



U.S. National Science Foundation  
Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in  
Biology

Administrative Guide

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**Directorate for Biological Sciences**  
Division of Biological Infrastructure  
Division of Integrative Organismal Systems

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## 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 fellowships to recent recipients of the doctoral degree for research and training in selected areas supported by the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) and with special goals for human resource development in biology. Additional information about the program is available on the [PRFB Program Webpage](#).

This Administrative Guide outlines the administrative policies and procedures for Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology (PRFB) Fellows and Host Institutions and incorporates all policies found in the Fellowship Offer Letter and the PRFB Program Solicitation. This Administrative Guide, in conjunction with the award letter, comprise the **award terms and conditions** for the PRFB Fellowship award.

The current Administrative Guide applies to all current and future fellows, unless otherwise noted or superseded by an updated version. **It is the responsibility of the Fellow to ensure compliance with all the terms and conditions of the Fellowship Program.**

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 revocation of the award by and repayment to NSF.

This Administrative Guide also provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your fellowship to help NSF and your Host Institution to serve you more quickly and efficiently and avoid unnecessary correspondence. Please also familiarize yourself with the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#), which provides guidance on managing your award.

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

<b>Active</b>	Status of Fellow during Fellowship Period, not completed or terminated
<b>ACM\$</b>	Award Cash Management Service
<b>AOR</b>	Authorized Organizational Representative (for Postdoctoral Fellowships this is the fellow)
<b>Completed</b>	Inactive Fellow with no Tenure years left
<b>Continuing Fellow</b>	Active Fellow in good standing with time left on the Fellowship
<b>DBI</b>	BIO's Division of Biological Infrastructure
<b>Deferral</b>	Only approved for Military/Medical – there is no other deferral of the Fellowship
<b>DFM</b>	Division of Financial Management
<b>Effective</b>	The awarded date of fellowship (see grant notice)
<b>FASED</b>	Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities
<b>Fellow</b>	Active NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology Fellow
<b>Fellow ID</b>	Fellow Identification Number assigned in Research.gov e.g., 2010123456
<b>Fellowship Allowance</b>	Funds to cover expenses such as research, training, travel, and fringe benefits; set by program solicitation under which award is granted.
<b>Host Institution</b>	Research institution where Fellow is working
<b>IACUC</b>	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
<b>IOS</b>	BIO's Division of Integrative Organismal Systems
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>Month</b>	14 or more days in a calendar month
<b>NCE</b>	No-cost extension
<b>New Fellow</b>	Accepted Fellowship Offer and starting the first Fellowship Year
<b>NSF</b>	National Science Foundation
<b>OMB</b>	White House Office of Management and Budget
<b>PAPPG</b>	<a href="#">NSF Proposal &amp; Award Policies &amp; Procedures Guide</a>
<b>PI</b>	Principal Investigator
<b>Program</b>	NSF unit in BIO responsible for PRFB program management and oversight
<b>PD</b>	Cognizant NSF Program Director, the person who oversees your grant
<b>PRFB</b>	Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology
<b>Stipend</b>	Fellowship payment to Fellows during award; prorated in whole-month increments; set by program solicitation under which award is granted.
<b>Tenure</b>	Time period of award funding during which Fellow is Active and in good standing
<b>Termination</b>	Fellowship discontinued by NSF or Fellow

## NSF Documents and Publications

Please bookmark this section for future reference.

[NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#)  
[PRFB Program Webpage](#) (includes a link to the solicitation)  
[Research.gov](#)

## Contacts

When communicating with the PRFB program by email, you should always CC the appropriate Program Alias (see below). **Please include your award number in the subject line.**

For Competitive Areas 1 and 2:

Areas 1,2 Program Alias: [bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov](mailto:bio-dbi-prfb@nsf.gov)  
DBI/BIO, Room W 12200  
National Science Foundation  
2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 292-8470; Fax: (703) 292-9063

For Competitive Area 3:

Area 3 Program Alias: [dbipgr@nsf.gov](mailto:dbipgr@nsf.gov)  
IOS/BIO, Room E 12300  
National Science Foundation  
2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 292-4400; Fax: (703) 292-9062

## ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

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

<b>March-May</b>	<p>New Fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts new fellowship offer</li> <li>• Verifies contact information, Host Institution, start date</li> <li>• Submits descriptive abstract for fellowship work</li> <li>• Submits updated Current and Pending Support</li> <li>• Submits banking data via web portal on Research.gov</li> <li>• Obtains IRB or IACUC approval, if required</li> </ul>
<b>Summer</b>	<p>NSF's Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officially notifies New Fellow of award</li> </ul>
<b>Summer through September 1 of next year</b>	<p>New Fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submits Postdoctoral Fellow Degree Certification form to the Program</li> <li>• Submits banking data via web portal on Research.gov</li> <li>• Submits Fellowship Starting Certificate (<a href="#">NSF Form 349</a>) to Program when fellowship begins</li> </ul>
<b>Annually</b>	<p>Continuing Fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submits Annual Project Report via Research.gov</li> <li>• Verifies contact information in Research.gov</li> <li>• Updates IACUC and IRB, if needed</li> </ul>
<b>Anytime</b>	<p>All Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit requests for prior approval request for foreign travel by email to the cognizant NSF Program Director, if applicable</li> <li>• Submit requests for a major change in research direction or change in Sponsor or Host Institution via Research.gov</li> <li>• Submit Starting Certificate (<a href="#">NSF Form 349</a>) for Host Institution if changing institutions by email to appropriate Program Alias.</li> <li>• Email inquiries concerning payments to cognizant Program Director, CC appropriate Program Alias.</li> </ul> <p>Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews and approves annual project reports</li> <li>• Approves/disapproves Fellow's requests</li> </ul>
<b>Completion or Termination</b>	<p>All Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit final annual project reports via Research.gov</li> <li>• Submit Project Outcomes Report for the General Public via Research.gov</li> <li>• For Early Terminations, first email Program Alias. Must return a prorated portion of the fellowship allowance to NSF and submit a Final Annual Project Report and a Project Outcomes Report within 30 days</li> </ul>





## INTRODUCTION

Your NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology has been awarded by the U.S. 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

### Communication

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

To contact the Program, please email either [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 your full name, Award ID, and details of the issue or request. Please ensure spam filters do not block NSF email addresses. The Program will follow-up with Fellows, via email or phone, depending on the nature of the request.

### Fellowship Acceptance and Degree Certification

Before you begin your postdoctoral fellowship, the 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 the fellowship, you must submit documents that all requirements for the degree have been completed before beginning the fellowship appointment. Documents may come from the Dean of your graduate school or Registrar's office and must include letterhead, signature, and contact information. Degree documentation should be sent to the appropriate PRFB Program Alias before your start date.

## Starting Your Fellowship

You start the fellowship by submitting a [NSF Form 349, Fellowship Starting Certificate](#) to the Program. Fellowships may be started only on the first day of the month. To expedite your stipend and allowance payments, you should email your signed Starting Certificate to the appropriate PRFB Program Alias on the day you begin your fellowship (or the next business 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, the NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the time frame of the delay and permit the full appointment period. You (as an individual registered in Research.gov) must request a no-cost extension through Research.gov no earlier than 120 days but at least 45 days prior to the expiration of the fellowship award. You also serve as the Authorized Organizational Representative for your award and must forward the request to NSF. The Sponsored Projects Office at your Host Institution cannot request or 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 (see the NSF PAPPG). These include adhering to 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 the appointment (for a full discussion, please review the NSF PAPPG). 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.

NSF may request 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 Sponsored Projects Office or the NSF PAPPG. Information about the use of human subjects and vertebrate animals can also be found in the next two sections of this Administrative 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 NSF PAPPG outlines the Fellow's responsibilities regarding proposals involving vertebrate animals. In accordance with these requirements, fellowship projects involving use of any vertebrate animal for research or education must have an approval letter from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) at the Host Institution before an award can be made.

You must obtain the IACUC approval letter as an amendment that adds you, the PI, onto the approval for your sponsoring scientist's lab. These amendments are generally applicable for a year, so **you may need to send your cognizant Program Director a new approval each year** of your grant. If the Host Institution does not already have an approved PHS Assurance or you are conducting your work overseas, please contact your cognizant NSF 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 PAPPG outlines the Fellow's responsibilities regarding 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.

