# NIH Policy Manual

## 2300-320-7 - Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program

**Issuing Office:** OD/OIR **Phone:** (301) 496-1921

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Transmittal Notice

1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This issuance describes the policies and procedures for implementing the Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program. This revision updates the manual chapter to address all levels of IRTA trainees, clarification of the renewal policies (Section C.7), leave policy (C.24), tort claims (C.30). In addition, this version eliminates the technical IRTA and adds the academic student IRTA (C.5); and revises and clarifies the roles and responsibilities (Section D).
   *NOTE*: A Technical Revision has been made to index the subsections that were previously included in Section C: Policy. Users may now easily navigate and reference these sections of the policy using the left hand navigation pane.
2. **Filing Instructions:**

   **Remove:** NIH Manual 2300-320-7 dated 02/24/2009
   **Insert:** NIH Manual 2300-320-7 dated 2/24/2021.

3. **PLEASE NOTE:** For information on:

- For information on content of this chapter, contact the issuing office listed above.
- NIH Policy Manual, contact the Division of Compliance Management (DCM), Office of Management Assessment (OMA) on 301-496-4606, or enter this url: https://oma.od.nih.gov/DMS/Pages/Manual-Chapters.aspx

### A. Purpose

This chapter transmits the NIH policy on the use of the NIH Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program.

IRTA Traineeships are established for the principal benefit of the participant and to provide opportunities for developmental training and practical research experience in a variety of disciplines related to biomedical research, medical library research and related fields. Traineeships are designed to provide research training “for which fellowship support is not provided under Section 487 of the Public Health Services (PHS) Act, and which is not residency training of physicians or other health professionals.”

## B. Audience and Scope

This policy applies to all intramural research programs in all Institutes and Centers, (ICs) that report to a Scientific Director as required to provide IRTA Traineeships.

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| **Postdoctoral** | To provide advanced practical research experience to physicians and other doctoral researchers who are at the beginning stages of their professional research careers. Traineeships are not appropriate for scientists who have already demonstrated significant research achievements or who have proven records as independent researchers. |
| **Pre-doctoral** | To provide practical research training and experience to doctoral students, by supplementing academic course work and/or encouraging pursuit of professional careers in biomedical research. |
| **Postbaccalaureate** | To provide an introduction to biomedical research, encourage the pursuit of professional careers in biomedical research, and allow additional time to apply to either graduate or professional (medical, dental, pharmacy, etc.) schools for individuals early in their careers. |
| **Student** | To provide a developmental training experience to promising high school, undergraduate, and graduate students who have expressed a strong interest in or are studying disciplines related to biomedical sciences, generally during the summer. |

## C. Policy

Training must be carried out at a facility of the NIH but may be supplemented by additional training acquired at another institution if it is found by the Deputy Director for Intramural Research (DDIR), Office of Intramural Research (OIR) or the IC Director to be directly related to the purpose of the traineeship and necessary to its successful completion. Such training outside NIH may not be for more than a cumulative 3 months out of a calendar year. Training at international facilities may comprise a maximum of 3 months out of a calendar year and must be approved by OIR. Periods greater than this are only possible for trainees participating in an institutional partnership. In no case, may training outside of NIH comprise a majority of the training.

The IRTA Program encourages the participation of individuals from groups who are underrepresented in biomedical research: women, persons with disabilities, and individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. The NIH follows the guidelines for disadvantaged backgrounds as stated here: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-031.html

Service is a by-product of the IRTA Program unlike Research and Clinical Fellowships where service is a dominant part of the training objective. NOTE: Trainees are prohibited from

having any human subject/patient contact unless they are entirely under the direct supervision, at all times, by an appropriately qualified NIH employee (FTE). See Section C.30. Tort Claims. Trainees may not be assigned official supervisory responsibilities, or sign documents (e.g., requisitions) on behalf of the Government.

## D. Legal Authority and References

(1) The Director, NIH, may conduct and support research training for which fellowship support is not provided under Section 487 of the PHS Act and which is not residency training of physicians or other health professionals [42 U.S.C. 282(b)(11)];

(2) the Directors of the national research institutes may conduct and support research training for which fellowship support is not provided under Section 487, and which is not residency training of physicians or other health professionals [42 U.S.C. 284(b)(1)(D)];

(3) the *National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health* NIH, may conduct research training as described in 42 U.S.C. 287c-21(a);

(4) the National Library of Medicine (NLM) may conduct research training as described in 42 U.S.C. 286b-3 (NLM Traineeships limited to Postbaccalaureate students only);

(5) 42 CFR Part 63, Public Health Service Regulations re: Traineeships

## E. Program Administration

Delegations of Authority

- Program: General No. 53, NIH Administration of Intramural Training Award (IRTA) Program dated, 05/29/2021
- Program: General No. 54, IC Administration of Intramural Training Award (IRTA) Program dated, 05/29/2021

## F. Program Exceptions

Approval by the Deputy Director of Intramural Research (DDIR) is required for all exceptions to program provisions. Requests for exceptions to program provisions must be fully justified in writing, describing the nature and basis for the exception.

## G. Resources and Funding

Trainees are not Federal employees, are subject to the availability of space, funds, and preceptors' time, and are limited by the number of training assignments available within participating Institutes or Centers (IC).

