

Format and Content are Key!

Carefully review the evaluation criteria on the [Knauss fellowship website](#), specifically “additional relevant experience” for the development of your statement. Ensure your statement is 1000 words or less. Do not include personal contact information or web links.



Why Knauss?

Questions to consider as you prepare your goal statement:

What will you bring to the Knauss fellowship?

What do you hope to learn/gain from a Knauss fellowship?

What are your professional development and career goals?

How will Knauss help you achieve those goals?

Focus on how a year in the Knauss fellowship will help you to grow professionally instead of how the Knauss fellowship will help you to get a job in the future.

Use Storytelling

The review panel wants to know who you are, why you are different, and how the fellowship will help you grow as a professional. Use stories, specific examples, and relevant details to help the reviewers see “the real you” that is often hidden in a CV. Your stories should validate your skills, exemplify your personal resilience when faced with past obstacles, and illuminate your capacity and interest in connecting science to broader economic, social, and political issues. Use stories to describe what inspires you, what motivates you, and what drives you to learn more about where science meets policy. Try not to focus solely on stories that explain what drew you to marine and/or coastal issues.

Supplement (Don’t Regurgitate) Your CV

Use your goal statement to elaborate upon or dive deeper into past experiences. Those past experiences can be on your CV or not, depending on your purpose for telling the story, but make sure to add your personality into the goal statement. Highlight your experiences with diverse issues or stakeholders. Consider and highlight experiences besides what is typically considered important in an academic setting, including unpaid, volunteer, and non-scientific positions you’ve held. How has your experience working at a clothing store or volunteering with your local Boys & Girls Club helped you to develop leadership skills? Be creative and represent yourself accurately and broadly.

Be Open-Minded

The Knauss fellowship is a broad educational opportunity. It is not appropriate to be too specific in the types of work, agencies, or offices you want to be placed in. The review panel wants to see that you are open-minded, interested in broadening your skills and professional network, and eager to learn the science-policy nexus. *Example:* “I am interested in learning how agencies use science to develop policies...” (as opposed to “I am interested in working for the National Marine Fisheries Services on issues related to endangered species...”). You can talk about themes you’re interested in (for example, stakeholder engagement or protected species), and we recommend keeping them broad (protected species, as opposed to specifically piping plovers).

Avoid Stating Placement Preferences

Both executive and legislative placements offer unique educational opportunities for fellows. It is inappropriate to specify preference for a specific host office or an executive versus legislative placement in the goal statement. Instead, focus on the type of professional growth and experiences you hope to gain from a year as a Knauss fellow. Including statements about skills, experiences, or perspectives you expect to gain from the Knauss Fellowship will go a long way in convincing reviewers that you have thoughtfully and seriously considered how the Fellowship is a critical step in your career development.

Don't Shy Away From Your Lack of Marine or Policy Experience

The Knauss Fellowship is intended to be a training experience so a lack of policy or marine experience is not a strike against you. The fellowship mentions a focus on marine issues, but many fellows bring experience with coastal, interior waters, and Great Lakes instead of strictly marine. Think about the skills and experiences you have gained in graduate school and how they can serve you in a policy setting. You have likely developed a wealth of skills in your scientific training that you haven't realized - don't be afraid to think outside the box! For example, if you've taught college classes, you likely acquired skills in communication, leadership, education, critical evaluation, and more.

Additional Recommendations from Reviewers

We suggest using a 12pt font (Arial, Times New Roman, or similar), including your name and "Goal Statement" in a header or footer, and proofreading carefully. You can use formatting like headers, white space, bold/italics, etc to guide the reviewer and make the statement easier to read. Reviewers are reading many statements, so make yourself stand out! Consider using headers in your goal statement.