

J-WAFS Travel Grant for Water Conferences 2024 Call for Applications

Background

The Abdul Latif Jameel Water and Food Systems Lab (J-WAFS) was established in 2014 as an Institute-wide effort to bring MIT's unique strengths to bear on the many challenges of water and food supply. J-WAFS catalyzes MIT research, innovation, and technology for ensuring safe and resilient supplies of water and food while reducing environmental impact to meet the local and global needs of a rapidly expanding and evolving population on a changing planet.

J-WAFS is offering travel grants for graduate students to attend one of two major upcoming water sector conferences:

- [Stockholm World Water Week \(August 25-29, 2024, Stockholm, Sweden\)](#)
- [UNC Water & Health Conference \(October 14-18, 2024, Chapel Hill, North Carolina\)](#)

Through these grants we seek to support learning and networking opportunities for outstanding MIT graduate students who are pursuing careers in the water sector, whether in academia, non-profits, government, or industry.

J-WAFS anticipates awarding two to four students with funding to cover conference registration and travel expenses for each conference. The travel grants are supported by gifts to J-WAFS from our [Research Affiliate companies](#), Xylem Inc. and GoAigua. Xylem is a leading global water technology company with operations in more than 150 countries. The company was named to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index four times for advancing sustainable business practices and solutions worldwide. Xylem is a major sponsor of the Stockholm conference, and the selected students will benefit from opportunities to interact with Xylem leaders and participate in Xylem-sponsored side events. GoAigua is a Spanish company leading the digital transformation of the water industry, delivering services and technological solutions to manage the entire water cycle. With customers around the world, GoAigua is a strategic technological partner for the water industry. The company was also at the forefront of wastewater-based epidemiology for Covid-19.

Summary information about each conference is provided in the addendum to this announcement, and detailed information is available at the conference websites:

[Stockholm World Water Week website](#)

[UNC Water and Health Conference website](#)

Eligibility and Expectations

Students eligible to apply for the travel grant must be full-time MIT graduate students whose research, academics, and other activities demonstrate a commitment to addressing water quality, water supply, or related public or private sector challenges around water use, sustainability, and access, as well as an interest in pursuing a career in the water sector.

Students selected for support will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements, and if they don't hold a U.S. passport, they are responsible for determining visa requirements and applying in a timely manner for any needed visas.

Funded students will be expected to maintain a daily journal at the conference, in which they record and reflect on their experiences there, including sessions attended, people they meet or engage with, interactions with Xylem, what they are learning, and how the conference influences their thinking about their research or career aspirations. Upon return, J-WAFS' communications staff will request a summary of each student's experience, as well as photos to be used in the J-WAFS' newsletter, communications with the funders, and other materials. The funded students will also be asked to acknowledge their appreciation to Xylem and GoAigua for the gift that is supporting this funding opportunity and any additional opportunities provided during the conference.

Application and Selection Process

Applications for consideration should be sent by email to jwafsapPLY@mit.edu.

Stockholm World Water Week: Complete application packets (see detailed instructions below) are due by email no later than **5:00 p.m. ET on Monday, May 6, 2024.**

The UNC Water & Health Conference: Complete application packets (see detailed instructions below) are due by email no later than **5:00 p.m. ET on Monday, August 12, 2024.**

J-WAFS will select students to be awarded funding based on their statement of interest, resume and academic achievement, and expected benefit from attending the conference. Decisions are expected to be announced within a week or two of each application deadline.

Applications must include the following:

Part 1: Student application

Please submit the following, in a single PDF, in the order given below:

1. A completed [cover sheet](#).
2. Your resume or CV.



3. A brief, 1–2-page statement of interest. The statement should directly address these three questions:
 - Why would you like to attend Stockholm World Water Week or the UNC Water & Health Conference?
 - What water sector issues are of most interest to you?
 - What are your career and/or MIT research objectives and how will they benefit from attendance at this conference?
4. A current, unofficial copy of your transcript (this can be obtained free of charge from the [Registrar's Office](#)). (Please include only the transcript itself. Do not include any extraneous pages explaining how to read the transcript etc.)

Part 2: Faculty advisor support

Your MIT faculty advisor or program director should email a statement of support directly from his/her MIT email account to jwafsapply@mit.edu. The letter should confirm your MIT research interests and career objectives related to water, and the anticipated benefit of your participation in the conference.

Questions? Contact J-WAFS communications and program manager, Carolyn Blais at cblais@mit.edu.

See addendum below for additional information.



Addendum: Conference Information

Stockholm World Water Week (SIWI), August 25 – 29, 2024

[Stockholm World Water Week](#) is the annual focal point for the globe's water issues. It is organized by [SIWI](#), the Stockholm International Water Institute. The theme of World Water Week 2024 is 'Bridging Borders: Water for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future,' which focuses on water cooperation for peace and security. The theme asks us to recognize the regional and global interconnectivity of communities and nations, and underscores the collaborative effort needed to achieve a peaceful and sustainable future. The event takes place both online and on-site in Stockholm, Sweden.

World Water Week provides a unique forum for the exchange of views, experiences, and practices between the scientific, business, policy, and civic communities. It focuses on new thinking and positive action toward water-related challenges and their impact on the world's environment, health, climate, economic and poverty reduction.

Experts, practitioners, decision makers, business innovators, and young professionals from a range of sectors and countries attend World Water Week in Stockholm to network, exchange ideas, foster new thinking, and develop solutions to the most pressing water-related challenges of today. In 2023, the conference attracted 15,000 participants from 193 countries and territories, and consisted of 300 sessions and activities.

Xylem has been a collaborating sponsor of this important gathering of thought leaders for more than a decade, and is the Founding Global Sponsor of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. Depending on final arrangements, MIT students attending the conference may be invited by Xylem to join 50-60 [Junior Water Prize](#) winners for a tour of Xylem's facilities in Stockholm, and may be invited to a poster session for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

The UNC Water & Health Conference, October 14 - 18, 2024

Since its founding in 2009, the goal of the Water Institute at UNC has been to inform the way the world works on water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) issues by generating the evidence that drives improvements in both practice and policy. The annual [UNC Water and Health Conference](#) is intended to advance these goals by creating a widely accessible space where policymakers, practitioners and researchers can gather to review the evidence, interrogate the science and improve old and develop new approaches to expanding WaSH access.

Throughout the years, the UNC Water and Health Conference has brought together stakeholders from 122 countries around the world and engaged more than 3,700 registrants. More than 789 organizations have been represented and 258 universities. The 2024 conference will continue to explore the latest learnings around improving public health by achieving universal access to WaSH services that are safe, affordable and sustainable.