## H. Eligibility

Traineeships are contingent upon submission of acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or resident alien status and a medical evaluation if applicable. In addition, trainees must meet the requirements of one of the categories specified below:

**Categories**

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| **Postdoctoral** | Individuals who possess a Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., D.M.D., D.V.M. or equivalent doctoral degree in a biomedical, behavioral, or related science; or certification by a university as meeting all the requirements leading to such a doctorate; and 5 or fewer years of relevant postdoctoral experience and up to 2 additional years of experience not oriented towards research (i.e., clinical training for physicians). |
| **Pre-doctoral** | Students enrolled in Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., D.M.D., D.V.M., or equivalent degree programs (which frequently involve dissertation research). The research experience is undertaken as an integral part of the student's ongoing academic preparation and is credited towards completion of degree requirements. Students who are enrolled in graduate or other doctoral or medical degree programs and who have written permission from their school to interrupt their current schooling and to return within one year to their degree granting program, are also eligible. |
| **Postbaccalaureate** | Individuals who have (1) been awarded a bachelor's degree no more than 3 years prior to the activation date of the Traineeship or (2) completed a master's degree less than 6 months prior to the activation date of the Traineeship and who intend to apply to graduate school in a biomedical program or to professional (medical, dental, pharmacy, etc.) school during their tenure at the NIH or (3) individuals who meet criterion (1) and/or (2) who have been accepted into graduate or professional school as outlined above and have written permission from their school to delay entrance for up to 1 year. |
| **Student (Summer)** | Individuals who (1) are 17 years of age or older on June 15 of the internship year and are enrolled at least half-time in high school, college (including community college) or graduate/professional school at the time of application **OR** (2) are high school or college graduates at the time of application and have been accepted into accredited undergraduate, graduate or professional programs.<br>In addition, individuals who are in ***high school at the time of application***, must (1) be high school juniors or seniors and (2) if they will be 17 on June 15 of the internship year, live, at the time of application, within 40 miles of the NIH campus on which they will intern.<br>Individuals who are U.S. permanent residents must be attending or have been accepted into **institutions in the U.S.** to be eligible.<br>. |
| **Student (Academic)** | Individuals who are at least 17 years of age on the date they begin the internship and are enrolled and in good standing during the internship ***in high school, college (including community college), or a master's degree program***. |

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| | In addition, individuals who are in ***high school at the time of application***, must (1) be high school juniors or seniors and (2) live with a parent or legal guardian and/or attend a school within 40 miles of the NIH campus on which they will intern.<br>Individuals who are U.S. permanent residents must be attending or have been accepted into **institutions in the U.S.** to be eligible. |

## I. Duration of Traineeship Programs

Time spent on a Traineeship program within any IC counts toward the total Traineeship duration, regardless of the number of Traineeships granted by different ICs. The duration of the award period and the original termination date may be extended due to periods (4-12 months) of excused absence without stipend. All renewals must be in writing and include beginning and termination dates.

**Traineeship**

| | **Postdoctoral** | **Pre-doctoral** | **Postbaccalaureate** | **Student** |
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| **Initial Traineeship** | 1 year | 1 month to 1 year | 1 year | 1 month to 1 year. Traineeships of less than 1 month or greater than 1 year will not be authorized. |
| **Renewal of Traineeship** | 1-2 year increments | 1-month to 1-year increments | 1-year increments | 1-month to 1-year increments |
| **Maximum Traineeship** | 5 years | 5 years | 2 years | May return for summer and other traineeship periods for as long as trainee remains a student in good standing. |
| **Extensions/Terminations** | See sections C.7 for exceptional extensions and C.22 for early termination. | | | |

## J. Renewals

***Postdoctoral,*** the NIH policy is to limit the postdoctoral training period to 5 years. This will eliminate the need to unnecessarily extend training and delay employment. Appointments are typically renewed in one-year increments. The Research Fellow mechanism is available to extend the total time in training to 8 years: https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/ipds-appointment-mechanisms/research-fellow.

A short-term extension to the 5th year of postdoctoral training can be awarded without seeking approval outside the Institute/Center (IC). This short-term extension period, not to exceed 3 months, is permitted only for individuals leaving the NIH, if requested instead of an exceptional 6th year (described below). A Postdoctoral Fellow will not be permitted both a 6th year and a terminal extension.

An exceptional 6th year of training within the IRTA postdoctoral mechanism is occasionally needed to complete training in-progress and/or to complete applications for jobs outside of the NIH. The terminal 6th year extension requires a written justification requesting additional time, followed by a rigorous review that includes the Scientific Director' (SD) approval. More information on the Postdoctoral IRTA Fellow 6th year terminal extension can be found at https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/recruitment-processes-policies-checklists/exceptional-extensions-irta-visiting-fellowships-6th-year). An individual who takes any part of an exceptional 6th year at NIH as an IRTA may not remain or return to NIH within 2 years of their departure date. The Office of Intramural Research (OIR) may grant exception to this for certain long-term NIH staff positions.

***Pre-Doctoral IRTA*** appointments are generally renewed in one-year increments. A short-term extension to the 5th year of graduate training can be awarded without seeking approval outside the IC. This short-term extension period, not to exceed 3 months, is permitted if requested instead of the exceptional extension request process (described below). A predoc will not be permitted both a terminal 3-month extension, and further time through the exceptional extension request process.

Exceptional extension request process: Beyond 5 years, renewal requires a written justification requesting additional time, followed by a rigorous review that includes the SD's approval. The written justification memorandum must include (1) a summary of the student's progress, (2) projected timeline for completion, and (3) specific dates of the fellowship renewal request. The memorandum must be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and Scientific Director (SD) indicating their support for the extension and submitted for approval to the Director of Policy and Analysis, Office of Intramural Research (OIR) and the Director of the Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP). A current copy of the student's CV must also be included. Submissions must be made at least 3 months in advance of the renewal date, and the student must be interviewed by the Director of the GPP as a part of the approval process. Extensions are generally requested in one-year increments, though less time may be requested depending on the circumstance. No more than one year may be requested for each submission. Occasionally, extensions beyond six years are requested, but obtaining approval requires further justification and repeating this entire exceptional extension request process.

***Postbaccalaureate IRTA*** appointments will be for one year, with the possibility of renewal for a second year. It is expected that postbaccalaureate (postbac) will, and should, move on to graduate/professional education after two years.

