



American Elasmobranch Society 2026 Student Research Awards Summary

The AES Grant Fund Committee offers a number of awards for students in various stages of their studies and research. After the addition of the **Mollet Elasmobranch Research Award** in 2010, the boundaries between the three major student research awards may at first seem unclear. Students interested in applying for any of these awards should therefore review the text below.

Of the three major student research awards, the **Donald R. Nelson Behavior Research Award** is the most straightforward in scope: the award funds work on the behavior and sensory biology of chondrichthyan fishes. By contrast, the **Mollet Elasmobranch Research Award** and **Student Research Award** are broader in scope, funding any research centered on chondrichthyan fishes. Starting in 2013, applications for the **Mollet Elasmobranch Research Award** and **Student Research Award** are evaluated together and the awards given (in no particular order) to the top two applicants.

Applications will be considered for all possible awards for which they are eligible; however, a given project can only win one award. A student may conceivably win multiple awards in the same year, but this would require multiple applications for *wholly different projects*. For example, a student could win the **Mollet Elasmobranch Research Award** and **Student Research Award** to fund Chapters 1 and 2 (respectively) of their thesis or dissertation project, where each chapter focuses on a different aspect of a species' biology.

For students submitting multiple projects, each project requires a separate application package. The Grant Fund committee reserves the right to return redundant applications, in which case the applicant will be notified.

Students can receive each award only once per degree. As such, students are expected to apply with their highest-quality and best-organized work. If, after reading the award documentation, you are unclear as to whether your project is suited to a certain award, please email Dominic Swift, the Grant Fund Committee Chair (dominic.swift@tamucc.edu).



American Elasmobranch Society 2026 Student Research Awards

Each year, the AES Grant Fund Committee will award two separate \$2,000 awards for **research on chondrichthyan fishes**: the **Mollet Elasmobranch Research Award** and the **Student Research Award**. In addition, the **Donald R. Nelson** Grant Committee will award \$2,000 for **research on the behavior and sensory biology of chondrichthyan fishes**. The award winners will be announced, and the awards presented, at the 2026 AES annual meeting. Students who are currently enrolled in a degree program (undergraduate or graduate) and are **AES members in good standing** (i.e., paid dues by December 31, 2025) are eligible to apply. Students are eligible to receive each award **once per degree**. Selection of the recipients will be based on the merit of the proposed or ongoing research. The ranking criteria form used by the Grant Fund Committee members is provided below to help students refine their proposals. Emphasis will also be placed on how crucial the additional funding would be to the progress (or completion) of the research project.

Before applying, please read the summary on the page above to understand the differences among the three student research awards.

Award winners are **expected** to present the results of their research at an AES annual meeting.

Award winners are **required** to:

- Submit a report of expenditures to the AES Treasurer **within one year of the award date**.
- Acknowledge AES for financial support in resulting presentations and/or publications.

To apply, compile the following documents:

1. A completed application form (see next page).
2. An itemized budget showing how funds will be spent.
3. A 1-2 page curriculum vitae including
 - a. All degree information.
 - b. Recognition, funding, and awards.
 - c. Relevant work history, e.g., research positions, teaching assistantships, consulting, etc.
 - d. Up to five of your most significant/relevant publications.
 - e. Synergistic activities, e.g. committee involvement, editorial positions, outreach, etc.
4. A **1,000-word (max)** description of the research project, including hypotheses, objectives, methodology, rationale, significance, and financial need. Literature cited does not count in the word limit. See the *Ranking Criteria Form* (below) for details about how proposals will be ranked.
5. A letter of support from your major advisor explaining your research abilities, the significance of the research, and the extent to which the award would facilitate the work's completion.

Submit your completed application by email as a **single pdf document** to Dominic Swift, the Grant Fund Committee Chair (dominic.swift@tamucc.edu). Completed applications **must be received by 5pm (Eastern Standard Time) May 1, 2026**. Late applications will not be considered. If for some reason you cannot submit an electronic version of your application, please contact the Grant Fund Committee Chair well in advance of the deadline for other options.



American Elasmobranch Society 2026 Student Research Awards Application Form

Please complete this form and include with the other documents in your application. The completed application must be received by email no later than **5pm (Eastern Standard Time) May 1, 2026.**

☐ I am an AES member in good standing (dues paid by December 31, 2025).

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

| DEGREE | UNIVERSITY | DEGREE & YEAR EARNED |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Current | | |
| Undergraduate | | |
| Previous graduate | | |

ADVISOR: _____

EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: _____

TITLE OF STUDY: _____

If you are submitting more than one application, please explain how your requests differ for each application:

I hereby acknowledge that I am a member of the American Elasmobranch Society in good standing (dues paid by December 31, 2025) and I agree to use these grant monies for research purposes and present the results of this study at an AES annual meeting. Furthermore, I will acknowledge the AES for funding in presentations and publications resulting from this work.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE



American Elasmobranch Society 2026 Student Research Award Ranking Criteria Form

| Rating | Excellent (5) | Good (4) | Competent (3) | Needs Work (2) | Not Acceptable (1) | Points |
|---|---------------|----------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|--------|
| Statement of Questions or Hypotheses | | | | | | |
| Clear, well-explained rationale for study | | | | | | |
| Statement of question(s) or hypothesis(es) | | | | | | |
| Clear Objectives | | | | | | |
| Project objectives are clearly stated | | | | | | |
| Clear Methodology | | | | | | |
| Use of appropriate methods | | | | | | |
| Use of appropriate analyses | | | | | | |
| Text Clarity & Presentation | | | | | | |
| Grammar, flow, and spelling | | | | | | |
| Originality & Innovation | | | | | | |
| Originality of the research and/or methodology | | | | | | |
| Importance of Work | | | | | | |
| The importance of the work is clearly expressed | | | | | | |
| Detailed Budget & Justification | | | | | | |
| Detailed budget | | | | | | |
| Clear justification of costs | | | | | | |
| Maximum Points | 50 | | | | | |
| Total Points Given | | | | | | |
| Comments | | | | | | |