**CREST CAChE Welcome**

Welcome to the CREST Center for Aquatic Chemistry and Environment (CAChE) at Florida International University, we are excited to have you join our team! There are a few things we want all new members to know about us and our program, and this guide is meant to give a bit more info about our overall mission and expectations: both what we expect from our students and what they can expect from us. **We ask that all new CREST members read the following information fully and carefully, and please keep this document for future reference.**

As you may know, our center is funded by the National Science Foundation: we are one of almost 30 NSF Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST Centers), and ours at FIU is the Center for Aquatic Chemistry and Environment (CAChE). The CREST CAChE research mission is to tackle environmental contamination by addressing the sources, transport, and transformation of pollutants, and to create data visualizations that can effectively convey our findings with the public and decision-makers. But our main focus is the education and professional training of our students as they work towards completing their degrees. We believe that attaining a degree while acquiring useful skills should be the top priority of all our students, and CREST CAChE’s job is to provide support along the way.

You may have also heard that we were recently awarded full renewal funding in 2021 for CREST Phase II. For all new and returning students, we’d like to emphasize a few main things about our CREST program:

1. **ANYONE** interested in our work can be involved/affiliated as a CREST student, not only those MS and PhD students who are funded as CREST Fellows.\*
2. **ALL** CREST students are eligible to apply for additional funding to support purchase of research materials/supplies, field work, travel needs, professional development, software, and analyses at FIU labs like the CAChE Nutrient Analysis Lab.
3. Once affiliated, you are **ALWAYS** able to participate as a member of CREST until you graduate, and not only if/while you are being funded as a CREST Fellow.

\**If you intend to apply to become a CREST Fellow – which provides tuition and stipend funding up to 1-2 years for eligible MS and PhD students, respectively – you must fill out and submit the New Student Application/Nomination along with your faculty advisor.* *Please note that only US Citizens and/or Permanent Residents are eligible for CREST Fellowship.*

You can find out more on our website: [crestcache.fiu.edu](https://crestcache.fiu.edu/index.html). In particular, see our **Research** page for more details about the type of work we do, and the **Products and Resources** page which has lots of useful info such as the *Additional Funds Application*, found under Forms and Applications. We also have 3 dedicated CREST spaces at FIU which all members may use: CASE-158 and OE-112 at MMC; and AC1-331 at BBC.

**Requirements**

As a CREST CAChE student, there are a few things that we will need from you. Please review the following information carefully, as it applies to both new and current students:

* **All new students must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) online training**, and email a copy of your official RCR completion report to crestcache@fiu.edu. This is required at the start of the semester. You can find instructions on the Products and Resources page, under Forms and Guides: [RCR Training](https://crestcache.fiu.edu/products-and-resources/RCR%20Online%20Training%20Instructions.docx).
* If you are not yet listed among our website’s About page under Students, please send a headshot and a few sentences about your research interests. See examples: [Graduate Students](https://crestcache.fiu.edu/about/students/index.html). Students are not eligible for funding if they have not submitted their RCR certificate or bio info.

**Student Expectations**

For all students, there are a few regular activities in which we expect everyone’s participation:

1. **Journal club –** A chance for us to get together with all students and postdocs on a regular basis in Fall and Spring semesters. During these informal sessions we cover any issues and/or needs that you may have, and discuss opportunities for professional development or other collaborative work. This is a great way to meet fellow students/postdocs and learn about the kinds of research everyone is doing, and you may also propose workshops or trainings that you would like to have included in a future session. **We do expect all CREST students to attend these meetings**. They are informal and meant to benefit you in your degree. Meeting days/times will be determined at the start of each semester, so please stay tuned!
2. **ALL Hands Meeting** – Each Spring, we hold our annual All Hands Meeting, during which we present on the past year’s activities and plan ahead for future work. As students, you are a necessary part of this event and will be asked for the following:
* Before the All Hands Meeting, we must submit our annual report to NSF, which includes updates on all student progress. At the beginning of each Spring semester we will ask students to provide updated information on their work over the past year, including: *Project Title & Description, Products, Activities, Significant Results, Dissemination*, etc.
* Each student must also prepare a poster to present during the All Hands meeting. For this, we’ve created a poster template to help everyone get started. It is just a guide, and the content sections/headings may be edited to include “Preliminary Data” or “Expected Results” as necessary. The only required items are found along the bottom section of the template, including logos and acknowledgment text: [see template here](https://crestcache.fiu.edu/products-and-resources/crest-cache-student-poster-template-2019.pptx).
1. **Publication info –** For ALL publications, see the Acknowledgement Guidelines on our website. This is very important, so please refer to this guide when preparing a new publication.
2. **Data Requirements –** CREST students are also required by NSF to house data from their project on a secure data repository with the Center. There is a [User Manual](https://crestcache.fiu.edu/products-and-resources/crest-data-repository-manual.pdf) with more info available on the Products and Resources page.
3. **Social Media –** All students are also asked to please join us on LinkedIn (search for the CREST CAChE group and request to join) so that we can stay connected at FIU and beyond. You can also follow us on social media (Facebook and Twitter) @CRESTCAChE, where we post regular updates on our work and activities throughout each semester. If you’d like to promote your work with us, we’d be more than happy to help – just send an email to crestcache@fiu.edu.

If you have any questions about this or other CREST-related matters, please feel free to email us at crestcache@fiu.edu or call 305-348-3594. Thank you, and we look forward to working with you!

--

The CREST CAChE Team