A short-term extension to the 2nd year of postbac training can be awarded without seeking approval outside the IC. This short-term extension period, not to exceed 3 months, is permitted if requested instead of an exceptional 3rd year (described below). A

postbaccalaureate will not be permitted both a 3rd year and a terminal extension.

Postbaccalaureates may request permission to remain at the NIH for an exceptional third year. This will require (1) submission of a plan for the third year that demonstrates that the trainee will make good use of the time and (2) signatures of the PI and SD indicating their support for the plan and belief that the postbaccalaureate possesses the talent and potential to make good use of the time in terms of both science and career development. Plans must be submitted to the Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE), OIR for approval at least six months in advance of the requested third year extension. Under no circumstances will a postbaccalaureate be permitted an extension at the NIH beyond the third year.

## K. Upon Conclusion of Traineeship

- IRTA Trainees do not incur a service payback obligation.
- Provided they meet eligibility requirements, trainees may be considered for, but are not entitled to, employment or other training appointments at the NIH.

## L. Schedules

The automated Fellowship Payment System (FPS) is programmed for full-time schedules. For full-time schedules less than one year in duration, the system will calculate the correct amount of pro-rated funds to obligate. However, for part-time schedules, ICs must compute the percent of time and enter the annual prorated stipend in the Fellowship Payment stipend screen.

Scheduling policy for the different Traineeship programs is as follows:

**Schedules**

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| **Postdoctoral** | Trainees are normally expected to devote 40 hours per week to the training assignment. However, part-time schedules may be arranged on a case-by-case basis if approved by IC Scientific Director. An IRTA trainee may not be part-time for more than an 8-year calendar period. Intermittent schedules are not permitted. **NOTE:** Part-time schedules of less than 32 hours per week may affect eligibility for health insurance offered by the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) or other health plans. |
| **Pre-doctoral, Postbaccalaureate, and Students** | Part-time schedules may be negotiated and pre-arranged with IC Scientific Director approval. Intermittent schedules are not permitted. **NOTE:** Part-time schedules of less than 32 hours per week may affect eligibility for health insurance offered by the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) or other health plans. |

## M. Stipends

Stipends are established based on relevant research experience after receipt of the degree that determines program eligibility, or completed education level (i.e., degree is not conferred, and university comptroller certifies that all degree requirements are met). Stipend ranges and/or fixed stipend levels are periodically reviewed by the Office of Intramural Research (OIR) in consultation with the NIH Scientific Directors. See appendices for detailed information. The Trainee must be paid within the stipend range for experience and degree earned.

**Stipends**

| **INITIAL STIPENDS** | |
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| **Postdoctoral (See Appendix 1)** | Stipends are established based on 5 or fewer years of relevant postdoctoral research experience and up to 2 additional years of experience not oriented towards research (i.e., clinical training for US-credentialed physicians).<br>**NOTE:** Stipend level must be prorated based on training schedule. |
| **Pre-doctoral (See Appendix 2)** | Stipends are established based on the number of years of postbaccalaureate education completed upon activation of Traineeship.<br>**NOTE:** Stipend level must be prorated based on training schedule. |
| **Postbaccalaureate (See Appendix 3)** | Stipends are established based on the number of years of relevant experience after receipt of the bachelor's degree up to a maximum of 3 years.<br>**NOTE:** Stipend level must be prorated based on training schedule. |
| **Student (See Appendix 4)** | Stipends are established based on the amount of education completed upon activation of Traineeship.<br>**NOTE:** Stipend level must be prorated based on training schedule. |

| **ANNUAL INCREASES TO STIPEND** | |
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| **Postdoctoral** | A stipend increase of up to $2,000 per annum may be granted based on growth, development, and accomplishments, but where warranted, increments can be larger, provided they do not exceed the appropriate stipend range (Appendix 1). ICs may approve a one-time merit-based exceptional stipend increase of one stipend step level, e.g., a Trainee with one year of postdoctoral experience could be paid a stipend within the range for the two-year experience level, at the time of renewal for up to 10 percent of its trainees. |
| **Pre-doctoral** | A stipend increase to the next highest level in Appendix 2 may be granted per annum, based on progress in academic studies and/or the training assignment, for each year the Trainee remains in the program. |
| **Postbaccalaureate** | A stipend increase to the next highest level in Appendix 3 may be granted, if the award is renewed for a second year in the program. No stipend increase will be provided for the third-year extension. |
| **Student** | Eligible for the next highest stipend level (Appendix 4) based on the level of completed education. |

| SPECIALTY ALLOWANCES | |
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| **Postdoctoral** | An additional allowance of up to $10,000 may be added to the stipend level (allowing the stipend to exceed the established stipend range) for postdoctoral trainees for previous training or equivalent experience in one of the following specialty categories:<br>1. Engineer (electrical, chemical, mechanical, biomedical);<br>2. Computer Scientist;<br>3. Computational Biologist: (informatics, information technology);<br>4. Physicist;<br>5. Chemist (analytical, physical, organic, and inorganic);<br>6. Bio-statistician;<br>7. Epidemiologist;<br>8. Mathematician;<br>9. IC Competitive Fellowship, e.g., Kety Fellowship in NIMH; or<br>10. Fellow entering the fifth year, for whom the IC wishes to provide a merit-based stipend higher than the top of the range for the fifth year. |

## N. Method of Stipend Payment

Stipends will be paid in arrears on a 30-day monthly basis, i.e., the stipend payment received for a given month will reflect the amount owed from the preceding month.

All Trainees are strongly encouraged to immediately establish (or correct) an electronic file transfer in the NIH Administrative Database (ADB) via the Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) Vendor miscellaneous payment enrollment form (Form SF 3881) in the ADB vendor database. Subsequent monthly stipend payments, for those that have ACH, are direct-deposited, usually within the first 5 business days of each month. Trainees who do not have established electronic file transfers to their bank accounts will receive stipend payments by check on or about the 10th business day of each month.

