



**Administrative Guide for the  
POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS IN BIOLOGY Program  
NSF 15-501**

**Revised June 2016**

**National Science Foundation Directorate for  
Biological Sciences Division of Biological Infrastructure**

**NSF 15-083**

## FOREWORD

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology (PRFB) Program awards Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology to recent recipients of the doctoral degree for research and training in selected areas supported by BIO and with special goals for human resource development in biology. Additional information about the program is available at [https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=503622](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503622).

This Guide outlines the administrative policies and procedures for Fellows and PRFB Host Institutions and incorporates all policies found in the Fellowship Offer Letter and the annual PRFB Program Solicitation. This guide does not supersede the award letter terms and conditions. The current Guide applies to the 2014 Fellowship year forward, unless otherwise noted or superseded by an updated version. **Please note that the Fellowship Terms and Conditions are subject to change, and it is the responsibility of the Postdoctoral Fellow to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Fellowship Program.**

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## COMMON ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, TERMS, LINKS, AND CONTACTS

Active	Fellow within the two or three-year Fellowship Period, not completed or terminated.
AAG	<a href="#">NSF Award and Administration Guide</a>
AOR	Authorized Organizational Representative (for Postdoctoral Fellowships this is the fellow)
Completed	Inactive Fellow with no Tenure years left
Continuing Fellow	Active Fellow in good standing with time left on the Fellowship
Deferral	Only approved for Military/Medical – there is no other deferral of the Fellowship
FASED	Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities
Fellow	Active NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology Fellow
Fellow ID	Fellow Identification Number assigned in FastLane; e.g., 2010123456
Forfeit	Active Fellow on Tenure, or beyond the two-year Reserve limit, who is not eligible to receive PRFB financial support
GPG	<a href="#">NSF Grant Proposal Guide</a>
Host Institution	Research institution where Fellow is working
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IRB	Institutional Review Board
Month	14 or more days in a calendar month
NCE	No-cost extension; relevant only in cases of fellowship deferral
New Fellow	Accepted Fellowship Offer and starting the first Fellowship Year
NSF	National Science Foundation
OMB	White House Office of Management and Budget
PAPPG	<a href="#">NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide</a>
PI	Principal Investigator
Program Office	NSF unit responsible for PRFB program management and oversight
PO	Program Director, the person who oversees your grant

PRFB	Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology
Stipend	Fellowship payment to Fellows on Tenure; prorated in whole-month increments
Tenure	Active Fellow in good standing
Terminated	Fellowship discontinued by NSF or Fellow

## NSF DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide: [NSF 16-001](#)

PRFB Program Solicitation: [NSF 15-501](#)

## CONTACTS

When communicating with the PRFB program by e-mail, please include your award number in the subject line.

### **For Competitive Areas 1 (Broadening Participation of Groups Under-represented in Biology) and 2 (Research Using Biological Collections)**

PRFB Program Office: [bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov](mailto:bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov)

DBI/BIO, Room 615

National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington VA 22230

Phone: (703) 292-8470; Fax: (703) 292-9063

Staff: Michael Vanni, Reed Beaman (Program Directors) and Zaneta S. Tyler (Program Specialist)

### **For Competitive Area 3 (National Plant Genome Initiative Postdoctoral Research Fellowships)**

NPGI PRF Program Office: [dbipgr@nsf.gov](mailto:dbipgr@nsf.gov)

IOS/BIO, Room 685

National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington VA 22230

Phone: (703) 292-4400; Fax: (703) 292-9062

Staff: Diane Jofuku Okamuro, Anne Sylvester, Eduardo Vallejos and Timothy Nelson (Program Directors), and Maya S. Anderson (Program Specialist)

## ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

PRFP operates on an annual cycle. The following are critical dates for administrative actions:

