

Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Summer Internship Program

FAQ

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

What is the HERS summer internship program?

The Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) program is an 8-week paid summer internship held during June and July. Interns spend the first six weeks of the program on the University of Kansas (KU) and Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) campus. During this time, interns are in classrooms and laboratories, learning about climate change and developing individual research proposals. Interns will travel to a national research center, Konza Prairie Biological Station, during their first week. In the following weeks, interns will work closely with University of Kansas (KU) graduate, masters, and Ph.D. students studying the effects of climate change on natural and human systems and will design independent research posters and proposals on climate and environmental change occurring in an Indigenous community of their choice. Interns will also develop a personal statement, often a requirement for graduate school applications. During week seven of the program, interns travel and present their research to representatives of the Oneida Nation in Green Bay, WI. During the program's final week, interns will work independently to complete and submit their research proposals.

The HERS program offers post-internship opportunities to qualifying interns. Opportunities include funding for professional presentations at national conferences, including but not limited to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and the Society for Advancing Chicanos & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)

HERS interns will receive the following:

- \$4,000 stipend
- Housing accommodations & meals
- Paid travel to and from internship and to national research centers
- Academic support from Haskell and KU professors & graduate student mentors
- Use of a laptop computer and software
- Study materials & financial support for graduate school entrance exams

What is the purpose of this program?

The mission of the HERS program is to prepare Native American undergraduate students for graduate study in STEM disciplines through mentorship, advocacy, and research training.

Through the course of the summer internship program, students will gain an understanding of the following topics, examined at various scales from local communities, to nation-states, to global:

- The scientific evidence of human-produced climate change and its physical and social impacts
- Support in researching a specific aspect of how climate and/or environmental change is impacting Indigenous communities

- Preparation for graduate-level research and writing

How can the HERS summer internship program help me?

The HERS program allows you to focus on a specific research topic, learn skills (research, writing, GIS, etc.), and discover the answers to a question you propose that has real-world impacts. There is no substitute for research experience, enhancing your strength as a college student and a potential graduate student. HERS successfully assists in the transition from undergraduate studies to graduate studies and benefits interns in their professional goals. The HERS internship is an excellent tool to help you improve your resume, develop professional skills, and network.

Why should I choose the HERS summer internship program?

HERS has an extensive writing, research, GIS, and professional development curriculum. Interns are supported by student graduate mentors, instructors, staff, and faculty. Additionally, interns can network with professionals for the opportunity to explore labs and national research centers. In eight weeks, you can discover the opportunities available through scientific research and the pursuit of graduate education. Upon completion of the HERS program, you will have a polished research poster to present at academic conferences, a well-written research proposal to use for graduate school applications, and technical and professional skills that will increase your rate of success in graduate school and a professional or academic career.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Undergraduate Native students eligible to enroll in tribal colleges are encouraged to apply. Applicants are eligible if they are enrolled in courses for the coming fall semester or have recently graduated. To be considered for the HERS Internship Program, applicants must be undergraduate students and in good standing with their institution.

Can I apply if I am not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States?

Program eligibility is limited to American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders students who are U.S. citizens.

Is the HERS summer program limited to specific majors?

Applicants are not required to have a specific academic major. Many HERS applicants major in scientific majors and/or Environmental Studies, but there have been numerous HERS interns with a social science or humanities background. There is no area of study or major requirement. The HERS program is designed to help students from all academic backgrounds discover their research interests.

Is there a minimum GPA to participate in this program?

No, but all applicants should be in good academic standing. The internship is competitive. If there are some issues with your GPA, you are encouraged to address those issues in your application essay.

I will be graduating from college in the spring. Am I eligible to participate in HERS?

Applicants are still eligible if graduating in **May 2023 or December 2022**.

I am still a first-year student (Freshman standing). Am I eligible for the program?

Yes. Undergraduate students at any level may apply.

I applied previously and was not selected; can I reapply?

Yes. You should fill out a completely new application and will need to obtain new letters of reference. Your initial letter writers can also write your letters for your second application to the program.

FUNDING & SUPPORT

What funding is available to support students in the program?

Each intern will receive a competitive stipend of \$4,000. HERS interns will receive a stipend of \$1,000 approximately every two weeks throughout the program. The final stipend will be contingent on completing the program, which entails the submission of a final research proposal. The HERS program will fund travel to and from the internship and any trips to national research centers or field sites during the program. Additionally, HERS interns selected for a top-proposal award will be fully funded to travel and present at an academic conference of their choice after the HERS program has concluded.

How do the housing and meals work?

The HERS program provides room and board at the University of Kansas campus, providing dining at KU dining facilities. If you live locally and prefer to live at home during the summer, you can do so.