## O. Advance Payment for Trainees

**Advance Payment for Trainees**

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| **Postdoctoral** | An automatic $2,000 advance will be provided for Trainees after activation if requested. |
| **Pre-doctoral, Postbaccalaureate, and Student** | An amount less than $2,000 may be provided after activation, based on hardship as determined and approved by the IC Scientific Director prior to the award start date that is entered into the Fellowship Payment System (FPS). |

Any advance payment will reduce the annual stipend payment. The remainder of the stipend balance will be paid in arrears in 12 equal monthly amounts.

If the Trainee leaves within 12 months of the initiation of the award, the final check may NOT be for the 1/12th amount because it will have been offset by the balance of the advance. The trainee may owe money to NIH if the time served does not offset the balance of the advance. A personal check covering a stipend overpayment must be submitted to the Office of Financial Management "Fellowship Payment Office" with a copy of the FPS-generated termination notice. Any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed to the U.S. Government.

## P. Pay Certification

Stipend payments will be certified monthly and authorized in the FPS by the IC Designated Program officials between the 20th and 25th of the month so the Office of Financial Management (OFM) may authorize payments. If the IC does not certify and authorize payment for a trainee, no stipend payment will be issued for that month until certification is received.

## Q. Supplemental Funding

Supplemental funding should be granted to Trainees who wish to come to NIH for a period of research training under the auspices of traineeships or grants awarded by outside (non-extramural NIH) organizations or institutions, when the outside funding fails to provide a stipend in the established range for Trainees as described in the appendices below.

Supplemental Funding should be granted:

- ONLY to Trainees who have already been approved for or currently receive outside (non-extramural NIH) support;
- ONLY to Trainees NOT receiving support under the National Research Service Award (NRSA) Program;
- ONLY to Trainees that have NO employment relationship with the outside (non-extramural NIH) sponsor: other issues, e.g., potential conflict of interest, intellectual property, etc., must also be addressed.

The amount of the NIH IRTA supplement will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will vary depending on the level of support provided by the outside (non-extramural NIH) sponsor. The supplement will be fixed at such a rate that the combined level of support will match the stipend rate for a similarly qualified Trainee. Supplemental funding that would result in a combined amount from NIH and the outside (non-extramural NIH) sponsor that is either less than or in excess of the authorized stipend rate for the relevant trainee level and Traineeship program may not be approved. Supplemental funding must be terminated when outside (non-extramural NIH) support ceases.

An IC cannot provide a supplement solely to cover health insurance – a stipend of at least $1 per month must also be authorized.

## R. Application Procedures

***Postdoctoral IRTA*** applicants should apply directly to one or more specific Principal Investigators.

***Pre-doctoral IRTA*** applicants must follow the procedures outlined on the Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) page, https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/gpp. This will include an online application to the NIH and may include requests to complete additional university applications.

***Postbaccalaureate and Student IRTA*** applicants must submit online applications via the Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE) website, https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/postbac_irta

***Student IRTA*** appointment can be used for two types of internships, **Summer Internships** and **Academic Internships**. The application process depends on both the type of internship and the educational level of the applicant as follows.

Most Student IRTAs come to the NIH as **Summer Interns**. All applicants for Summer Internships must complete Summer Internship Applications on the OITE website. Individuals who are in college or graduate/professional school will apply to the **Summer Internship Program** https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/sip. Individuals who are in high school at the time of application will apply to the **High School Summer Internship Program,** https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/hs-sip.

All individuals who wish to come to the NIH during the school year will apply directly to the **Academic Internship Program**. Those who are enrolled in master's degree programs will, in addition, follow the procedures outlined on the OITE webpage at, https://www.training.nih.gov/programs.

## S. Application Documentation

| **Application Documentation** | |
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| **Postdoctoral** | Curriculum Vitae (CV), bibliography (if applicable), 3 letters of reference, applicant's statement of research goals, official copy of transcript. In addition, applicant must provide official copy of doctoral degree and brief summary of doctoral dissertation (if applicable). |
| **Pre-doctoral** | CV, bibliography (if applicable), 3 letters of reference emphasizing research potential, applicant's statement of research goals, official copy of undergraduate, graduate, and/or medical school transcript. Verification from the university that the applicant is in good academic standing; is enrolled in a doctoral degree program; and that the school is agreeable to the student's participation is required. |
| **Postbaccalaureate** | CV, bibliography (if applicable), 3 letters of reference emphasizing potential, applicant's statement of research goals, and official copy of undergraduate school transcript. Applications must be made online. See |

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| | http://www.training.nih.gov/ |
| **Student** | Resume or CV, 2 letters of reference, official copy of school transcript, letter from school verifying academic standing, information on honors and achievements, and statement of interest in biomedical research. Applications must be made online. See https://www.training.nih.gov/ for applications specific to educational levels. |

Trainees must provide documented evidence of their U.S. citizenship or resident alien status before their Traineeships may be activated. Citizenship or resident alien status can be established by providing one or two documents, as indicated on the following list: Originals or copies are acceptable.

List Identity and IRTA Eligibility

- United States Passport (Current or Expired)
- Certificate of United States Citizenship
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Lawful Permanent Resident Card (green card) with photograph
- A State-issued driver's license or I.D. card with a photograph, or information including name, sex, date of birth, height, weight (if on license), and color of eyes AND birth certificate
- School ID card with photograph AND birth certificate
- U.S. Military Card AND birth certificate
- Other Officially issued identifying document that provides proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency status may be acceptable at the discretion of the IC designated program administrative official.

## T. Selection Procedures

Individual Principal Investigators select their own Postdoctoral IRTAs, Postbaccalaureate IRTAs, Academic Interns at all educational levels, and Summer Interns. Applicants to these programs are encouraged to contact investigators with whom they would like to work directly.

