



MAY 2019

## The National Science Foundation International Research Experiences for Students Program

The National Science Foundation (NSF) International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) program was created in 2006 to promote advanced training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. IRES provides funding to institutions, mostly universities, to support international research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. The underlying rationale for the program is that “research experience is one of the most effective avenues for attracting students to and retaining them in science and engineering, and for preparing them for careers in these fields” (Program solicitation NSF 13-542).

### The IRES program is designed to:

- ▶ **Foster globally-engaged U.S. science and engineering students**, by giving students opportunities to engage in research while receiving mentorship from researchers at host sites
- ▶ **Promote international engagement and collaboration**, by supporting student participation in high-quality research in foreign settings and fostering international connections

To assess the program’s progress in achieving its goals and objectives, NSF commissioned Mathematica to do the following:

- ▶ **Conduct an evaluation of the IRES program** that will answer important questions about the program strategy, characteristics and outcomes of participants, and implications of findings for program improvement
- ▶ **Develop a data system** that will allow NSF to support prospective monitoring and evaluation of the program

This project builds on the monitoring and evaluation infrastructure being developed for the Research Experiences for Undergraduate Program. It will rely on data available at NSF and information gathered from the following sources:

1. Interviews with NSF program officers to learn about the IRES program and their learning priorities
2. A review of project documents to analyze information available about the characteristics of awards and program impacts and contributions to the literature from the perspective of principal investigators
3. A survey of former student participants to learn about program experiences and educational and employment outcomes

Photo credit: IRES student at the University of North Texas–Chile Biocultural Conservation Program (reproduced with permission).



For questions, please contact Jennifer Beck, the NSF contracting officer representative, at [jbeck@nsf.gov](mailto:jbeck@nsf.gov)