March/April	Program Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes new fellowship offers fellow applicant</li><li>• Accepts/declines fellowship offer</li></ul>
May 1	New Fellow <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verifies contact information, Host Institution, start date in FastLane</li><li>• Submits descriptive short title and abstract for fellowship work</li><li>• Obtains IRB or IACUC certifications, if needed</li></ul>
Summer	NSF's Division of Grants and Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Officially notifies New Fellow of award</li></ul>
June 1-Jan 1	New Fellow <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submits Postdoctoral Fellow Degree Certification form to the Program Office</li><li>• Submits FastStart Direct Deposit Form (<a href="#">NSF Form 1379</a>) to the Division of Financial Management (Contact Information on Form)</li><li>• Submits Fellowship Starting Certificate (<a href="#">NSF Form 349</a>) to Program Office when fellowship begins</li></ul>
Annually	Continuing Fellow <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submits Annual Project Report via <a href="#">Research.gov</a></li><li>• Verifies contact information in FastLane</li><li>• Updates IACUC and other certifications, if needed</li></ul>
Anytime	All Fellows <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit advance approval requests for foreign travel by e-mail to Program Director</li><li>• Submit request for a major change in research direction or change in Host Institution via email to Program Director; however major changes in research scope are submitted via <a href="#">Research.gov</a>.</li><li>• Submit starting certificates (<a href="#">NSF Form 349</a>) for Host Institutions if changing institutions by email to Program Specialist</li><li>• Send inquiries concerning payments to Program Specialist via emails</li></ul> <p>Program Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviews annual reports</li><li>• Approves/disapproves Fellow's requests</li></ul>
Termination	All Fellows <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit final project report via <a href="#">Research.gov</a></li><li>• Submit Project Outcomes Report for the General Public via <a href="#">Research.gov</a></li><li>• E-mail signed termination certificate (<a href="#">NSF Form 453</a>) for Host Institution to the Program Office</li><li>• Early Terminations must return to the NSF Program Office a prorated portion of the fellowship allowance and submit final report within 30 days.</li></ul>

This information outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology for [NSF 15-501](#) and provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your fellowship. NSF and your Host Institution will thus be able to serve you more quickly and efficiently, and unnecessary correspondence will be avoided.

As a recipient of NSF funds, you are responsible for fulfilling the academic and fiscal obligations of your award. Failure on your part to observe all the terms and conditions of this fellowship award constitutes sufficient grounds for its revocation by and repayment to NSF.



## **INTRODUCTION**

Your National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology has been awarded by the National Science Foundation in recognition of your accomplishments to date, and with the expectation that the experience you obtain during the tenure of your fellowship will increase your scientific competence and the scientific potential of the United States.

## **FELLOW RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Fellowship Acceptance and Degree Certification**

NSF expects that you will begin fellowship activities on the effective date of your fellowship shown in your notice of award, but not later than January 1 for (NPGI) and April 1 for (PRFB) of the year following your award notification. If you are not able to begin tenure by this date, you must contact the Program Director and you may decline the fellowship. This declination will not prejudice any future application.

Before you may begin your postdoctoral fellowship, NSF must have on record a certification of receipt of the doctoral degree and the date of receipt. If the degree is not received prior to the starting date of tenure, you must submit documents that all requirements for the degree have been completed before beginning fellowship tenure. Documents may come from the Dean of your graduate school or Registrar's office and must include letterhead, signature, and contact information.

### **Starting Your Fellowship**

You start the fellowship by submitting a Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#) to the Program Office. Fellowships may be started only on the first day of the month. To expedite your stipend and allowance payments, you should either fax or e-mail your signed starting certificate to the Program Office on the day you begin your fellowship (or the next day if the first day of the month falls on a weekend or Federal holiday). We do not consider your fellowship to have started until we receive your starting certificate and cannot authorize payments until it is received. If you affiliate with more than one institution over the course of the fellowship, a Starting Certificate is required each time you change institutions. If the fellowship start is delayed beyond the effective date stated in the award notice, NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the delay and permit the full tenure. You (as an individual registered in FastLane) must request the extension through [Research.gov](#). You are also the AOR and must forward the request to NSF. The sponsored projects office at your Host Institution cannot grant a no-cost extension to your fellowship.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research**

It is the responsibility of the Fellow, in conjunction with the Host Institution, to ensure that all academic and research activities carried out in or outside the U.S. comply with the laws or regulations of the U.S. and/or of the foreign country in which the academic and/or research activities are conducted. These include appropriate human subject, animal welfare, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. All academic and research activities should be coordinated with the appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities, and necessary licenses, permits, or approvals must be obtained prior to undertaking the proposed activities.