High School Summer Interns are selected by committees in the ICs, not by individual Principal Investigators. Therefore, applicants to the High School Summer Internship Program should not contact PIs directly.

The mechanism for selecting Predoctoral IRTAs depends on whether they have applied to a GPP Institutional Partnership (selections are made by admissions committees), to be in a GPP Individual Partnership (selections are made by individual Principal Investigators), or to the Medical Research Scholars Program, administratively housed within the NIH Clinical Center.

Candidates may not be excluded from consideration or evaluation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identity, disability, age, national origin, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor. Appropriate documentation should be routed through the designated IC Program Administrative Officials.

Each IC is responsible for establishing its own policy on the granting of Traineeships to students who are relatives of IC employees. Please note the nepotism policy at https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-310-1. In no case may trainees receive a training assignment in a Lab/Branch where a relative has authority for resource allocation decisions. Furthermore, the NIH Policy Statement on Personal Relationships in the Workplace, which goes beyond nepotism, must be strictly followed https://hr.nih.gov/working-nih/civil/nih-policy-statement-personal-relationships-workplace.

For minors under 18 years of age, if required by State or local government law, work permits must be obtained. A written agreement of a parent or guardian is also required. In addition, restrictions published by the Department of Labor (DOL) must be followed regarding assignments that may be hazardous or detrimental to the health and well-being of minors.

## U. Mentoring

The principal responsibility of scientific mentoring rests with training preceptor; other assistance is available from IC Lab/Branch Chiefs and Scientific Director and the NIH OITE.

## V. Career Counseling

The NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education Career Services Center is available for career counseling, https://www.training.nih.gov/career_services

## W. Training and Tuition

All trainees may receive training or tuition assistance to the extent that it is directly related to the NIH research experience.

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are required for all trainees and they must complete all NIH mandatory training. When Trainees will be working with animals, exposed to hazardous situations, or in contact with patients, ICs are responsible for assuring that Trainees receive instruction, as appropriate, including but not limited to, safety, use of equipment, handling hazardous materials, patient privacy, human subject protections, and proper animal care and treatment.

Trainees are prohibited from having any human subject/patient contact unless they are entirely under the direct supervision, at all times, by an appropriately qualified NIH employee (FTE). Also see Section C. 30. Tort Claims.

Generally only one rotation of 3 months or less in a science-related office (science policy, communications, grants, center for scientific review, technology transfer, etc.) is permitted when such activity can be justified as an integral part of the NIH training experience.

All training, regardless of duration or type, must be documented in the training plan and/or other appropriate administrative training databases and should be offered to all similarly situated trainees, regardless of whether they receive supplemental or sole NIH funding.

## X. Travel

Travel cost to NIH for a postdoctoral trainee (including dependents, movement of household goods, and temporary storage of household goods) not to exceed (NTE) $3,000 is permitted at the discretion of the IC; no allowance for return travel is authorized. A personal check covering a travel advance overpayment must be submitted to the Cashier's Office attached to a copy of the travel voucher. Any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed to the U.S. Government.

Payment of travel to scientific meetings or training at a remote site is at the discretion of the IC and is subject to availability of funds.

IRTA trainees may accept ***payment only on an "In Kind" basis to cover*** travel and per diem expenses from an outside entity while attending an "official duty" type event for the purpose of teaching, speaking or writing (such as presenting a paper at a scientific meeting), provided there is no conflict of interest in the source of the funds. No honorarium, or compensation for services rendered, may be accepted. Reimbursement must be from non-Federal funds. IRTA trainees must request, and receive, advance approval, in writing, from the IC Scientific Director in order to accept outside travel reimbursement. The HHS Form 348 is ***not to be used*** since IRTA Trainees are not Government employees. However, ***IC administrative staff, on behalf of an IRTA Trainee, must complete an Acceptance Letter and a Certification Checklist indicating that the funding source is non-Federal. For additional information, see NIH Policy Manual 1500, Chapter 08-03). Also see guidance at https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/ethical-conduct/government-ethics/guidelines-non-ftes-trainees-nih-related-activities-outside-activities***

When a separate travel allowance is available through an outside sponsor, at its discretion, an IC may supplement that allowance only to the extent that outside funding is insufficient to pay authorized travel costs.

A personal check covering a travel advance overpayment must be submitted to the Cashier's Office attached to a copy of the travel voucher. Any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed the U.S. Government.

## Y. Termination of Traineeship

Use the FPS to process terminations of all trainees. Termination of the traineeship may be made prior to specific expiration date upon request of the trainee, or for scientific or other forms of misconduct or failure to comply with terms of the traineeship or to carry out or satisfy the purpose for which it was made. All termination proposals for cause must be in writing and provide the trainee with an opportunity to make a reply before a decision is rendered. In the case of personal incompatibility or any unforeseen programmatic circumstances, and absent any conduct issues, the IC should arrange for transfer of the trainee to another laboratory.

Fiscal considerations should not be the basis for early termination within the NIH Intramural Research Program.

