



National Science Foundation  
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## SEES Fellows Award Management Guidelines

The NSF SEES Fellows program now has three cohorts of Fellows -- 2012, 2013 and 2014. The program supports both the research and the professional development of the individual Fellows. This document provides some guiding principles related to employment options and other research grant opportunities, for use by Fellows, their institutional administrators (SPO/SRO), and their cognizant NSF Program Officers. Fellows who have a question about their award should discuss it with their institutional administrator first, before contacting NSF.

Question #20 in the "Frequently Asked Questions for NSF SEES Fellows Solicitation" (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2014/nsf14004/nsf14004.jsp?org=MPS#q20>) addresses one aspect of employment as follows:

**20. I am a current Fellow. I have accepted a tenure track appointment at a university. Can I take the remaining award money with me to augment my start-up package?**

Congratulations on your appointment! SEES Fellows awards are intended to "develop a workforce trained in the interdisciplinary scholarship needed to understand and address the complex issues of sustainability." Please discuss your situation with the NSF managing Program Officer for your grant. A decision on your request will depend on whether the new position will allow you to advance the objectives/requirements of the SEES Fellows program including, for example, interdisciplinary research experience beyond current core disciplinary expertise, a research partnership that broadens the impact/scope of the research, and professional development.

In the following, we provide more details on this issue and a few related issues.

SEES Fellows are expected and encouraged **not** to wait until the end of their award to seek their next career/funding opportunities. Significant flexibility exists in adjusting SEES Fellows awards to accommodate a variety of situations. SEES Fellows awards are **standard grants** and are governed by NSF rules and the stipulations in the solicitations [NSF 11-575](#), [NSF 12-601](#), and [NSF 13-595](#).

An important over-arching principle is that the objectives of the SEES Fellows project, as detailed in the proposal, must remain substantially unchanged. If the Fellow's time commitments will be reduced, the resulting reductions of scope must be explicitly described, and the Fellow must make a compelling case, in terms of original objectives, for continuation of the award.

Another significant issue relates to salary support. As noted in the NSF [Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II.C.2.g\(i\)](#):

"As a general policy, NSF limits salary compensation for senior project personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year. This limit includes salary compensation received **from all NSF-funded grants**.

NSF award funds may not be used to augment the total salary or salary rate of faculty

members during the period covered by the term of faculty appointment or to reimburse faculty members for consulting or other time in addition to a regular full-time organizational salary covering the same general period of employment."

All of the following are possible, subject to agreement by both the grantee institution and the cognizant NSF Program Officer (PO) (who will verify acceptability with other internal NSF units). The PO will forward to the Division of Grants and Agreements the Fellow's proposed plan for continuing activities described in his/her original SEES Fellows proposal.

- a. Although Fellows may not be employed in a tenure-track position as of the proposal deadline, Fellows who accept tenure-track positions after receiving their award may keep their award.
- b. Although the solicitation indicates specific budgetary limitations (for example, \$264,000 for 36 months of PI salary and benefits, \$60,000 for additional research expenses, etc. in solicitation [NSF 13-595](#)), Fellows who accept tenure-track positions can make post-award budgetary changes to reflect the salary level of their new position.
- c. The award duration can be extended, per general NSF policy via no cost extensions.
- d. If a Fellow is moving to a new position at a different institution, and will continue to work on his/her SEES Fellows project, and if both institutions as well as NSF agree to transfer the award to the Fellow's new institution, this can be accomplished according to the [Award and Administration Guide Chapter II.B.2.h](#). The Fellow is responsible for ensuring that the new institution is SEES-eligible (that is, any institution that falls within the scope of the first two bullets in the "Who May Submit Proposals" section of the solicitation to which the original proposal was submitted). See also b) above regarding salary support.
- e. If the Fellow is moving to a new position within the same institution, and will continue to work on his/her SEES project, he/she will need to describe the proposed change in an email to his/her institutional administrator and cognizant NSF program officer. If the budget will change, a revised budget and associated Budget Impact Statement also should be provided to the cognizant PO for inclusion in the award jacket.
- f. If the Fellow moves to a position at a non-SEES-Fellows eligible institution (that is, any institution that does not fall within the scope of the first two bullets in the "Who May Submit Proposals" section of the solicitation to which the original proposal was submitted), then the award cannot be transferred, and may need to be terminated. However, Fellows may be able to negotiate an adjunct or other appointment/arrangement at the original grantee institution in order to continue their SEES Fellows project activities. In the latter case, a revised budget and associated Budget Impact Statement, as well as a revised scope of work (due to the change to an adjunct position) should be emailed to the cognizant PO for inclusion in the award jacket.
- g. If the Fellow gets salary support from another research grant (e.g., as a participant on another NSF award), the SEES Fellows grant period can be extended to accommodate this, provided that the SEES Fellow does not receive more than 12 months' salary from NSF awards during a calendar year.

For all of the above situations, the Fellow needs to work closely with his/her institutional administrator and with his/her cognizant NSF Program Officer.