Request for Applications – Emerging AI Scholars Program

Sponsored by Amazon Web Services (AWS)
In Partnership with FSU Information Technology Services and the Office of the Vice President for Research

Available Funding.
$32,000 in compute credits total for up to eight awards.

Description.
The Emerging AI Scholars Program will support postdoctoral researchers and graduate students by providing AWS credits for an AI-enabled 'work package' within a larger research project. Emerging AI Scholars should be developing **dual expertise in AI-for-research and another research domain** and have **strong mentorship** to ensure rigor and reproducibility.

Emerging AI Scholars are selected competitively. We seek proposals for AI-enabled work packages that demonstrate:

A) A strong scientific motivation
B) A clear potential benefit to a larger research project outside of AI/ML research (e.g., PhD dissertation, faculty mentor's grant-funded project)
C) The Emerging AI Scholar's primary responsibility for the work package's success
D) A clear technical and research mentoring plan

Funded projects must provide a progress report six months after completion. Emerging AI Scholars will be expected to lead a community of practice throughout so that trainees can learn from one another and share their knowledge with the broader FSU community.

Timeline.
Proposals due November 19, 2026
Reviews completed by December 4, 2026
Award notifications by December 11, 2026
Award start date on January 18, 2027
Award end date on January 17, 2028

Eligibility.
Applicant must be an FSU graduate student or postdoctoral researcher.
Applicant must be PI on the proposed work package. No co-PIs are allowed.
Applicants may not submit more than one proposal.
Mentor(s) must have demonstrated *technical* experience with AI/ML application and demonstrated *research* experience in the larger research project's field. One mentor with dual competency or two mentors with complementary competencies are permitted.

Mentor(s) need not be applicant's dissertation supervisor, research group PI, etc. Mentor(s) must be active, full-time, tenured, tenure-track, or research-track FSU faculty.

Proposal Submission.
Proposals must be submitted via FSU's InfoReady portal and include ***only*** the following. Pages must have 1" margins and use 11pt Times New Roman or Arial font.

- Text entry fields for:
  - Proposal title
  - Name and department of the Emerging AI Scholar
  - Name and department of the Technical Mentor
  - Name and department of the Research Mentor
  - Total compute credit request (estimate)
  - Project duration (up to one year)
  - Proposal abstract (up to 200 words)
- Proposed research (up to two pages), including the following sections:
  - Scientific Motivation
    - Address both the motivation for the work package itself and the larger research project it enhances
  - Benefit to the Larger Research Project
  - Objectives, Approach, and Workplan
  - Rationale for Selection of Technical and Research Mentor(s)
- References cited (does not count toward page limit).
- Mentorship plan (up to 0.5 pages) describing plans for mentorship and evaluation (meeting frequency, milestones, summative evaluation, etc.).
- Order-of-magnitude budget estimate with justification, including anticipated compute services (up to one page). Budget must be comprised entirely of compute credits. Salary, equipment, and other expenses are not allowed.
  - Applications selected for funding will receive support to finalize budget.
  - Total funding is $32,000 for up to eight awards. There is no per-award budget limit, but the request must be reasonable and fully allocable to the proposed activities. All else equal, larger budgets require more compelling justification.
- CVs of Emerging AI Scholar and Technical and Research Mentor(s) (up to three pages each). Recommended: follow Common Forms format.

Work Package Restrictions.
No data uploaded to AWS may concern sensitive information that requires additional safeguards or controls. This can include controlled unclassified (CUI) or classified information, personally identifiable student or health information (PII, PHI) subject to

HIPAA, FERPA, or other regulations, data subject to export controls, etc. Applicants can reach out to Nick Ruhs, Research Data Management Librarian, for guidance as needed.

The work package must represent a distinct task or product that does not overlap with key deliverables from awarded or pending research grants.

Review Criteria.
Proposals will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Factor 1: Importance, scored 1–9 (with 1 being best)
    - Potential benefit to larger research project
    - Potential benefit of larger research project
- Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility, scored 1–9 (with 1 being best)
    - Viability of work package outcomes given workplan, budget
    - Clear evaluation/quality control activities incorporated
- Factor 3: Expertise Development Potential, sufficient or not
    - Potential to develop Scholar's dual expertise beyond present skillset
    - Suitable technical and research mentorship

Payback.
If the awardee leaves FSU prior to the end of the award period, they must notify the Internal Funding Coordinator, Sherry Core, so that remaining credits can be reallocated.

Emerging AI Scholars Community of Practice.
Emerging AI Scholars are expected to work with FSU AI Research Solutions to create, lead, and expand an interdisciplinary community of applied AI/ML scholars among graduate and postdoctoral trainees at FSU. This includes leading:

- Trainee-focused, monthly coffee chats to informally share new developments in AI for research and discuss work in progress
- Trainee-focused, work-in-progress seminar series to formally present to peers across campus, with seminars at least every other month

Questions?
For questions about AWS services, request an ITS Cloud Services Consultation.

For questions about the submission portal, contact Sherry Core.