**Termination of Traineeship**

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| **Postdoctoral** | See https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/recruitment-processes-policies-checklists/guidelines-early-termination-awards-postdoctoral-fellows for early termination of postdoctoral fellows. |
| **Pre-doctoral, Postbaccalaureate, and Student** | Predoctoral: https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/policies-recruitment-processes/policy-reassignment-or-early-termination-awards-predoctoral-fellows<br>Postbaccalaureate: https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/policies-recruitment-processes/policy-reassignment-or-early-termination-awards-postbaccalaureate-fellows |

Trainees must reimburse Office of Financial Management (OFM), OM, OD, NIH, for any and all stipend overpayments prior to OFM clearance. When a Traineeship is terminated prior to its normal expiration date, the trainee is no longer entitled to a stipend and any stipend checks received or deposited to the trainee's account inappropriately after the termination date are inadvertent and do not belong to the trainee but are the property of the United States. Trainees should reimburse the U.S. Government for any overpayment that may occur. Knowingly cashing, depositing, or converting any such check to the Trainee's use could result in criminal penalties. In addition, any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed to the U.S. Government. A personal check must be submitted to the OFM "Fellowship Payment Office" with a copy of the FPS-generated termination notice. In addition, if the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) (301-496-8063) is handling the trainee's health insurance, it must be provided a "Notification of Termination" form, obtained from the IC's Administrative Officer. The FPS-generated "Notification of Termination" form must be submitted to FAES, which will provide advice and answer questions on Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (C.O.B.R.A.) benefits. The form must be signed by an FAES representative before the end of the month in which the fellowship is terminated to avoid overpayment.

## Z. Transfer

If a trainee is transferring to another IC within NIH, the losing IC must indicate this in the FPS module and notify the gaining IC. The gaining IC must accept and retrieve the trainee's record. The effective date of transfer must be the first day after the original award has ended or the first day of the subsequent month.

## AA. Excused Absence with Stipend

Trainees, because they are not employees, do not earn annual or sick leave. However, they should be excused for Federal holidays and any other time the government is closed. Trainees

should be given 20 days per year for illness, personal emergencies, and vacations when awards are for more than 90 days. The number of days should be prorated for Traineeships less than one year. These excused absences do not accrue year-to-year and reset every year on the date of renewal. Preceptors should also provide flexibility for travel for interviews, and these absences should not be counted towards the 20 days of leave. Preceptors may exercise discretion in granting additional short absences (less than a week per year) as they deem appropriate. More extended absences must be approved by the IC Scientific Director.

Twelve weeks of excused absence will be granted for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child or other family health care. In addition, ICs must excuse absences to accommodate a trainee's military obligations, i.e., active duty, active duty training, and inactive duty training Not to Exceed (NTE) six weeks per year.

## AB. Excused Absence without Stipend

Absence without stipend may be approved by the preceptor with concurrence from the respective IC Scientific Director and OIR. Through the FPS, the IC must enter the effective date to temporarily stop payment and must reactivate the award in the FPS to resume payment. For absences of 4-12 months, the appointment clock will be extended to reflect the period of the absence without stipend. Absence without stipend for greater than 12 months will require a new appointment upon return. The "Keep the Thread Policy" outlines some of these options: https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/recruitment-processes-policies-checklists/keep-thread-policy

FAES Elected Health Insurance: Should a trainee with FAES health insurance plan to be absent without stipend for less than 60 days, NIH requires the trainee to maintain continuous health insurance coverage. Specifically, trainees must personally complete a Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (C.O.B.R.A.) Application through FAES and begin to pay health insurance coverage premiums on the 1st day of the month following the start date of the unpaid absence and continue to pay for any month when trainee is not in a pay status on the first day of the month. For example, if the trainee is absent without stipend effective June 15th through August 15th, the trainee must pay health insurance premiums beginning July 1st (1st day of the month following the start date of unpaid absence) and pay the premium for the full month of July and August (any full month when trainee is not in a pay status on the first day of the month)

Should the trainee plan to be absent without stipend for more than 60 days, the trainee may choose to stop coverage and not pay the premium. Upon return to NIH, the trainee may then re-enroll as a new subscriber. Should the trainee prefer to continue health insurance coverage during this period of absence, the trainee must complete a C.O.B.R.A. application through FAES. Generally, C.O.B.R.A. coverage is limited to 18 months.

Regardless of total time spent in unpaid absence, respective ICs must provide to FAES written notification generated from the FPS to include start and end date of unpaid absence. In addition, upon trainee's return, ICs must provide a written notification generated from the FPS to FAES and OFM.

## AC. Medical Treatment

All trainees may use the Occupational Medical Service for injuries sustained and emergency care on the training assignment. Workers' compensation and benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act, 5 U.S.C. 8101(1)(B) may be applicable in the event of a work-related injury.

## AD. Health Insurance

All trainees must have adequate health insurance coverage to receive training in NIH facilities. This requirement may be satisfied by a policy held either in the Trainee's name or in another's name with the Trainee identified as a family member. Verification of health insurance enrollment is required.

An approved plan of health insurance is available through the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES). Insurance coverage requires that Trainees be on a training schedule of at least 30 hours per week and a minimum duration of 60 days.

Should a trainee elect FAES health insurance, they are responsible for enrolling in FAES health insurance before the start date of the award or the day of arrival. FAES health insurance enrollment will be effective as of the start date of the award. On the start date, the trainee must meet with FAES to complete, sign, and submit all required health insurance forms. If the trainee does not elect and enroll in FAES health insurance within 30 days from the award start date, the trainee will not be able to elect FAES health insurance until the next open enrollment period for the FAES plan or until a qualifying life event occurs, whichever occurs first. Trainees must maintain an existing policy or purchase a personal policy until they have met with FAES and elected FAES health insurance.

The enrollment data that reflects the FAES effective date must be entered into the FPS by the Fellow's IC Administrative Officer (AO). The effective date of FAES health insurance is the date recorded on the FAES Election of Health Coverage form. This date will typically be the start date of the award and is reflected in the effective from date of the first insurance rate line of the award. If the date provided by FAES is later than the start date of the award, the first insurance rate line in FPS must be changed to "Declined", and a second rate must be entered with the effective from date equal to coverage start date provided by FAES.

Fellows must notify the IC Administrative Officer (AO) and FAES of qualifying life events to change health insurance coverage; e.g., marriage, birth, divorce, loss of other health insurance coverage. A change in health insurance coverage due to a qualifying life event must be reported within 30 days of the event. The change in insurance coverage will be effective as of the date of the qualifying life event. If a change is not requested within 30 days of the qualifying life event, the trainee will need to wait to make any changes to coverage until either the following open enrollment period for the FAES health insurance plan or until another qualifying life event occurs, whichever occurs first. Evidence of the qualifying life event must be presented to FAES.

