# **Commonly Asked Questions**

### Do I need to be a GSA member?

Yes. If you need to sign up or renew, please visit http://www.geosociety.org/members/. Keep in mind that the registration and other GSA databases exchange data each night. Therefore, the day you pay for membership, you will not have access to the database. You will have access the following day once the two systems have communicated.

### Do I need a résumé or CV?

No. Your "résumé" is your on-line application which you fill out after you log in. This process asks contact information, as well as program specific questions.

## Do I need a cover letter?

Yes. Our committee relies very heavily on this letter when they make their selections, so it is important you spend some time on it. Please make sure you thoroughly address why the program would be useful to you and what your career plans are.

## Who should I address the cover letter to?

Address it to either the Program Manager or the Selection Committee. You do not need to set it up in business letter format. You only have 2500 characters for your cover letter, so you should concentrate on the letter content, not the addresses and salutations.

#### How long should my cover letter be?

There is a 2500 character limit (including spaces). When you reach the limit, it will cut off anything that does not fit. Therefore, concentrate on the letter content, not the salutations. Also, every cover letter will lose all formatting when you view it. This is how the committee sees every cover letter so do not be alarmed.

#### Make sure you view your finished cover letter!

Once you reach your 2500 character limit, the committee will not see any additional information. If you cut and paste your cover letter from Word, please make sure our system captured the entire letter.

# Can I apply if I am not a US citizen?

For the Bighorn award, anyone may apply, but you must live in North America. We do not have funds to cover foreign airfares. For the Scholars Award, anyone, anywhere can apply.

# Do I need to submit my application?

Once your on-line résumé/application is finished you hit the 'submit' button. This does not submit your entire application, it just submits the information you entered into the on-line form to our database. You

may edit this information as often as you like until the deadline. There is no formal process to submit your application.

#### How do I submit my letters of recommendation?

They are submitted on-line. After you hit the submit button at the end of your on-line résumé/application you will go to your personal landing page. At the top of the page, it will say "Welcome, (and then y our name will appear)". This page shows all the GSA Education and Outreach databases/programs you have applied to. There you will find the program you are currently applying to and 'request letter of recommendation' will appear to the right. You will type in the e-mail address for the individuals you are requesting letters from. They then receive an e-mail from our system with a distinct URL where they need to enter their personal information and letter. This must be done on-line. No mailed or e-mailed letters are accepted. Also, please make sure when you type in the e-mail address that no spaces are entered.

## If I just have one letter of recommendation am I still eligible to apply?

No, you need to have two letters of recommendation for your application to be considered complete.

## Do I need to submit a transcript?

No, not initially. From your personal landing page you will need to enter all the relevant courses you have taken and the grade you earned. These are reviewed by our selection committee. If you receive the award, then copies of transcripts are requested.

## How long after the deadline will I hear if I received the award?

After the deadline, the program manager needs several days to prepare the data for the selection committee and the committee needs at least 2 weeks to review it. It is generally 3-4 weeks after the deadline when everyone is notified whether or not they will receive the award.

# When are the dates for the Bighorn field camp?

They are listed on our main website:

http://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Education\_Careers/Field\_Experiences/GSA/fieldexp/home.aspx?hkey= 1d184870-c99c-499b-ab60-4edac0e10689 under the Bighorn award. Generally it is the first week in August each year.

# How do I know that my application is complete?

From your personal landing page (when you log in after your on-line application is complete), you can view and edit your cover letter, you will see two checked boxes when both your letters of recommendation have been received, and you may view and edit your on-line resume/application. When everything has been received, your application is complete.