Some situations frequently encountered in the conduct of research require special information and supporting documentation before starting tenure. These include research involving:

1. An actual and/or potential impact on the environment;
2. A registered historic or cultural property;
3. The use of in vitro generated recombinant DNA molecules;
4. The use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals, or endangered species.

You must provide information on the status of any special permissions, clearances or provisions related to the above items before an award notice can be issued. Assessment of environmental impact will be required when appropriate. Specific guidance on the need for such additional documentation may be obtained from your Host Institution's Research Administration Office or the [NSF Award & Administration Guide](#).

### **Use of Vertebrate Animals**

The Fellow is responsible for the humane care and treatment of any vertebrate animals used or intended for use in such activities as field or laboratory research/experiments/testing, development, and training, or for related purposes supported by NSF grants. The latest [NSF Grant Proposal Guide](#) Chapter II.D.7 outlines the Fellow's responsibilities with regard to proposals involving vertebrate animals. In accordance with these requirements, fellowship projects involving use of any vertebrate animal for research or education must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at your Host Institution before an award can be made. For this approval to be accepted by NSF, the Host Institution must have a current Public Health Service (PHS) Approved Assurance.

You must provide this PHS number AND get an IACUC approval letter as an amendment that adds you, the project PI, onto the approval for your sponsoring scientist's lab. This letter must contain your name, the **exact title** of your project and the expiration date of the approval. These amendments are generally applicable for a year, so **you may need to send NSF a new approval each year** of your grant. If the Host Institution does not already have a PHS approval or you are working overseas, please contact your Program Director to determine the proper steps.

### **Use of Human Subjects**

The Fellow must ensure that subjects are protected from research risks in conformance with the relevant federal policy known as the Common Rule (*Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects*, 45 CFR 690). The [NSF Grant Proposal Guide](#) Chapter II.D.8 outlines the Fellow's responsibilities with regard to proposals involving human subjects. All projects involving human subjects must either (1) have approval from the organization's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before issuance of an NSF award or, (2) must affirm that the IRB has declared the research exempt from IRB review.

You must provide the IRB approval or exemption letter with the name of the project PI. This letter must contain your name and the **exact title** of your project. If the project is to be performed outside of the U.S., evidence of IRB approval is required.

## **Acknowledgement of NSF Support**

All publications, presentations, and creative works based on activities conducted during the fellowship must acknowledge NSF PRFB Support:

"This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology under Grant No. (NSF grant number)."

NSF support should also be acknowledged during all news media interviews, including popular media such as radio, television and news magazines.

You are also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Web pages) based on or developed under this award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

You are responsible for assuring that your cognizant NSF Program Director is provided access to, either electronically or in paper form, a copy of every publication of material based on or developed under this award, clearly labeled with the award number and other appropriate identifying information, promptly after publication.

## **Sharing of Findings, Data and Other Research Products**

NSF expects significant findings from research and education activities it supports to be promptly submitted for publication, with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. It expects Fellows to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of the work. It also encourages Fellows to share software and inventions or otherwise act to make the innovations they embody widely useful and usable.

Adjustments and, where essential, exceptions may be allowed to safeguard the rights of individuals and subjects, the validity of results, the integrity of collections or to accommodate legitimate interests of NSF-supported Fellows.

## **Reporting Requirements**

### **Annual Reports**

1. Submission Requirement. Fellows are required to submit annual project reports.
2. Content of Annual Project Reports. Fellows are required to submit annual reports electronically via the Project Reports System in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). Keep in mind the original abstract you and the program agreed to post at nsf.gov. Your fellowship consists of both a research project and your personal training goals, including career advancement activities for you. Be sure to list both research and training goals in the

Major Goals of the Project section and report on both appropriately in the prescribed format. Also, report on your broader impacts activities in the appropriate sections. Other requirements for annual project reports are specified in the system.