**NOTE: Both initial insurance enrollment with FAES and qualifying life events thereafter necessitate a visit to FAES for a signature by FAES confirming the insurance effective date (page three of Election of Health Coverage form).**

Funds for individual or family FAES fee-for-service health insurance are provided to FAES by the sponsoring IC at the direction of the trainee. For a non-FAES policy, NIH will pay or reimburse for a policy issued in the Trainee's name in an amount not to exceed that of the FAES fee-for-service health insurance, individual or family coverage, as appropriate. Alternatively, NIH will reimburse for any additional health insurance cost, if incurred, as a result of being covered under a spouse's plan and identified as a "family member" in an amount not to exceed the cost of the FAES fee-for-service health insurance. Documentation verifying health insurance coverage and documenting health insurance costs is required when using a non-FAES policy. If a trainee separates from NIH; terminates his/her FAES health insurance coverage; subsequently returns to NIH; and wants to enroll again in the FAES plan; the trainee must personally pay the premiums for each of the months since termination of coverage if there was less than a 60-day break in the training period. If more than a 60-day break in the training period occurs, the trainee may drop coverage and re-enroll again upon return to NIH as if a new subscriber.

If a trainee separates from NIH, health insurance will continue for 30 days after the award end date (if extension is elected in FPS by the Fellow's Administrative Officer). No changes to health insurance coverage (e.g., individual to family) are permitted during this final 30 days of coverage.

When the outside sponsor provides insufficient funding for the purchase of health insurance coverage, the IC may provide supplemental funding to permit the purchase of a policy equivalent in cost to the FAES fee-for-service health insurance, individual or family coverage, as appropriate. An IC cannot provide a supplement solely to provide health insurance coverage – a stipend of at least $1 per month must also be authorized, even when the outside funding is greater than the applicable stipend. See Section C.25, "Excused Absence without Stipend" above if applicable.

## AE. Retirement Benefits

Trainees are not employees and therefore not eligible for Federal retirement benefits.

## AF. Income Taxes

Stipends are subject to Federal, state, and local income tax; however, NIH does not withhold taxes from the trainee's stipend. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) annually prepares and sends appropriate income information to the IRS and to trainees. Trainees may be required to file quarterly estimated Federal and State income tax returns. Since interpretation and implementation of the tax laws are the responsibility of the IRS and courts, trainees should consult their local IRS office and/or tax advisor if they have questions about the applicability of the current tax code to the taxability of Traineeships, the proper steps to be

taken regarding tax obligations, and concerns regarding their own situations.

Since IRTA traineeships are considered awards for training and not wages for services, neither Social Security nor Medicare taxes are deducted from stipends. Although definitive determinations regarding Social Security obligations and coverage must be made by the Internal Revenue Service and the courts, it is the opinion of the NIH Legal Advisor that trainees would not be considered self-employed for purposes of coverage under the Social Security Act and, therefore, cannot make Social Security or Medicare payments on their own behalf. Trainees are encouraged to consult their local IRS office and/or tax advisor.

## AG. Tort Claims

IRTAs will likely be covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 2671 et seq.) and under section 224 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 233(a)), from personal liability for damages or injuries that arise from actions occurring within the scope of their Federal assignment so long as the IRTA is under the direct control and supervision of a Federal employee. However, the ultimate decision on issues of coverage is made on a case-by-case basis by HHS Office of General Counsel, Department of Justice (DOJ), and, ultimately, the courts, and depends on the circumstances (e.g., including the activities of the IRTA and the proximity of the supervision).

## AH. Outside Work

Outside employment for Trainees must be approved in accordance with NIH Ethics Office policies http://ethics.od.nih.gov/. Guidelines for Outside activities can be found in the NIH sourcebook: https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/ethical-conduct/government-ethics/guidelines-non-ftes-trainees-nih-related-activities-outside-activities.

## AI. Program Evaluation

The NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE) will periodically evaluate the training program for representation of women, minorities, and disabled persons; to assess its relationship with other NIH Traineeship Programs; and to determine whether it is functioning effectively and accomplishing the purpose for which it was designed. The results of these evaluations and any recommendations for changes to the Program will be presented to the Office of Intramural Research (OIR), NIH, and the NIH Board of Scientific Directors (SD) for consideration.

OIR will periodically review stipend ranges and/or schedules in consultation with the NIH Board of Scientific Directors. Recommended adjustments by OIR and the SD subcommittee of trainee stipends will be submitted to the Scientific Directors for review and concurrence and then to the Director, NIH, for final approval.

## AJ. Publications

The publication and presentation of scientific research by Trainees are governed by the same policies as applied to other scientists, either employed by or in training at NIH, as described in Policy Manual, Chapter 1184 – Preparation and Clearance of Scientific, Technical, and Public Information Presented by NIH Employees or Produced for Distribution by NIH. Additional guidance on authorship and publications may be found in the "Guidelines and Policies for the Conduct of Research" and https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/submitting-research-publications.

## AK. Inventions

Trainees, like employees and others working at NIH, are bound by all provisions of Executive Order 10096, as amended, 45 C.F.R. Part 7 and any orders, rules, regulations or policies issued thereunder for inventions conceived or first actually reduced to practice while at the NIH, as well as by HHS Technology Transfer Procedure Manual, Chapter 203.1, "NIH Procedures Related to Disposition of Rights in Inventions by Non-Employees Working at NIH, Receiving NIH Intramural Training Support or Working On-Site under Research Collaborations (NIH-Access only). Trainees will disclose promptly, to the appropriate NIH technology transfer officials, all inventions which they conceive or first actually reduce to practice during their assignment, and will sign and execute all papers necessary for conveying to the government the rights to which it is entitled by virtue of Executive Order 10096, as amended.

