



SOP # 301

Title: Physically Qualified (PQ)

Background: Field work in Greenland carries inherent risks due to environmental factors (extreme cold, high altitude, etc.) as well as logistics and other factors (shortage of transportation assets, distance from and/or difficulty accessing modern facilities). To ensure the health and safety of personnel working in remote field camps in Greenland and to minimize the risk of emergency evacuations, all researchers and employees are subject to requirements to complete and pass a National Science Foundation (NSF)-mandated physical exam. Currently no medical clearance procedures are required for projects in other locations.

Details: All researchers and employees working at remote field locations in Greenland for an extended period of time (see definition below) must complete the NSF physical exam annually. The NSF and Polar Field Services (PFS) must approve any exceptions to this rule prior to deployment.

The definition of a **remote field location** in Greenland is:

- Summit Station
- Camp Raven
- Remote tent camps on the inland ice and/or other locations where no villages, transportation or medical facilities are near. *This remains a gray area.*

The definition of an **extended period of time** is:

- For personnel who are working at Summit or Raven: working at the site for longer than a single Air National Guard flight period.
- For personnel who are working at a remote field site: being placed into the field and remaining in this location overnight without close-support aircraft in the region.

Individuals who are exempt from this requirement include:

- Media participants or distinguished visitors who are in the field more than two days and one overnight. If it is not clear whether a member of the media must complete the exam, PFS must get NSF approval to waive the PQ process.
- NASA-funded project participants who are approved to use the NSF logistics chain, unless they are working at Summit Station. NASA participants working at Summit for longer than one flight period must pass the exam.
- Participants not using the NSF logistics chain to access their field site.

However, researchers working under those circumstances should note that they are bound by any medical requirements of foreign camps/stations they might visit, and furthermore should be informed that NSF does not take responsibility for the health and safety of the science team, or their extraction from the field.



The project and supporting institution should be self-sufficient in that regard and arrange their own SAR insurance.

The NSF has set the guidelines and exemptions and therefore must approve any further exceptions prior to deployment. Scientists are required to budget for the cost of this exam in their grants. PFS employees will be reimbursed for any substantiated medical procedures that are within established company and NSF guidelines and have proper documentation.

Employees seeking reimbursement must submit all itemized invoices/receipts from their doctor and/or dentist, with either a zero balance on the invoice or some other form of proof of payment. This should be included with a PFS Medical Expense Form. Only NSF-mandated exams and procedures will be reimbursed.

Point of Contact: The point of contact for PFS is the PFS Health, Safety, Environment Manager. It is his/her responsibility to contact and track the progress of all known researchers and employees as early as possible in the planning process to begin the physical clearance procedures.

Required forms and exams: Anyone who is required to physically qualify must fill out the NSF Medical History Form (form 1422), and bring it with the "Dear Doctor" form (form 1423-B) to their physician and have the required examinations and lab work conducted.

Complete dental exams are required on an annual basis for all persons. Panorex or full mouth x-rays are required for all new participants. The individual's dentist must fill out the "Dear Dentist" form (form 1425-B) upon examination. These forms are available online at: <http://www.polar.ch2m.com>

Timeline: Individuals should send completed forms to the NSF Health Unit directly, at least 6 weeks prior to their scheduled field departure. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation or delay of the person's deployment.

At this time, forms cannot be accepted electronically. Participants should mail completed forms to:

Dr. Maria Ferreira
NSF Health Unit
4201 Wilson Blvd. 265S
Arlington, VA 22230
703-292-8124
Fax: 703-292-9001
maferrei@nsf.gov

Encourage participants to mail the forms via insured mail, FedEx or by other traceable mail services.



Arctic/Antarctic compatibility: Individuals who were physically qualified for the U.S. Antarctic Program during the previous year and whose exam was completed during the last 12 months may be exempt from further medical examination. An NSF doctor will determine whether the exams suffice following a review of the person's Antarctic medical forms.

Currently, to transfer Antarctic medical records for consideration within the Arctic program, the participant should contact Gwen Adams, gadams@nsf.gov, to request a transfer.

This request must come from the participant and not a third party. Within the request, participants should include the following information: prospective dates in the field and location of field site.

Physically Qualified: Upon being cleared by the NSF Doctor, both the participant and the PFS Health, Safety, Environment Manager will receive an email from the NSF Health Unit, informing both parties that the participant has physically qualified for deployment to Greenland. The PFS Health, Safety, Environment Manager will update ARLSS with the information that shows up on several internal reports.

Approval: NSF issues approvals after the on-staff NSF doctor has reviewed a participant's record and received any additional or missing test results. Most approvals are received within 2 weeks of submitting paperwork to the NSF. Approvals are valid for one year from the time of approval. On a case-by-case basis, an individual may request an extension from the NSF. Extensions may be granted if a participant appears to be in good health and there have been no major health issues in the previous year.

NPQ/Waivers: Due to unforeseeable circumstances there may be times when a person is deemed non-physically qualified (NPQ) by the NSF. Those who NPQ are not allowed to deploy unless they obtain a waiver from the NSF. Participants should contact the NSF directly to seek a waiver.