NSF cannot accept any IRB document that requires continued monitoring of the award activities involving human subjects by NSF. For projects lacking definite plans for the use of human subjects, their data, or their specimens, pursuant to 45 CFR 690.118, NSF can accept a determination notice that establishes a limited time period under which the PI may conduct preliminary or conceptual work that does not involve human subjects. Please see the NSF PAPPG for further instructions.

Upon request, you must provide your cognizant Program Director the IRB approval or exemption letter with the name of the PI. This letter must contain your name and the title of your project. If the project is to be performed outside of the U.S., evidence of IRB approval is required.

### Safe and Inclusive Working Environments for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research

The Fellow, as the 'awardee institution', must ensure that there is a plan in place for safe and inclusive research for any proposal that proposes to conduct off-campus or off-site research. The NSF PAPPG outlines the Fellow's responsibilities regarding safe and inclusive working environments. The Program encourages Fellows to work closely with their sponsor(s) in developing the plan.

### 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 NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology Program under Grant No. (NSF grant number). The funders had no role in this project's development, design and delivery."

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, electronically or 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

The 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 (including relevant data digital object identifier numbers), 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.

### Technical Reporting Requirements

The NSF policy on technical reporting requirements is contained in the NSF PAPPG. Program- specific reporting requirements for the fellowship are outlined below.

### Annual Project Reports

1. Submission Requirement. Fellows are required to submit annual project

reports.

2. Content of Annual Project Reports. Fellows are required to submit annual project reports electronically via Research.gov. When writing the report, keep in mind the original abstract that you and the program agreed to and is posted on [NSF.gov](https://www.nsf.gov). Your fellowship consists of a research project, your personal training goals, including career advancement activities for you, and broader impacts activities (including broadening participation in STEM). Therefore, **be sure to list research, training, and broader impacts goals in the Major Goals of the Project Section** and report the major activities and outcomes on each appropriately in the prescribed format. Since the fellowship is a 100%-time appointment, your reported effort should be 12 months in any reporting period, unless you took approved leave. Also report effort for any Participants who contributed to the project. This typically includes your Sponsor(s) and any students who worked on research related to your project. Other requirements for annual project reports are specified in the system.
3. Timing of Annual Project Reports. Unless otherwise specified in the grant, annual project reports should be submitted electronically 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 project report serves as the project's final report and must be submitted in accordance with the section below. A three-year fellowship requires two annual reports and one final report. It is the Fellow's responsibility to submit annual project reports on time. Research.gov will continue to send reminders until the report is submitted.

#### Final Annual Project Report and Project Outcomes Report

1. Final Annual Project Report. No later than 120 days following the end date of the grant, a final annual project report must be submitted electronically via Research.gov. Failure to submit a final annual project report will prevent you from receiving NSF funding in the future. You can submit proposals to NSF prior to submitting the final annual project report, but a grant cannot be issued to you until the fellowship final report is submitted and approved.

The final annual project report is **not** a cumulative report and should only describe activities and accomplishments in the final year of the project – follow the same guidance provided for annual reports. By submitting the report, you are indicating that the scope of work for the project and your training have been completed and that you do not anticipate any further action on the fellowship, including no- cost extension requests.

2. Project Outcomes Report for the General Public. No later than 120 days following the end date of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via Research.gov. Prepared specifically for the public, this report serves as a brief summary of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted electronically by NSF exactly as it is submitted and will be accompanied by a disclaimer found in the NSF PAPPG.

### Other Reports

The Foundation would be pleased to receive an account of the Fellow's progress at any time, especially if there are significant developments during a given Fellowship year. These reports can be submitted electronically as an interim report, via Research.gov or by contacting the cognizant NSF Program Director by email.

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 Research.gov 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 for any major change by outlining and justifying the changes. Major changes in objectives or scope must be submitted via Research.gov. The cognizant NSF Program Director will determine if the revised research and training plans are

appropriate.

## **SPONSORING SCIENTIST(S) AND HOST INSTITUTION(S)**

### Host Institution

As part of the fellowship requirements, 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 the appointment period, to assure both you and NSF 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, including a copy of the award notice and this Administrative Guide, with your sponsoring scientist(s) 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. If you plan to conduct research at multiple institutions, only one will serve as your primary Host Institution; this institution must be where your lead sponsoring scientist is located.

