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Opportunity Title: The Pandora SmallSat: Multiwavelength Characterization of Exoplanets and their Host Stars
Opportunity Reference Code: 0255-NPP-NOV26-GSFC-Astrophys

Organization National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

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How to Apply All applications must be submitted in Zintellect

Please visit the NASA Postdoctoral Program website for application instructions and requirements: How to Apply | NASA Postdoctoral Program (orau.org)

A complete application to the NASA Postdoctoral Program includes:

1. Research proposal
2. Three letters of recommendation
3. Official doctoral transcript documents

Application Deadline 11/1/2026 6:00:59 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description

About the NASA Postdoctoral Program

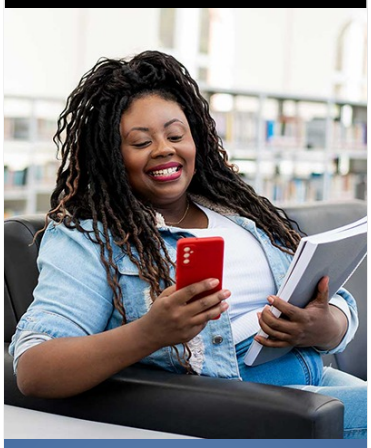
The NASA Postdoctoral Program (NPP) offers unique research opportunities to highly-talented scientists to engage in ongoing NASA research projects at a NASA Center, NASA Headquarters, or at a NASA-affiliated research institute. These one- to three-year fellowships are competitive and are designed to advance NASA's missions in space science, Earth science, aeronautics, space operations, exploration systems, and astrobiology.

Description:

The Pandora SmallSat, selected under NASA's Astrophysics Pioneers Program and currently in science operations as of 2026, is a flight project designed to advance our understanding of exoplanetary atmospheres. Utilizing long-duration, broad-wavelength coverage—with simultaneous visible-light photometry and near-infrared transmission spectroscopy—Pandora's primary mission is to disentangle the signals of planetary atmospheres from the contaminating effects of stellar activity (such as star spots and faculae) across K to M dwarf host stars. By accurately characterizing these active regions, Pandora will robustly determine the atmospheric compositions of planets ranging from Earth-size to Jupiter-size, identifying which worlds are shrouded in clouds and hazes. Utilizing a 0.45-meter Cassegrain telescope and leveraging a sensitive NIR sensor with JWST heritage, the Pandora mission is not only pioneering a new class of NASA astrophysics mission but is also a leader in cultivating the next generation of space mission leadership.

NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, home to the Pandora Science Operations Center, is seeking a Postdoctoral Fellow to join the mission team. This position offers a unique, dual-faceted opportunity to support both Pandora mission operations and independent scientific research. A Fellow will have the opportunity to contribute to Pandora Science Operations and/or the Data Pipeline—optimizing observing strategies, generating science calendars, developing software and tools to turn uncalibrated Pandora data into high-quality light curves and time-series spectra, and engaging with the broader science team to maximize scientific data quality and return.

Beyond operational support, the Fellow will also have the opportunity to lead and

NPP NASA Postdoctoral Program
ORAU Pathfinder

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participate in an array of Pandora science projects. This includes primary mission goals —such as analyzing exoplanet transmission spectra and modeling host star activity—as well as auxiliary science opportunities leveraging Pandora's continuous viewing and optical and near-infrared capabilities to study other variable phenomena and astrophysical transients.

Prospective applicants should reach out to a potential advisor below to discuss ideas for operational and/or scientific work that could be performed under this fellowship.

Qualifications for the Pandora opportunity include a Ph.D. in astronomy, physics, computer science or a related discipline. Prior experience with any of the following skills is desirable: astronomical software development, exoplanet transmission spectroscopy, atmospheres simulations, cool star astronomy, stellar spectra, NIR observational astronomy with HST/JWST, data analysis, systematics correction, time-series astronomy, astronomy image simulation development, Python, supercomputing/cluster computing, open source coding practices, software packaging, documentation.

Field of Science: Astrophysics

Advisors:

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Applications with citizens from Designated Countries will not be accepted at this time, unless they are Legal Permanent Residents of the United States. A complete list of Designated Countries can be found at: https://www.nasa.gov/oiir/export-control.

Eligibility is currently open to:

- U.S. Citizens;

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- U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR);
- Foreign Nationals eligible for an Exchange Visitor J-1 visa status; and,
- Applicants for LPR, asylees, or refugees in the U.S. at the time of application with 1) a valid EAD card and 2) I-485 or I-589 forms in pending status

Point of Contact Mikeala

Eligibility Requirements

- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree.