The Fine Print

If you have concerns or questions about anything listed here, please contact the course coordinator before the application deadline. If you do not contact the course coordinator, by applying for the program we will assume that you are comfortable with all physical, psychological, academic, emotional, and financial requirements.

What your fee includes:

- Round trip flight from Waco to Grand Junction
- Checking one bag (50 pounds or less) on both the outgoing and return flight
- Transportation to and from Grand Junction and MDRS
- Double-occupancy hotel for two nights
- Food while you are at MDRS
- All MDRS fees required by the Mars Society
- Food at one of the orientation meetings
- ATV training
- Access to any supplies listed in the “MCC Kit” list
- Breakfast the morning of arrival at MDRS (provided by hotel)
- Printing one 36” x 48” color research poster, which will be kept by MCC and displayed as appropriate

What your fee does not include:

- Tuition
- Transportation to and from the Waco airport
- Checking more than one bag on a flight, or checking a bag over 50 pounds
- Any personal items you may need (clothing, laptop, camera, sleeping bag, etc.)
- Meals in the airport
- Dinner the night before arriving at MDRS or before flying back to Waco
- Costs for any equipment or supplies you may need for your research. Work with your advisor and sponsoring department to see what support they can provide in this area. Very limited funds are available through a petition process if all other avenues have been exhausted.
- Shipping any supplies to or from MDRS

Other information:

- All participants must be 18 years of age at the time of travel.
- Acceptance into the program does not guarantee which rotation you will be selected for. If you have particular scheduling requirements, discuss these with the coordinator before the beginning of the spring semester.
- Internet connection is very limited. Participants will not be able to use Skype, MyMathLab, Blackboard, YouTube, etc. during their time at MDRS. Overuse of the available bandwidth by any one person will result in the shutting down of Internet for the entire crew the following day.
- Wearing the helmet for the first time may cause anxiety. Air is pumped into the helmet, which helps considerably, but it can be initially stressful.
- You will not have much (if any) auditory privacy. All your conversations are likely to be overheard by everyone in the hab.
• Your image in the hab will be captured via webcam and published to the Internet every five minutes. Staterooms and bathrooms are the only camera-free areas.
• You will be expected to participate in a food study where your meals are carefully planned and monitored.
• The space suits are all different sizes. One or two may accommodate participants up to 275 pounds and up to 6’ 2”.
• The staterooms are very small. Three bunks are “low” and three are “high.” The bunks themselves about 10 inches narrower than a twin bed. Participants must have the agility to sleep in either a top bunk or a bottom bunk and must be able to fit into their sleeping quarters. Participants have been known to roll out of bed, so be careful!
• Field work requires wearing a 40-pound backpack and a clunky space suit, walking extensively and bending over to pick up samples.
• Participants will ride ATVs. Training will be provided. Strict speed protocols must be adhered to. Your GPS unit will record your max speed. Participants exceeding speed restrictions will be immediately suspended from all EVA activity.
• You will be expected to participate in all activities, including the orientation, geology, and chemistry EVAs, as well as the microbiology lab.
• You will be expected to participate in hab maintenance and cleaning, working on the engineering team for a rotation of two or three days (checklists and instructions are provided).
• The days will be long. Expect to be awake no later than 7 am and do not expect to go to bed until after the communication window with mission support ends at 9 pm. Nights might be longer when completing the astronomy work.
• Unless performing specific engineering hab maintenance, you will not be allowed to leave the hab unless you are “in sim.”
• Sanitary services are primitive. You will be lucky to shower once during your rotation. Hot water is not guaranteed and the toilet itself, while clean, requires a bucket of water to flush. Middle-of-the-night bathroom runs require climbing a ladder.
• Students may participate in the program as many times as they like, provided that space is available and that they continue to conduct effective research. That said, expect the application process to be increasingly competitive year-to-year.
• The hab is at 4400 ft elevation.
• There is limited cell phone service.
• You will be a member of a team. As a member of the team, you will help design a Team Operating Agreement, which you will be required to sign. You will also take a personality assessment.
• Expect to be flexible in traveling and living arrangements.
• All crew members will need to submit to Mars Society rules and regulations, and will be expected to file all required reports during a specific time and using a specific format.