Will I have to pay for my airfare?

The HERS program provides travel for interns from their homes to Lawrence, Kansas, at the beginning of the internship and back home at the end of the program. Interns pay for baggage fees and on-ground transportation. The program will reimburse you for these expenses. We require receipts for all reimbursable expenses.

Will I be able to participate if I don't have a laptop?

If needed, laptops are provided to each intern for use during the internship program. Laptops will have all the necessary software installed to perform summer research, and Wireless internet is available on campus.

What about taxes?

Your stipend is reported as taxable income. You will have to report the income in your annual IRS filing and pay taxes, if required, based on your income and filing status.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

What is required for the HERS summer internship program application?

Applications for the HERS Program include completing or providing the following:

1. Online Application: The online application includes providing demographic information and uploading required materials, like your statement of purpose, essay, and a recent college transcript.
 - a. Statement of Purpose (400-500 words): Must address the following three areas (1) Introduce yourself and explain how a HERS internship benefits your academic goals of graduate school. (2) Include a description of previous research experience. (3) Describe your perception of science and research.
 - b. Essay (400-500 words): Describe an important environmental issue affecting Indigenous communities, particularly one of interest to you.
 - c. Transcripts: Provide a copy of your most recent college or university transcripts (unofficial transcripts accepted). Please include current semester enrollment, and official transcripts may be requested at a later time.
2. Two Letters of Recommendation: Applicants must provide two letters of recommendation. Submit references by completing the letters of recommendation request form. Your letter writers will receive a link to upload their letters.
 - a. Academic letter of recommendation
 - b. Character reference.

How do I apply?

You apply by visiting: <http://hersinstitute.org/apply.html>

Applicants use two links to complete the application process. The first will be for the online application. To complete the online application, you will need to enter your personal information and upload your statement of purpose, essay, and transcripts. Submit these materials at the same time. There is no function that allows you to save your progress. The second link is to submit the information for your letters of recommendation.

When should I apply?

HERS 2023 applications open on **January 20, 2023**. You should apply when you have all of your application materials gathered and edited. You should also consider your letter of recommendation writers and how much time they will need. Complete applications submitted before the deadline are not given a preference. However, applications submitted after the deadline are not considered unless extreme circumstances arise. Please contact us at HERS@ku.edu if you feel your situation warrants consideration of a late application.

Is there a deadline for the submission of applications?

Yes. The deadline to apply to the **HERS 2023** program is **Friday, March 3, 2023**. Your letter writers have until the following Monday to submit your letters, but you want to ensure they have adequate notice and time to write excellent letters. We highly recommend you ask letter writers before submitting their information on our portal. After they agree to write you a letter, let them know that our system will send them a link to upload their letter.

How will I know if my application is complete?

The HERS application portal will send a confirmation email when your application is complete. When each one of your letter writers submits a letter of recommendation, you will receive an email confirmation. Once you have received an email that your online application is complete and the two emails that your letters of recommendation have been submitted, your application is complete.

Will the program keep me informed of my application status?

If your application is partially complete within one week of the deadline, we will notify you that you have an incomplete application with details about what you are missing.

Is there an application fee?

No. There is no application fee.

Letters of Recommendation (LORs)

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

You will need two letters of recommendation: one based on your academics and a second based on your character. For the academic recommendation, you should ask an individual that knows you from the classroom, such as a professor or a faculty advisor. For character reference, you should ask someone who knows you personally and professionally, such as a mentor, employer, or coach. Character references can be written by professors or faculty advisors, too, as long as each letter is written by a different person.

Is there a deadline for receipt of my recommendation letters?

The deadline for recommendation letters is one week after applications are due. Some years, the program extends the application deadline. If this happens, the recommendation letter deadline is also extended by a week. Check our website for postings about extensions.

What should I do if my references have not received a request for a letter of recommendation on my behalf?

Contact the HERS staff (hers@ku.edu). When you provide your letter writer's information, they should receive an email with instructions for submitting their letter. Once they submit their letter, you will receive an email confirming that one of your letter writers submitted a letter on your behalf. If you are unsure if your letter writer received an initial email or if they have submitted a letter on your behalf, contact the HERS staff at hers@ku.edu.

Who ensures that reference letters are received?

You do. You are responsible for communicating with your letter writers and ensuring their letters are submitted on time. If you, or your letter writers, are unsure of the status of your letters, please contact us at hers@ku.edu.

Can I submit more than the required two letters of reference?

No. You may only submit the required materials. Because of the large number of applicants, we must discourage you from sending any additional documentation.

Review & Selection

After I apply, can I make changes to my application?

