to be downloaded and retained by the fellowship recipient and Dr. Fenqjen Luo, the principal investigator (PI) for this MTF program at Montana State University.

I. FELLOWSHIP AGREEMENT

A. I verify that

1. I am a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien.
2. I will demonstrate a commitment to teach and serve for five years in a high-need local educational agency (LEA).
3. I hold a valid teacher certification or licensure.
4. I possess a ___ bachelor's _____ master's degree in education or a STEM discipline.
5. I hold at least two years of teaching experience in science or mathematics.
6. I teach at least 50% of science, mathematics, or both classes in a high-need school district.
7. I understand that this fellowship will end if I cannot meet the expectations of the MTF program at Montana State University.

B. I agree that Master Teaching Fellows (MTFs) are expected to fulfill their teaching service commitment and leadership roles by:

1. Serving as a full-time STEM teacher in a high-need LEA for a total of five years.
2. Assuming a teacher leadership role within the school or high-need LEA where the MTF is employed, while meeting the teaching service commitment in addition to regular classroom responsibilities. Examples of such leadership activities include mentoring, participating in curriculum development, assisting with the planning and implementation of professional development experiences, and contributing to pre-service teacher education.
3. Taking on a leadership role in regional, state, or national professional development at least twice during the five-year fellowship term. Examples of such leadership activities include serving as a member of a regional, state, or national professional education board or facilitating a professional development workshop at a regional, state, or national conference, such as (but not limited to) the MFPE Educators' Conference, STEM Summer Institute, or M³ (Mcubed).

Note: Master Teaching Fellows with elementary certification or licensure should teach mathematics and/or science for at least 50% of their classroom teaching responsibilities.

C. I agree that MTFs are expected to demonstrate professional development growth each year by:

1. Attending the mandatory in-person Montana STEM Summer Institute (SSI) and Annual STEM Leadership Academy and actively engaging in tasks and activities assigned during the program.
2. Participating in most monthly online meetings throughout the academic year and responding to tasks and activities assigned during these meetings.
3. Attending at least one relevant professional development event at the regional, state, or national level and interacting with peer fellows during these meetings to foster collaboration and share insights.

Note: MTFs who are still pursuing their master's degree are encouraged, but not required, to fulfill C.3.

D. I agree that MTFs are expected to demonstrate success in improving student academic achievement in STEM disciplines by:

1. Examining student standardized test results and identifying effective strategies to improve performance in STEM disciplines.
2. Leading the design and facilitation of both formal and informal student STEM activities within schools and communities, such as MathCounts, Science Fairs, or Science Olympiad.
3. Integrating funds of knowledge and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy into STEM classes.

E. I agree to the amount and duration of salary supplements regulated by the National Science Foundation below.

A key aspect of the MTF Track is the provision of annual salary supplements to the Master Teaching Fellows as they fulfill their five-year teaching service commitment. While participating in the program and teaching in a high-need LEA, MTFs must receive a salary supplement of \$10,000 or more per year for each year of the five-year teaching commitment period (for those possessing a master's degree) or each of the four-year teaching commitment (for those possessing only a bachelor's degree) after earning the master's degree. In cases where MTFs do not start the program with a master's degree in education or a STEM discipline, they must be enrolled in and complete an education or STEM master's degree program during their first year of participation. While there is no restriction on the length of the master's degree program, Master Teaching Fellows must complete the master's degree in their first year of the MTF program and a maximum of one year cost of attendance support (counted as the salary supplement for year one) may be offered only in the final year of the master's degree program. The high-need LEA must agree not to reduce the base salary of the MTF while the salary supplement is being received.

Based on the National Science Foundation's regulations, Montana State University's Noyce program, *Rural and American Indian School Educators as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Leaders (RAISE STEM Leaders)*, details the amount and duration of salary supplements below:

1. MTFs will receive a salary supplement of \$12,000 per year for each year of the five-year teaching commitment period for those possessing a master's degree.
2. MTFs will receive a salary supplement of \$12,000 per year for each year of the four-year teaching commitment period for those possessing only a bachelor's degree after earning the master's degree. The "one-year" master's program may begin in the summer of 2025 and extend up to 14 months to accommodate two summers as part of the master's degree program.

