**INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED SCIENCE**
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**To:  Faculty in COE, CNRE, CVM, CALS, and COS**                                    **October 30, 2023**

**Re**: **FY25 Call for Nominations: ICTAS Doctoral Scholar 4-year Funding Opportunity for New (Fall 2024 Enrollment) PhD Candidates**

I am pleased to invite you to nominate a new PhD candidate for Fall 2024 enrollment that you are recruiting from outside of Virginia Tech for the FY25 ICTAS Doctoral Scholars program.  This program offers faculty (and departments) in our partnering colleges (COE, CNRE, COS, CALS, and CVM) an opportunity to nominate exceptional PhD applicants for a prestigious *4-year* scholarship that includes a $37,026/year stipend, yearly tuition and (some) fees, yearly travel funds up to $1000, and value added professional development and community building activities.  A yearly financial investment of only $12,342/year is required by the nominator/advisor for each of the four years of the award, and the rest of the award is funded through a partnership between ICTAS, the Graduate School, and partner Colleges.   This program supports the recruitment of top PhD students from outside of Virginia Tech to increase the diversity of educational, experiential, and research backgrounds in Virginia Tech research programs.  This document provides an overview of the program, nomination instructions, and a 1-page Nomination Coversheet Form.

## I.  Overview

The ICTAS Doctoral Scholars (DS) program facilitates the recruitment of exceptional PhD candidates in partnering colleges as a direct investment in the Virginia Tech research and educational missions.  We expect Doctoral Scholars to be very successful in their graduate work and to become knowledge experts.  We also expect them to be *leaders* in their discipline, community, and in making national and international contributions to society.  The ICTAS DS Program was launched in 2007.  As of Fall 2023, 146 Scholars have been supported, with 38 scholars currently in the program.

*Funding Model*  This program is possible because of a cost-sharing model supported by ICTAS, the individual Colleges, and the VT Graduate School, along with a yearly commitment of financial support from nominators.  The breakdown of funding for each scholar is as follows (for each of the four years of their award):

- Tuition and (some) fees:  VT Graduate School and/or ICTAS
- Travel Funds (up to $1000):  ICTAS
- 1/3 yearly stipend:  ICTAS
- 1/3 yearly stipend:  Scholar's College
- *1/3 yearly stipend:  Nominator (Faculty member or Department).  Currently this is $12,342/year for each of the four years.*

The nominator's 1/3 share of the stipend has historically come from sources such as faculty research funds, faculty overhead, department E&G funds, and/or Virginia Tech Foundation accounts.  While most nominations come from faculty who are recruiting specific students to their research programs, departments may also nominate students by committing

that the $12,342/year nominator portion of the award will be covered (by future advisor or department) for the four-year term, and by also committing to finding an advisor for the scholar within their first semester.

*Nomination and Review Process*  As shown in Figure 1, faculty members submit their nomination packages to their Department Head for approval.  Departments must approve each nomination by co-signing the cover sheet, and then the department needs to submit the nomination package(s) to their college's Associate Dean for Graduate Studies/Research. Nominations from departments are reviewed at the college level, and top applications are then forwarded to ICTAS for review.   As mentioned above, departments can also nominate PhD candidates directly to their college.
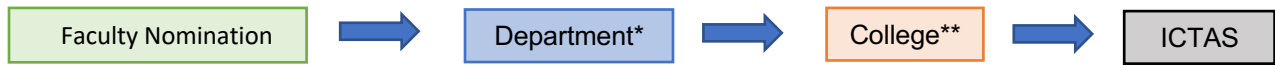


**Figure 1:  Process and Review Steps for ICTAS Doctoral Scholar Nomination**.
*\*Individual departments can decide if they want an internal review process, or just a signature approval (required), before forwarding nominations to their college for review*
*\*\*Colleges (Associate Deans for Graduate Studies/Research) determine their own review process, as well as any intake logistics for receiving nominations from departments*

*Rolling Nomination Deadlines*  There is a rolling submission process, with four deadlines between mid-December and mid-February, as listed in the **Nomination Instructions** below.  To increase the visibility and competitiveness of VT in recruiting top students, *we encourage early nominations, so that we can make early offers*.  Up to 50% of available offers may go out in the late December/early January time frame.  Early offers are a no-cost recruiting tool that gets VT (and your research program) on the radar of top students early in their search, while also sending these students a strong message that we really want them to come to VT!