### Sponsoring Scientist

The lead sponsoring scientist will be the representative at your Host Institution who is responsible for your activities during the fellowship. Your lead sponsor must sign your Starting Certificate 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 certificate.

Any questions relating to your status at the Host Institution that 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 or Sponsoring Scientist

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

If the change in Host Institutions is because your sponsoring scientist is moving to a new institution, an email explaining the move will be sufficient if the new institution provides you the same or equivalent opportunities to conduct the research and planned training.

## FELLOWSHIP STATUS

### Fellowship Appointment Periods

The Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology are awarded for a 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 start date stated in the award notice, NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the delay and permit completion of the full fellowship tenure. You (as an individual registered in Research.gov) must request the extension through Research.gov.

**The Sponsored Projects Office at your Host Institution cannot request or grant a no-cost extension to your fellowship.**

During the appointment period of the fellowship, you are expected to devote full time to the scientific research and training outlined in the proposal for which the award was granted. You may not engage in other activities for compensation

(except for brief military obligations) or receive another fellowship or research award without the prior approval of your cognizant Program Director. Such approval is granted only under exceptional circumstances.

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 while active as a Fellow is not permitted. If you plan to participate in paid teaching or other professional development opportunities, see "Paid Teaching or other Professional Development Opportunities".

### Paid Leave

Within the fellowship period, up to three months of fellowship duration may be used for paid leave, including parental or family leave. Paid leave can be taken at any time during the fellowship but must be coordinated with the Sponsoring Scientist and approved in advance by the cognizant Program Director. 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 as vacation at a later date. 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 fellowship program. If it is not possible for you to make these arrangements at the Host Institution, other arrangements must be made to carry on the work, or to suspend the fellowship for that period of time with prior approval from your cognizant NSF Program Director.

### Unpaid Leave

Interruptions in tenure or extensions without additional cost to NSF are permitted only for extenuating circumstances, including institutional closure, medical leave,

parental leave, or dependent care. The leave cannot be used to increase the level of Fellow stipend support beyond 36 full-time-equivalent months. In the case that remaining funds are still available in the award, a no-cost extension may be requested to extend the fellowship award, in order to complete project goals. 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. Military Deferral must be renewed each year, and a new copy of duty orders must be submitted to the cognizant NSF 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 cognizant NSF Program Director in writing as soon as plans are final. Interruptions of less than four days do not require approval.

### Paid Teaching or other Professional Development Opportunities

The Fellow may opt to accept a teaching position or other paid activities that directly support the stated professional development goals of the Fellow. 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/professional development interval. Please work with your cognizant NSF Program Director and Program Specialist to initiate the process for deferring the fellowship in advance of the start of the assignment. The deferment should be in two-week or whole month increments and must 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 SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

'Termination' means the ending of the fellowship award, in whole or in part, at any time prior to the planned end of the period of performance.

If the Fellow wishes to terminate the award early, they must send the request to the appropriate PRFB Alias. This ensures that the request will be received by all relevant staff members in a timely manner.

Your fellowship must be terminated by the date you start employment in any other position, with the exception of professional development opportunities that have been approved by your cognizant Program Director.

When a fellowship award is terminated early, the Fellow must return unused fellowship allowance funds to NSF. Generally, the Fellow would return a prorated portion of the allowance, e.g., if the fellowship were terminated after 6 months, half of the annual allowance would be returned. Exceptions may be considered for such things as equipment purchases or other allowable costs and should be discussed with the cognizant NSF Program Director.

Any suspension or termination action taken by NSF must be issued by a cognizant NSF Grants Officer and will be in accordance with this article, 2 CFR § 200.340, and the NSF PAPPG.

The fellowship award may be suspended or terminated in whole or in part in any of the following situations:

1. By the Fellow upon sending to NSF written notification setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and the amount of annual allowance that must be remitted to NSF.
2. By NSF, if the Fellow fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the fellowship award.
3. By NSF, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.
4. By NSF, with the consent of the Fellow, in which case the two parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date and the amount of annual allowance that must be remitted to NSF.
5. By NSF, pursuant to termination provisions included in the NSF award.
6. By NSF, when ordered by the Deputy Director under NSF's Regulation on Research Misconduct [45 CFR Part 689].