F. I agree to the recipient obligations of Master Teaching Fellowships.

As a condition of acceptance of a fellowship, Noyce recipients agree to provide the institution with annual certification of employment and updated contact information as well as to participate in activities (e.g., surveys, induction support) conducted as part of institution project-level and NSF program-level evaluation. In addition, the stipend or fellowship may revert to a loan, meaning that the recipient will be required to repay all or a portion of stipend or fellowship, if the recipient:

1. fails to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing in the program in which the individual is enrolled;
2. is dismissed from the program or institution for disciplinary reasons;
3. withdraws from the institution or program before completion of program requirements;
4. declares that the teaching service commitment will not be fulfilled; or,
5. fails to fulfill the teaching service commitment.

If such circumstances occur before the completion of one year of the teaching service commitment, the total amount of stipend or fellowship received by the individual must be repaid. If the circumstance occurs after the completion of one year of the teaching service commitment, the amount to be repaid will be as follows: one-half of the total amount of salary supplements received, including fellowship support in year one for MTFs without master's degrees.

G. I agree to provide the Montana State University with written verification of employment in a qualifying school district at the end of each academic year of service through a letter of verification from each school district employer, AND to notify the Montana State University at such time as I am not in compliance with any of the requirements.

H. I agree to inform the Montana State University within 60 days of any change in my name, permanent address, or contact information, AND if my employment in a high-needs school district (as defined above) ceases before I have fulfilled my full teaching obligation.

II. PROMISSORY NOTE

I agree that if I fail to meet the conditions described in Item I titled "**Fellowship Agreement**," I will repay either the full amount of the scholarship received, or an amount prorated by the fraction of teaching employment obligation not completed plus applicable interest.

A. Repayment:

1. I agree to begin repayment of my fellowship on the first day of the first month after the earliest to occur of any of the following: i) six months after I have ceased to fulfill the agreement in Item I; OR (ii) I inform the Montana State University that I do not plan to fulfill my teaching employment obligation.
2. I agree to make monthly payments to the Montana State University which cover outstanding principal and interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate, in accordance with the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-368) and any incurred reasonable collection costs, including, but not limited to, attorney fees and collection fees, according to a schedule established by the Montana State University. I must complete repayment within **one year** of entering repayment status. I understand that if I do not make the monthly payments as required by the schedule established by the Montana State University, the Montana State University will engage in collection efforts, including notification of credit bureaus concerning my default and litigation, similar to the collection efforts which are used by lenders and guarantee agencies in the guaranteed student loan program.

B. Deferment: I understand that I will not be considered in violation of the repayment schedule during the time that I am:

1. Serving, not in excess of three (3) years, on active duty as a member of armed services of the United States.
2. Temporarily disabled, for a period not to exceed three (3) years, as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.
3. Unable to secure employment for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months by reason of the care required by a spouse who is disabled.

During the time I qualify for any of the exceptions described in Item I.B, I.C., and I.E, I am not required to make the fellowship repayments described in Item II.A. In order to qualify for any of these exceptions, I must promptly notify the Montana State University of my claim and provide supporting documentation acceptable to the Montana State University. If my deferment status changes at any time, I must notify the Montana State University within 60 days.

C. Cancellation: the Montana State University shall cancel my repayment if:

1. I am unable to work as a teacher because of an impairment that is expected to continue indefinitely or results in death, on the basis of a sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.
2. I have become totally and permanently disabled as established by a sworn affidavit of a qualified physician.
3. I die, as established by a death certificate or other evidence of death that is conclusive under Montana law.
4. Circumstances have occurred that the Montana State University considers as a compelling reason to excuse repayment.

D. I understand that I may appeal any determination of non-compliance made by the Montana State University. Appeals must be made in writing to Dr. Fenqjen Luo at fluoj@montana.edu within 60 days of receipt of communication from the Montana State University that I am in non-compliance.

Please confirm your acceptance of these terms and conditions by signing below:

Master Teaching Fellow Signature: My signature below certifies that I have read and agree to the commitments presented in this agreement and promissory note.

Signature

Date

Print Name