3. **Timing of Annual Project Reports.** Unless otherwise specified in the award, annual project reports shall be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the end of each 12-month award period. This period is measured from the effective date in your award notification and is not affected by a late start to your fellowship, no-cost extensions, family leave, or fellowship interruptions. The final annual report serves as the project's final report and must be submitted in accordance with the section below. A two-year fellowship requires one annual and one final report; a three-year fellowship requires two annual reports and one final report; etc. It is the Fellow's responsibility to submit annual reports on time. FastLane will continue to send reminders until the report is submitted.

#### Final Project Reports and Documents

1. **Final Project Report.** No later than 120 days following expiration of the grant, a final project report must be submitted electronically via the Project Reporting System in Research.gov. Failure to submit a final report will prevent you from receiving NSF funding in the future. You can submit proposals to NSF prior to submitting the final report; but a grant cannot be issued to you until the fellowship final report is submitted and approved. The final report is not a cumulative report and it should only describe activities and accomplishments in the final year of the project.
2. **Project Outcomes Report for the General Public.** No later than 120 days following expiration of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted in the Research Spending and Results section of the Research.gov website exactly as it is submitted and will be accompanied by the following disclaimer:

“This Project Outcomes Report for the General Public is displayed verbatim as submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) for this award. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Report are those of the PI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation; NSF has not approved or endorsed its content.”

Fellows are to ensure that the report does not contain any confidential, proprietary business information; unpublished conclusions or data that might compromise the ability to publish results in the research literature; or invention disclosures that might adversely affect the patent rights or those of the organization, in a subject invention under the award. Responses are not to contain any private personally identifiable information such as home contact information, individual demographic data or individually identifiable information collected from human research participants.

3. **Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report.** In addition, at the end of the Fellowship tenure period, Fellows must submit (by fax or email) to the cognizant NSF Program Director the [Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report, NSF Form 453](#).

## Other Reports

The Foundation would be pleased to receive an account of the Fellow's progress at any time, especially if there are particularly significant developments during a given Fellowship year. These reports can be submitted electronically as an interim report, via the Project Reports System in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).

NSF may periodically ask you to respond to questionnaires or other inquiries as a part of the follow-up activities of the program. Minimally, we intend to track each Fellow over 10 years with respect to positions, grants received, lists of publications, and research related honors and awards. Please update your contact information in FastLane after completion of the fellowship and keep NSF up-to-date on your continuing role in science when requested or as you wish.

## Change in Research Plan

Minor changes in your research and training plan proposed in your original or revised application may be made at your discretion and with the concurrence of your sponsoring scientist. However, you must obtain prior approval from the Program Office for any major change by outlining and justifying the changes. The request should be submitted via email to the Program Director. The Program Director will determine if the revised research and training plans are appropriate. Major changes in scope or strategies are submitted via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).

## Communication

PRFB communications are conducted predominately by e-mail. Therefore, it is the Fellow's responsibility to keep their Contact Information current (especially e-mail addresses and phone numbers). Fellows completing their fellowships should update their contact information to allow the Program Office to contact them in the future.

To contact the Program Office, Fellows should e-mail [bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov](mailto:bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov) (Competitive Areas 1 and 2) or [dbipgr@nsf.gov](mailto:dbipgr@nsf.gov) (Competitive Area 3) and include his or her full name, Award ID, and details of the issue or request. Please ensure spam filters do not block the NSF PRFB e-mail address. The Program will follow-up with Fellows, via e-mail or phone, depending on the nature of the request.

## HOST INSTITUTION

By law, as a Fellow, you must affiliate with an appropriate research institution during the entire fellowship tenure. You are responsible for making all arrangements for such affiliation with the Host Institution. A clear relationship should be established with the chosen institution before beginning tenure, to assure both you and the Foundation that it will be possible for you to carry out the program of research and training for which the fellowship was awarded. Therefore, you should share information about your fellowship (e.g., a copy of the award notice and this instruction booklet) with both your sponsoring scientist and administrative personnel at your Host Institution. They may have no experience with NSF fellowships and may not be familiar with the special conditions of fellowships versus research grants and cooperative agreements.

## Sponsoring Scientist

Your application named a staff member(s) at the Host Institution(s) to serve as your sponsoring scientist(s). The sponsoring scientist will be the institutional representative responsible for your

activities during the fellowship and must sign your starting and termination certificates in this role unless your Host Institution has other requirements for signatures or your sponsoring scientist is absent, in which case an appropriate official of the Host Institution may sign. If you have arranged co-sponsorship, only one sponsoring scientist at each location needs to sign the certificates.

Any questions relating to your status at the Host Institution, which cannot be answered by your sponsoring scientist, should be referred for resolution to other appropriate officials within the Host Institution, such as a department chair, dean, or a designated institutional representative.

### **Change of Host Institution**

If it becomes necessary or desirable to affiliate with a Host Institution other than the one listed in the application and/or with a different sponsoring scientist, you must request permission from your Program Director via email prior to making the change. The request must state the reasons for the proposed change and explain the appropriateness of the new institution for the proposed plan of study. The request must contain a new sponsoring scientist's statement using the format from the fellowship instructions as in the original application, including the new sponsor's CV and current and pending support. This must be done **before** final arrangements with the new institution are completed. **You may not begin tenure at the new institution until your Program Director approves all changes.**

If the change in Host Institutions is because your sponsoring scientist is moving to a new institution, an e-mail explaining the move will suffice as long as the new institution provides you the same or equivalent opportunities to conduct the research and planned training.

## **FELLOWSHIP TENURE**

### **Fellowship Tenure**

The Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology are awarded for a 24-month or 36-month continuous period. The maximum tenure of your fellowship is 36 months, barring any extension as outlined below. If the fellowship start is delayed beyond the effective date stated in the award notice, NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the delay and permit the full tenure. You (as an individual registered in FastLane) must request the extension through [Research.gov](https://www.nsf.gov/researchgov).

The sponsored projects office at your Host Institution cannot grant a no-cost extension to your fellowship.

During the tenure of the fellowship, you are expected to devote full time to the scientific research and training outlined in the application for which the award was granted. You may not engage in activities for compensation (except for brief military obligations) or receive another fellowship or research award without the prior approval of the Foundation. Such approval is granted only under exceptional circumstances.

### **Paid Leave**

Within the fellowship period, one month per year of fellowship duration may be used for paid leave, including parental or family leave. The paid leave cannot be used to increase the level of NSF support beyond the duration of the fellowship. You are also entitled to the short holiday



periods observed by your Host Institution, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring holidays. These holiday periods cannot be accumulated for use at a later date as vacation. If your Host Institution should "close" for a period in excess of two weeks, you will be expected to have made prior arrangements for the use of necessary facilities to carry out the approved program. If it is not possible for you to make these arrangements at the Host Institution, other arrangements must be made, with prior NSF approval, to carry on the work or suspension of the fellowship for that period of time should be requested from your Program Director.

### **Unpaid Leave**

Interruptions in tenure or extensions without additional cost to NSF are permitted only for extenuating circumstances, including medical leave or dependent care. The leave cannot be used to increase the level of Fellow stipend support beyond 24 or 36 full-time-equivalent months. A no-cost extension may be requested to extend the fellowship award in order to complete the research and broadening participation goals, but no supplemental funds will be provided for this purpose.

### **Military Deferral Status**

Military Deferral is intended for Fellows who must interrupt their postdoctoral research for Active Duty. Fellows must request Military Deferrals from the Program Office. Military Deferral must be renewed each year, and a new copy of duty orders must be submitted to the Program Director. Failure to renew Military Deferral Status may result in termination of the fellowship.

Within a given fellowship year, duly authorized military service or training is permitted without penalty to the Fellow with the approval of the NSF, if the service does not compromise the Fellow's research progress. Requests for such interruptions of tenure should be directed to the Foundation in writing as soon as plans are final. Interruptions of less than four days do not require approval.

### **Paid Teaching**

The Fellow may opt to accept a teaching position paid by the Host Institution. Because, as a Fellow, you may not be paid concurrently for time on the fellowship and time teaching, you must defer the fellowship stipend during the teaching interval. Please work with your Program Director and Program Specialist to initiate the process for deferring the fellowship in advance of the start of the teaching assignment. The deferment should be in whole month increments, and should have the sponsor's concurrence. It is your responsibility to apply for a no-cost extension to extend the fellowship period for the number of months deferred.

## **FELLOWSHIP COMPLETION AND TERMINATION**

At the end of the fellowship tenure period, you must submit (by fax or e-mail) the [Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report](#), [NSF Form 453](#) to the Program Specialist. This certificate must be signed by your sponsoring scientist or an appropriate official at your Host Institution and should show the date you actually completed fellowship activities. If you affiliated with more than one institution, a Termination Certificate is required from each institution.

Submission of this certificate is necessary to comply with governmental accounting procedures. In the event the certificate is not submitted, you may be requested to return to NSF all fellowship funds that were received during fellowship tenure.

## **FELLOWSHIP DETAILS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Stipend**

The stipend for fellowships is specified in the solicitation that was active at the time of the award. Fellowships are typically made for either 24 or 36 months. Unlike salary, stipend payments are made in advance. Stipend payments are processed by NSF around the 20th of the month for the following month and are paid by the U.S. Treasury into your account at a Financial institution. If you have not received payment by close of business on the first of the month, please contact your Program Specialist. As stipends are normally paid in advance, you will not receive a stipend payment at the end of your last month.

Stipend payments are made directly to you via electronic funds transfer to a U.S. account. The fellowship is an award to you as an individual and payment cannot be deposited directly into the Host Institution's account. To receive payments from the fellowship, you must complete the [FastStart Direct Deposit Form](#), [NSF Form 1379](#). The form must be signed and submitted to the NSF Division of Financial Management (DFM) as shown on the form. Please be sure to check the "Fellow" box and name your Program Director as the NSF Contact at the top of the form. Your home address must be provided; your financial institution must be located in the United States; and you must sign the form to certify the accuracy of the information contained on the form and that you have read the Privacy Act Statement.

The first stipend will be paid as soon as possible after the completed forms are received by NSF, usually within 7 business days -- but delays are possible. You are encouraged to make arrangements for your account prior to starting your fellowship. If you change accounts during your fellowship, you must file a revised [FastStart Direct Deposit Form](#). Since stipend payments are processed around the 20th of each month, please submit a revised form in the preceding month to allow sufficient processing time and keep the old account open until a payment is received in the new account.

### **Fellowship Allowance**

The fellowship allowance is paid at the rate of \$15,000 per year of the fellowship. This allowance is intended to cover costs of research and training and may also be used for fringe benefits. Allowable costs for fringe benefits include individual or family health insurance (any combination of medical, vision, and/or dental) whether purchased as a group or individual plan, disability insurance, retirement savings, dependent care, and moving expenses. The fellowship allowance is paid either as a pro-rated monthly amount or annually at the beginning of each fellowship year as selected by the Fellow. You must initiate your preferred payment type within 30 days of fellowship start otherwise it will default to a monthly payment. The fellowship allowance is spent at the Fellow's discretion, except for foreign travel, which requires prior NSF approval. Allowable research costs include travel, such as short-term visits to other institutions or laboratories, field work, and attendance at scientific meetings, training, special equipment, IT equipment and software, supplies, publication costs, access fees for databases and other research-related expenses. The Fellow should keep records to document expenditures in the



event of an audit by the NSF Inspector General or the Internal Revenue Service. These records should be maintained by the Fellow but not submitted to NSF unless requested by the program office.

If you terminate your fellowship early, a prorated portion (calculated as a fraction of the completed fellowship versus the planned duration) of the fellowship allowance may need to be returned to NSF. You should write a check or money order made out to the NSF and mail to the Program Specialist. No funds may be spent after the expiration date of your fellowship and funds cannot be converted to another use.

### **Income Tax**

No income tax will be withheld from any stipend or allowance. Provision, therefore, must be made by you for payment of any tax, domestic or foreign, when due. Final authority as to the taxability of awards rests with the Internal Revenue Service and the courts. Specific questions should be referred to the Internal Revenue Service. IRS Publication 970 and Tax Topic 421 address tax issues on fellowships. Fellows going abroad may find it helpful to consult IRS Publication No. 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad.

Fellows are not in any sense employees of the National Science Foundation. Therefore:

- No funds will be deducted from your stipend nor reported to the IRS
- No Social Security taxes will be paid by NSF; and,
- No W-2 or 1099 forms will be issued.

In addition, you must accept responsibility for the filing of any necessary estimated taxes due and for payment of all income taxes which may become due.

NSF is unable to supply information concerning the U.S. income tax or other tax provisions of any foreign country. Inquiries should be directed to the authorities in the appropriate countries. If you need a statement of funds received (including the fellowship allowance) send an email to the NSF Division of Financial Management at [bfadfmils@nsf.gov](mailto:bfadfmils@nsf.gov).

### **Travel**

There is no separate allowance for travel and moving expenses to the fellowship institution. You may use your fellowship allowance to pay these costs once the fellowship begins. You may use your fellowship allowance for your expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence and related items when you are in travel status on business related to your NSF-supported project. Travel within the U.S. does not require prior NSF approval. Information regarding foreign travel can be found in the INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES section of this document.

You must travel using economy airfare. If this is not possible, please contact your Program Director. Train, bus or other surface carriers may be used in lieu of, or as a supplement to, air travel at the lowest first-class rate by the transportation facility used. If such travel could have been made by air, the allowance will not normally exceed that for economy airfare.

### **Stipend Supplementation**

Each Fellow is expected to devote full time to research during tenure of the Fellowship. However, because it is generally accepted that teaching or similar activities constitute a valuable part of the education and training, a Fellow may participate in these activities to the extent that they do not interfere with the proposed research and training plan without NSF

approval. It is expected that furtherance of the Fellow's educational objectives and gain of substantive teaching or other experience, not service to the institution as such, will govern these activities. Compensation for such activities is not permitted.

Sponsoring scientists and Host Institutions may supplement a Fellow's stipend with non-Federal funds. Fellows may solicit and accept non-Federal support within the Host Institution for research expenses, such as laboratory supplies, instrumentation usage fees, field-station usage fees, travel expenses, conference/registration fees, workshop expenses, or subscription fees.

### **Health Insurance**

Health insurance is not available through NSF but you are strongly encouraged to secure health insurance as it is now required by law. The fellowship allowance may be used for its purchase. You should discuss with your Host Institution whether you can participate in a group plan or if you need to purchase your own policy. You may find COBRA coverage is available to you. If you have chosen a Host Institution outside the United States, be sure that your insurance is applicable there.

### **Veteran's Benefits**

As a result of the enactment of P.L. 91-219, effective March 26, 1970, educational benefits payments from the Veterans Administration may now be received concurrently with and supplementary to fellowship payments from the National Science Foundation.

### **Future Employment**

The award and acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellowship does not obligate a Fellow, the National Science Foundation, or the United States Government with regard to future employment or future service of any kind.

### **Federal and/or Armed Forces Employees**

If, during any part of a Fellowship tenure, you will be a member of the Armed Forces or on leave from a position in the Federal Service, a statement must be filed from a cognizant official of the Government organization involved specifying (1) the funds, if any, that will be made available to you during tenure and the purpose for which they will be provided, and (2) the funds, if any, that will be made available to your Host Institution on your behalf. NSF and your Host Institution must reach a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding your support during tenure before any funds can be provided under the fellowship.

### **Liability**

NSF cannot assume any liability for accidents, illnesses or claims arising out of any work supported by your award or for unauthorized use of patented or copyrighted materials. You are advised to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to insure or protect yourself and your property.

### **Rights to Inventions or Writings**

NSF claims no rights to any inventions or writings that may result from its fellowship awards. However, you should be aware that NSF, other Federal agencies, or private parties may acquire such rights through other grant support. Fellows at foreign institutions should be aware

that specific provisions regarding allocations of intellectual property rights apply to particular countries, and you should be cognizant of any such provisions before commencing work.

### **Referrals to the NSF Office of the Inspector General**

The NSF Inspector General is responsible for investigating all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as allegations of research misconduct in connection with NSF programs and operations. You shall promptly refer to the NSF Inspector General ([oig@nsf.gov](mailto:oig@nsf.gov); <https://www.nsf.gov/oig/> or 1-800-428-2189) any allegations or credible evidence of research misconduct or criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to misappropriation, fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct involving NSF funds.

