



ASCEND^R
Fellowship

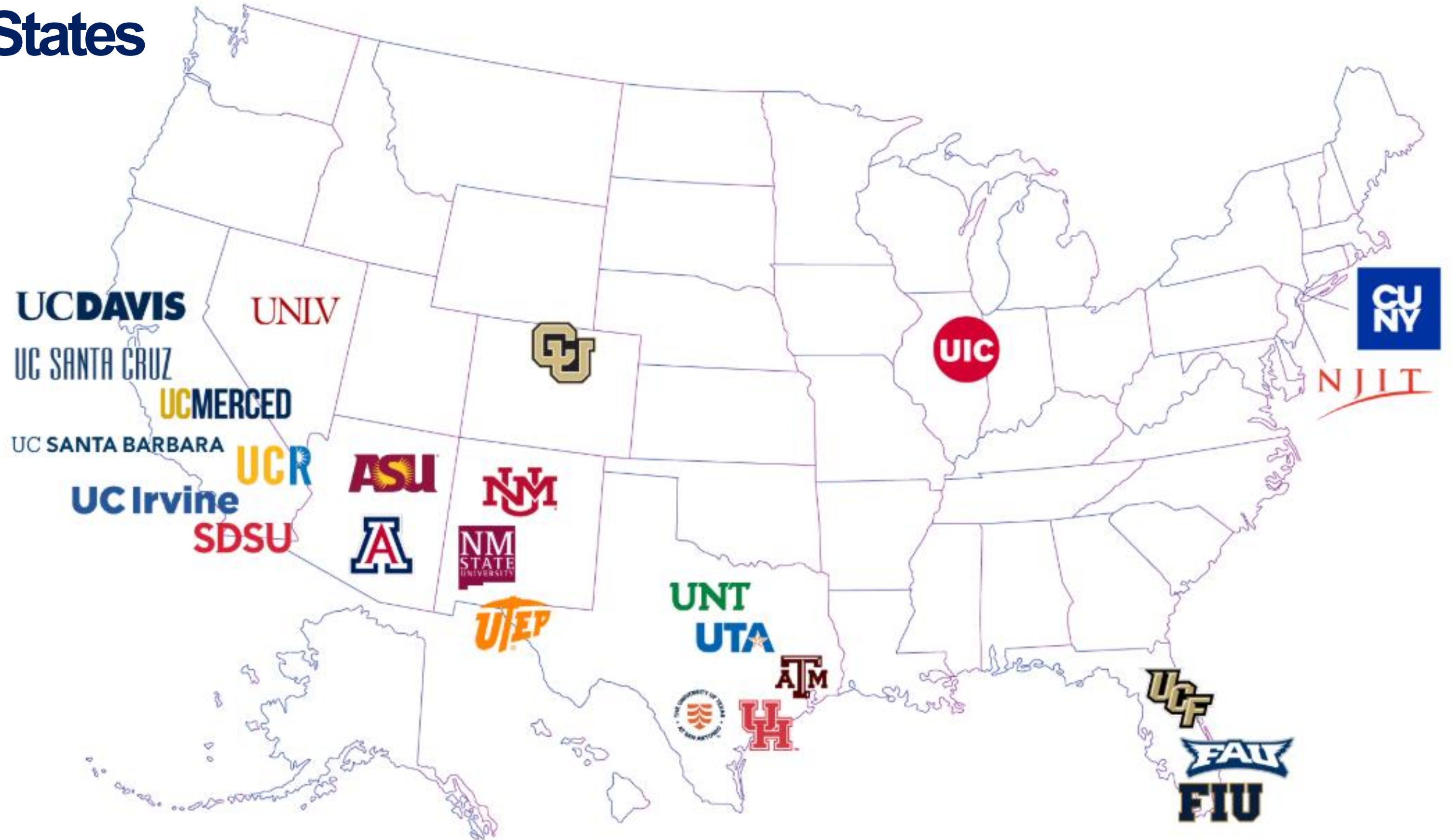
Fellowship Program Information Session



November 20, 2025

25 Research-intensive Institutions

Across 10 States



HSRU Approach and Purpose

The HSRU Alliance will collectively **contribute to the nation's research priorities, scientific and technical workforce**, and professoriate by deepening and strengthening collaborations among peer, mission-driven institutions committed to innovation and improving educational pathways.



About ASCEND^R

A multi-institutional initiative funded by the DOD National Defense Education Program (NDEP), advancing research, talent, and innovation in defense-relevant STEM fields aligned with national priorities.

Overarching Project Goal

Create a sustainable consortium model to exponentially increase the number of faculty and student researchers who can contribute to DOD research priorities

ASCEND^R Programs

- ➔ Opportunity Advising
- ➔ Fellowship
- ➔ Leadership
- ➔ Research

ASCEND^R Fellowship Overview

Immersing PhD students in defense-aligned research, mentorship, and career development.

Duration: August 2026 – June 2027

Designed for students nearing dissertation phase (Y3-Y4) who are conducting research that aligns with the DOD research.

The program provides a structured experience that combines:

- Faculty-mentored research at home institutions
- Professional development workshops
- Networking opportunities

Funding

- **Award Amounts**

\$12,500 award over 12 months to support their academic and professional development. *(35 fellowships available)*

- **Complementary Funding**

Fellows may hold other appointments or funding awards with approval from their graduate program.

- **Additional Competitive Awards**

Selected fellows will also have the opportunity to compete for additional awards to participate in other activities that advance the fellow's academic and career goals.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be U.S. Persons, defined as U.S. born or U.S. naturalized citizen.*
- Applicants need to be enrolled full-time in a STEM PhD program at an HSRU institution.
- Applicants must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5 to demonstrate strong academic performance.
- Applicants must secure a faculty mentor and propose research aligned with Department of Defense priorities.

**Updated on 12.3.25*

Permanent Residents are not eligible for this program

Fellow Expectations

Full-Time Enrollment and Academic Standards

Fellows must maintain full-time enrollment and a minimum GPA of 3.5/4.0

Research Progress and Participation

Continuous progress on research projects and active participation in all program activities

Research Presentations

Fellows are required to present their research at professional meetings and the annual HSRU convening to demonstrate accountability.

Application Process

Applications Open: December 1, 2025

Applications Close: February 20, 2026

Final Selections: Late April 2026

Interested applicants must apply at <https://hsru.infoready4.com/>

Required Materials

- Letter of interest
- Research plan to include a one-year project timeline
- CV
- Two letters of support, one must be from their proposed research mentor
- Unofficial transcript.

Applications will be reviewed by an external committee; selected candidates may be invited for interviews.

Program Timeline

Orientation

The program begins with an orientation in **May 2026** to introduce participants to key details and expectations.

Virtual Social Activity

A virtual event will take place in **July** to foster community among participants.

Fellowship Start

The fellowship officially starts in **August 2026**

Monthly Workshops

Monthly workshops run from **September through May** to provide continuous education and skill-building opportunities.

Annual HSRU Convening

The program concludes with the annual HSRU convening in **June 2027**

19 Participating Institutions

Last Updated 11.17.25



Why Participate?



**Strengthen
Dissertation Research**



**Access to
Defense Research**



**Networking
Opportunities**



**Professional
Development**

Upcoming Office Hours

Office Hours Session #1:

December 18, 2025 | 12 pm EST | [RSVP Here](#)

Office Hours Session #2:

January 22, 2026 | 12 pm EST | [RSVP Here](#)

Contact us

**REACH OUT TO US AT
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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
HSRU.ORG**