## FELLOWSHIP DETAILS AND CONDITIONS

### Stipend and Allowances

Fellowships are awarded for the number of months specified in the solicitation under which the award was made. The total fellowship amount, monthly stipend, and yearly research and training allowance are set by the solicitation under which a Fellows' award is made. Changes to stipend or allowance amounts in subsequent solicitations do not apply retroactively.

Stipend payments are processed in the Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$) of Research.gov. The stipend is dispersed monthly; you must make payment requests of your fellowship funds every month to distribute your allowances evenly over the course of your fellowship. As administrator in ACM\$, you must review and manage user roles. If you are not able to successfully make a request of your fellowship funds by COB on the first day of the month, please contact the appropriate PRFB Program Alias.

Stipend payments are made directly to you via an 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 have an NSF account and enter your banking information in Research.gov. Banking information provided in Research.gov is secure and will be used by NSF to make the EFT payments to you and only as authorized by law. Follow the steps provided in the automated email that was sent from the "NSF Individual Banking" email address ([btdefm005@associates.nsf.gov](mailto:btdefm005@associates.nsf.gov)) with "ACTION REQUIRED: Steps to Initiate NSF Payments" in the subject line or in the [Individual Banking How-to Guide](#).

After the information is received by NSF, you may begin making monthly requests of your stipend payments. You are encouraged to make arrangements for your account prior to starting your fellowship. If you change accounts during your fellowship, you must update the information in Research.gov. Submit the updated information in the preceding month to allow sufficient processing time and keep the old account open until a payment is received in the new account.

If you have any questions or for assistance to complete the steps to initiate NSF payments, please contact the NSF IT Service Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM –

9:00 PM Eastern Time; Monday – Friday except federal holidays) or via [rgov@nsf.gov](mailto:rgov@nsf.gov). **Please do not transmit banking information or personal identifiable information in the email to the NSF IT Service Desk.**

## Fellowship Allowance

The fellowship allowance is allocated annually throughout the fellowship and request of these funds is made in the ACM\$. The fellowship allowance is paid as selected by the Fellow, but the Fellow may not draw a future year's allowance in advance. Unspent allowance from one year will carry over to the next.

This allowance is intended to cover costs of research and training expenses 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 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, field station costs, and other research-related expenses. Unallowable research costs include stipends, salaries, or other forms of payment for employees; Fellows are not allowed to serve as employers during their tenure.

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.

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. No funds may be spent after the end date of your fellowship and funds cannot be converted to another use.

The links below will provide further information about ACM\$, assigning roles and requesting your fellowship funds. Please email the appropriate PRFB Program

Alias with inquiries. Be sure to include your ORGANIZATION ID (ID number beginning with "P") and award identification numbers.

[Research.gov Account Management Page Unaffiliated PI Specific Instructions](#)  
[General "Add a Role" Instructions](#)  
[Award Cash Management Service \(ACM\\$\) Instructions](#)  
[Research.gov Password Reset Guide](#)

## 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 (IRS) and the courts. Specific questions should be referred to the IRS. 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 NSF. 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 Host 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 cognizant NSF 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 and Other Awards

Prior approval is required from the cognizant Program Director for any stipend supplementation or awards for research, professional development, or travel. Sponsoring scientists, Host Institutions, and other external funding sources may supplement a Fellow's stipend with non-Federal funds, so long as this supplementation does not carry with it any requirement for additional work or similar obligations that do not fall under the Fellow's training plan. Fellows may solicit and accept non-Federal support for research, professional development, or travel expenses, such as laboratory supplies, instrumentation usage fees, field-station usage fees, transportation, conference/registration fees and expenses, or subscription fees.

### Health Insurance

Health insurance is not available through NSF. 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

In accordance with P.L. 91-219, educational benefits payments from the Veterans Administration may be received concurrently with and supplementary to fellowship payments from the NSF.



## Future Employment

The award and acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellowship does not obligate a Fellow, NSF, 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 with the PRFB Program 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 your 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 encourages development of inventions, discoveries and intellectual property. However, NSF claims no rights to any intellectual property 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 support for research. Also, fellows and trainees should note their obligation to include an Acknowledgment and Disclaimer in any publication.

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. Consult with

your host institution and sponsor(s), as there may be additional guidelines for Fellows to protect and pursue intellectual property rights generated from the work.