## **INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

[AAG](#) Chapter VI.F details NSF requirements for international travel and research.

### **Foreign Tenure**

International affiliations, either short-term or for the duration of the fellowship award, are allowed and encouraged. All arrangements for affiliation with a fellowship institution abroad and provision for housing are the responsibility of the Fellow. Some Fellows, particularly those with families, have experienced difficulty in finding suitable housing in foreign countries.

Fellows should be aware that housing shortages exist in many foreign cities, and that living costs may exceed those in comparable cities in the U.S. Early correspondence with the Host Institution regarding housing needs is recommended. Stipends and foreign living allowances are paid in US dollars only.

For Fellows going abroad, travel time from the U.S. to a fellowship institution and from that institution to the U.S., up to a maximum of one week each way, may be considered as part of tenure. Thus, the actual tenure at the fellowship institution, as shown on the Starting and Termination Certificates, may be up to two weeks less than the total authorized tenure for which stipends are to be paid.

If your fellowship includes a foreign living allowance and additional funds for foreign travel, these funds are intended to cover increased costs at your foreign location. NSF cannot give you tax advice on how to report these allowances.

### **Foreign Travel**

If you and your sponsoring scientist judge it appropriate for you to travel abroad, you must seek NSF approval before you travel. You can request prior approval by e-mail from your Program Director. The only fellowship funds available for such travel are within the Fellowship Allowance. In your e-mail, include the purpose of the trip and an itinerary. If you are attending a scientific meeting, it is expected that you will be giving a presentation; therefore give the title of your presentation and the name, place, and date of the meeting in the request for approval.

You are responsible for making all arrangements for securing a passport and visa. Visa regulations vary greatly by country, and to avoid the possibility of lengthy delay, you should make the necessary applications well before departure.

All travel to be reimbursed from Federal funds must be made via use of U.S. flag carriers if such service is available per the Fly America Act (for restrictions concerning the use of non-U.S. Flag carriers while on foreign travel, see [AAG](#) Chapter VI.F.1.

## **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Research Opportunities in Europe for NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows**

U.S. scientists and engineers with NSF-funded Postdoctoral Research Fellowships may pursue research collaboration with European colleagues supported through EU-funded European Research Council (ERC) grants. The Dear Colleague Letter [NSF 15-042](#) gives details on how to apply and requirements. This letter invites current Postdoctoral Research Fellows to apply for research visits to any identified, appropriate European research group. Information is available via email ([nsf-erc@nsf.gov](mailto:nsf-erc@nsf.gov)).

### **Opportunities as a Principal Investigator**

As you begin your independent research career, you may wish to apply for NSF research grants. Especially appropriate for new investigators is an NSF-wide “cross-cutting” program called the Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER). See <https://www.nsf.gov> for more information.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities**

Fellows who have disabilities may apply for funding for special assistance or equipment through the Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) program, [GPG.II.D.4 https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg) The Fellow will be responsible for submitting the NSF proposal for a Supplemental funding request to the existing PRFB Award. If multi-year funding is requested, the Fellow is responsible for requesting continuation of the FASSED, based on a Fellow's satisfactory progress.

#### **Proposal**

Fellows should discuss their accommodation needs with their Host Institution and sponsoring scientist and prepare a proposal including any ancillary documents, such as the sponsoring scientist's letter of support. The proposal should include an overview of current research and a detailed budget (annual and cumulative) and justification. The Fellow submits the proposal as a supplemental funding request to the existing PRFB award. Requests must be submitted at least two months before funds are needed. Funding decisions will be made on the basis of the justification and availability of program funds, with any resultant funding provided through a formal amendment of the existing PRFB award. FASSED proposals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the PRFB Program Office.

#### **Reporting**

Once a supplement is awarded, Fellows are required to address how the FASSED award facilitated their research in their Annual Activities Reports (i.e., include a paragraph that begins with "FASSED:" under the "Fellowship Summary" section in the Activities Report).