We do acknowledge that there are opportunities for student recruitment that may become available beyond early January.  Therefore, the rolling deadlines allow for the nomination of excellent candidates who may have applied later in the application cycle, and also allow faculty (and departments) additional time to secure new resources to recruit and nominate additional PhD students.  ***Note that when early ICTAS Scholar offers are rejected, new offers are extended***, and nominations received during all deadlines remain in the pool for consideration until all slots are filled.  Nominators are informed before an offer is extended to their nominee.  Note that some colleges allow for nominations beyond the mid-February deadline (please contact your college's research or graduate program dean).  The full cohort of scholars is formally announced after all acceptances are received.

### II.      Nomination Instructions
Faculty should nominate exceptional PhD candidates that they are recruiting from outside of VT.  ***We strongly encourage the nomination of students from underrepresented groups in STEM disciplines.***  Selection criteria includes academic achievement, research contributions, and demonstrated leadership.  All nominations must originate with either a faculty member or a department, in a participating college (COE, CNRE, COS, CALS, and CVM).  Note that students are only eligible if they are currently NOT enrolled as a VT student.

Specific nomination steps are as follows:

**Step 1:**  Faculty need to prepare a nomination package ***in a single pdf file*** that includes the following *three* components:

1. **Nomination Cover Sheet/Form** (1-page fillable form at the end of this letter)

2. **Nomination Letter:** A **1-page** letter that addresses the following categories:
   a. Why have you chosen to nominate this applicant?
   b. How has the applicant already ***demonstrated contributions to research***?
   c. How has the applicant already ***demonstrated leadership?***

*3.* **The** <u>**Complete**</u> **Virginia Tech Graduate Application of the Nominee** (including ***all attachments***, such as the letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc).

**Step 2:** Faculty must submit their single-pdf nomination package directly to their Department Head. Faculty should work with their department to understand internal deadlines and to insure that their nomination package is reviewed and advanced (if department approves) to the college level in a timely manner.

Departments must co-sign the cover-sheet for all nominations to indicate their approval, and then <u>departments need to forward nomination packages to their College's Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and/or Research</u>. The specific submission logistics may vary by college, and departments are requested to work with their college for specific department-to-college submission information. *Deadlines for **departments** to submit nomination packages to their college are as follows:*

- **December 15, 2023**: *First deadline* for nomination packages from departments to College Associate Deans
- **January 3, 2024**: *Second deadline* for nomination packages from departments to College Associate Deans (note that applications from the Dec 15 deadline without an offer stay in the application pool)
- **January 31, 2024**: *Third deadline* for nomination packages from departments to College Associate Deans (note that applications from earlier deadlines without an offer stay in the application pool).
- **February 15, 2024**: *Fourth Deadline* for nominations packages from departments to College Associate Deans. (note that applications from earlier deadlines without an offer stay in the application pool)

***Note: Some Colleges may accept applications beyond the Feb 15 deadline. Check with your department and college.***

Nominators are contacted before an offer is made to their applicant, and it is expected that nominators will continue to actively connect with the offer recipient during the recruitment process.

Thank you for your interest in the prestigious ICTAS Doctoral Scholar program! Additional information on the ICTAS Doctoral Scholars Program can be found at this link. Additionally, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions (maryk@vt.edu or 1-8552).

Best regards,

Mary Kasarda, PhD
Faculty Director of Scholarship, ICTAS
Associate Professor, VT Department of Mechanical Engineering

# Nomination Form for ICTAS Doctoral Scholars *(to be completed by the nominating faculty)*

## Candidate

Name

Email

Undergraduate Institution

Undergraduate Major                                                          GPA

Graduate Institution

Graduate Area of Study                                                       GPA

Current Position/Location (ex: MS student at MIT/Cambridge, MA)

## GRE Candidate Scores (OPTIONAL)

Verbal Reasoning : Score          Percentage          Quantitative Reasoning: Score          Percentage

Analytical Writing : Score          Percentage

## Projected Interests

Prospective Virginia Tech (VT) College

Prospective Program/Department at VT

Prospective Advisor(s): (You may list up to three)        1

2                                        3

Prospective Research Area/Topic:

## Nominated by

Name                                        Email

Department                                  College

By nomination, I agree to pay 1/3 stipend for the 4 year duration.

Faculty nominator – signature          Date          Department approval – signature          Date

Please create one pdf for submission that includes 1) this cover sheet, 2) your nomination letter, and 3) the candidate's full graduate application (including transcripts, reference letters, etc)

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