You could make changes to your application only if incorrect information was provided. For example, if you accidentally submitted an application with your name misspelled. If this happens, contact the HERS staff (hers@ku.edu), and do not submit a second application. You should only submit your application when you are ready to have it reviewed, and all of your materials are finalized.

What are my chances of receiving a position in the Summer Internship Program?

The HERS summer internship program is competitive. Your chances are better when you submit materials that are polished and when the contents are consistent with the program's mission and values.

How am I notified if I am selected?

Applicants are notified via the email provided on the application.

How soon can I expect to hear that I am selected?

Typically, you can expect to hear by **mid-April**. You will be notified if accepted, waitlisted, or not accepted. Please note that the application deadline may be extended; in that case, the period for notification is also extended.

Is there a waitlist?

Yes, there is a waitlist. Applicants offered an internship have a timeframe in which to accept the offer. Occasionally, accepted interns decline the internship. In this case, we will refer to the waitlist to offer the opportunity. Waitlisted applicants are informed of their status via email.

How long do I have before I have to accept or decline the internship offer?

Typically, applicants have one week to accept or decline the internship offer. Waitlisted applicants have a slightly shorter time to accept an offer, typically 3-5 days.

How do I accept the internship offer?

After you are notified of the offer, you will be asked to complete the acceptance survey within the given timeframe (usually one week). You are asked to verify your acceptance via email. Once your acceptance survey and email are received, you will receive confirmation and a timeframe to submit more information.

What happens if I accept the internship offer but change my mind?

If you need to decline your offer after accepting it, notify the HERS staff immediately (hers@ku.edu). Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances arise, and applicants have to decline an offer after acceptance. If this occurs, we ask that you inform us as soon as possible. If we can, we will attempt to fill your spot with a waitlisted applicant, but we can only do this with adequate time.

HERS INTERN EXPERIENCE

Do I select my research project?

Yes, you can select your own research project with the guidance of the HERS staff and the graduate student mentors.

Will I work independently, or will I collaborate with other interns?

Your research project will be independent, but you will have the opportunity to collaborate with your peers inside and outside the classroom.

How are student mentors matched with interns?

Student mentors are matched with interns based on their interests, expertise, and personality. Interns are given the choice of who they want to work with early during the internship program.

Where will I do my research?

You will do most of your research on-campus at University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University.

Will I have an opportunity to present my research?

Yes, you will have the opportunity to present your research to your peers and the local community. Additionally, if your research proposal is selected as one of the top proposals, you will have the opportunity to present your research at an academic conference of your choice during the following academic year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What are the start and end dates for the program?

The start date of **HERS 2023** is **June 5**, and the end date is **July 28**. However, HERS interns are asked to arrive in Lawrence, KS, by **June 4** for program orientation and the Welcome Dinner.

Where does the HERS internship take place?

The HERS internship takes place at University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. There is local and national travel during the internship, but most of it happens at KU and Haskell. If you are unfamiliar with the institutions or the area, here are resources to help you learn more.

Haskell Indian Nations University: <https://haskell.edu/>

University of Kansas: <https://ku.edu/>

Lawrence, KS: <https://unmistakablylawrence.com>

What is the duration of the internship?

The duration of the internship is eight weeks, typically all of June and July.

Are the dates of the internship flexible?

No. The HERS internship dates are not flexible due to logistics and programming. Individuals who are not available for the eight weeks of the HERS program will not be able to participate.

Can I complete the internship from a remote location?

No. HERS interns will need to be physically present on-campus at The University of Kansas and the other locations where the program takes place.

Can I take a Summer Session course while I am doing research?

No. We ask that all applicants who are offered and accept an intern position refrain from taking summer courses or from having summer employment.

Can I be late to start the program?

No. However, if you have a special circumstance that you believe merits consideration, please contact the HERS staff (hers@ku.edu). All special circumstances should be communicated to the HERS staff before accepting the internship position.

Can I miss a week of the program?

No. The HERS program is only eight weeks long, and each week is essential. If special circumstances require you to miss a shorter amount of time, please contact the HERS staff (hers@ku.edu). All special circumstances should be communicated to the HERS staff before accepting the internship position.

How many hours am I expected to work each week?

While the HERS internship is not a traditional employment position, you are expected to be present Monday-Friday from 9:00 am – 4:30 pm most days. If you are offered an internship position, more information will be provided. You can also contact the HERS staff if you have questions about specific dates/times.

Do I need to bring a car?

No. All transportation during the HERS program is provided.

Who should I talk to if I have more questions?

If you have questions about the application process, please contact the HERS Program Coordinator, Katrina McClure (hers@ku.edu)