### Notification Requirements Regarding Sexual Harassment, Other Forms of Harassment, or Sexual Assault

By accepting a fellowship award made pursuant to this solicitation, the Fellow agrees to abide by the affiliated institution's policies or codes of conduct. The Fellow further agrees to notify NSF's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) if, pursuant to a complaint made under federal or state law or the institution's policies or codes of conduct relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault, the Fellow is subjected to any "administrative leave/administrative action," (defined below) or is the subject of any "finding/determination" (defined below). Failure to notify NSF may result in termination of the fellowship.

"Administrative leave/administrative action" is defined as any temporary/interim suspension or permanent removal of the Fellow, or any administrative action imposed on the Fellow by the institution under the institution's policies or codes of conduct, federal or state statutes, regulations, or executive orders, relating to activities, including but not limited to the following: teaching, advising, mentoring, research, management/administrative duties, or presence on campus.

"Finding/determination" is defined as the final disposition of a matter involving sexual harassment or other forms of harassment under the institution's policies and processes, to include the exhaustion of permissible appeals exercised by the Fellow, or a conviction of a sexual offense in a criminal court of law.

### 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://oig.nsf.gov/>; 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

The NSF PAPPG details NSF requirements for international travel and research.

### Foreign Appointment Periods

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.

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 the fellowship. Thus, the actual tenure at the fellowship institution, as shown on the Starting Certificate, 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 obtain NSF approval before you travel.** You can request prior approval by email from your cognizant NSF Program Director. In your email, include the purpose of the trip and an actual travel 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 in accordance with the NSF PAPPG. You must follow guidelines of the [Fly America Act](#); you are responsible for adhering to the guidelines. If you think you may qualify for an exception, contact your program director well in advance of planning the travel.

There is no additional funding available in the PRFB Program for international travel; for those fellows who are traveling to Europe for research it is encouraged to explore opportunities in the Research Opportunities in Europe for NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows program.

### Section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019

This award also incorporates the following terms and conditions that implement Sections §§ 200.216 and 200.340 of the revised 2 CFR § 200 which was published in the Federal Register on August 13, 2020. The revised 2 CFR § 200 is effective on November 12, 2020, except for sections § 200.216 and § 200.340, which are effective on August 13, 2020:

1. Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115- 232) prohibits the head of an executive agency from obligating or expending loan or grant funds to procure or obtain, extend, or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain the equipment, services, or systems prohibited systems as identified in section 889 of the NDAA for FY 2019.

(a) In accordance with 2 CFR 200.216 and 200.471, all awards that are issued on or after August 13, 2020, recipients and subrecipients are prohibited from obligating or expending loan or grant funds to:

(1) Procure or obtain;

(2) Extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or

(3) Enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. As described in Public Law 115-232, section 889, covered telecommunications equipment is telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any

subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

(i) For the purpose of public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes, video surveillance and telecommunications equipment produced by Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

(ii) Telecommunications or video surveillance services provided by such entities or using such equipment.

(iii) Telecommunications or video surveillance equipment or services produced or provided by an entity that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Director of the National Intelligence or the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reasonably believes to be an entity owned or controlled by, or otherwise connected to, the government of a covered foreign country.

(b) In implementing the prohibition under Public Law 115-232, section 889, subsection (f), paragraph (1) heads of executive agencies administering loan, grant, or subsidy programs shall prioritize available funding and technical support to assist affected businesses, institutions and organizations as is reasonably necessary for those affected entities to transition from covered communications equipment and services, to procure replacement equipment and services, and to ensure that communications service to users and customers is sustained.

(c) See Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information. COVERED FOREIGN COUNTRY means the People's Republic of China.

## 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. Dear Colleague Letter [NSF 24-053](#) (or future versions replacing it) gives details on how to apply and requirements. Current Postdoctoral Research Fellows are invited to apply for research visits to any identified, appropriate European research group.

Information is available via email at [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 are:

- 1) An NSF-wide program called the [Faculty Early Career Development Program \(CAREER\)](#). See the program website for more information.
- 2) A BIO directorate-wide program called the [Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology \(BRC-BIO\)](#). This program supports pre-tenured faculty at minority-serving, predominantly undergraduate, or R2 institutions. See the program website 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 (see the NSF PAPPG). The Fellow will be responsible for submitting 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 supplementary 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 based on 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.

#### Reporting

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