## AL. Privacy Act

Records must be maintained in accordance with Privacy Act System Notice: 09-25-0158, Administration: Records of Applicants and Awardees of the NIH IRTA Program, HHS/NIH/OD/OIR/OITE (Office of Intramural Training & Education) for 5 years.

## AM. Required Forms

**Activation and Renewals:**

Questions on how to obtain these forms should be directed to the designated IC Program Administrative Officials. These documents should be retained by the ICs as official system records for the IRTA Program.

- NIH 2590-1, Verification of U.S. Citizenship or Permanent Residency Status
- Fellowship Activation (FPS-generated)
- Election of Health Insurance Choice 1, 2, or 3 (FPS-generated)
- Absence without stipend and reactivation (FPS-generated)

**Terminations:**

- Fellowship Termination Notice (FPS-generated)

## AN. Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Deputy Director for Intramural Research, OIR:**

    a. To coordinate the administration of the NIH IRTA Program including the establishment of new programs to meet evolving training needs and modifications of individual IRTA Traineeship program provisions NIH-wide
    b. To coordinate and approve stipend levels, adjustments, and changes for all Traineeship programs of the NIH IRTA Program
    c. To coordinate & consider approval of any and/or all exceptions to the NIH IRTA Program provisions
    d. To approve initial, renewal, transfers or revocation of Traineeships within the NIH IRTA Program provisions for all IRTA Traineeship programs
    e. To approve part-time schedules on a case-by-case basis for trainees within all IRTA Traineeship programs
    f. To approve supplemental funding in accordance with NIH-wide established Program provisions
    g. To approve training/tuition and/or a rotation to the extent it is directly related to the NIH research experience
    h. To approve extended absences with stipend (see section C.24)
    i. To assure trainees have proper instruction in ethics of scientific research and the safety, use of equipment, handling hazardous materials, proper animal care and treatment, and patient contacts

2. **Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE), OIR:**

    a. To evaluate the IRTA Program effectiveness and determine if the Program is accomplishing its purposes
    b. To approve extensions for graduate students beyond the fifth year or post-baccalaureates who request to remain at the NIH for an exceptional third year
    c. Provide career counseling, wellness, resilience and other assistance to traineeships

3. **Office of Financial Management (OFM), OM, OD:**

    a. To maintain the traineeship stipend outlay, including processing financial documents to arrange for and assure the proper payment, adjustment, or termination of stipends and other authorized allowances
    b. To provide required financial information on individual trainees annually to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and to the trainees
    c. To maintain required accounting information and generate necessary reports

4. **Office of Human Resources (OHR), OD:**

    a. To provide staff assistance to the DDIR, NIH and OIR, NIH as needed/required.

b. To provide advice and/or guidance to designated IC program and/or administrative officials of the purposes and requirements of the NIH IRTA Program, as well as its relationship and appropriate usage to other NIH scientific mechanisms.

5. **IC Directors:**

a. To support the intramural research program in providing a quality traineeship experience

6. **IC Scientific Directors:**

a. To approve initial, renewals, or transfers of Traineeships within the NIH IRTA Program provisions for all IRTA Traineeship programs
b. To approve part-time schedules on a case-by-case basis for trainees within all IRTA Traineeship programs
c. To revoke Traineeships in whole or in part (only after consultation with OIR)
d. To approve initial stipends and/or stipend increases within the NIH IRTA Program provisions
e. To approve supplemental funding in accordance with NIH-wide established Program provisions
f. To approve training/tuition to the extent it is directly related to the NIH research experience
g. To approve extended absences with or without stipend (see section C.24)
h. To ensure that their IC has developed Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and assure trainees have proper instruction in scientific ethics and the safety, use of equipment, handling hazardous materials, proper animal care and treatment, and patient contacts

7. **IC Lab/Branch Chiefs:**

a. Provide a training environment in their Lab/Branch that assured quality mentorship, ethics, and safety training for all trainees.

8. **IC Preceptors:**

a. To provide principal mentoring
b. To work with their trainees to develop Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
c. Assure instruction in scientific ethics, safety, use of equipment, handling hazardous materials, proper animal care and treatment, and patient contacts

9. **Designated IC Program Administrative Officials for IRTA Program:**

a. To provide advice and guidance to IC scientific program officials on the purposes and requirements of the IRTA Program provisions
b. To assure that: applicants meet eligibility requirements; necessary documentation is present and complete; Trainee schedules are determined; documentation to

activate, renew, and terminate the Traineeships is distributed and signed, if appropriate; the completion of medical exams is arranged; U.S. Citizenship or resident alien status is verified; and orientation for each trainee, including advising on benefits available, is conducted

10. **IRTA Trainees:**

    a. Must develop Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
    b. Complete all NIH mandatory training
    c. Complete required responsible conduct of research training
    d. Complete proper training for instruction in safety, use of equipment, handling hazardous materials, proper animal care and treatment, and only have patient contacts while under direct supervision of an NIH employee (FTE)
    e. Trainees must reimburse Office of Financial Management (OFM), OM, OD, NIH, for any and all stipend overpayments
    f. All trainees must have adequate health insurance coverage to receive training in NIH facilities (See section C.27 for more information)
    g. Trainees will disclose promptly, to the appropriate NIH technology transfer officials, all inventions which they conceive or first actually reduce to practice during their assignment, and will sign and execute all papers necessary for conveying to the government the rights to which it is entitled by virtue of Executive Order 10096, as amended
    h. Trainees must abide by the Guidelines for Non-FTEs (Trainees) for NIH-Related Activities, Outside Activities, and Awards https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/ethical-conduct/government-ethics/guidelines-non-ftes-trainees-nih-related-activities-outside-activities

## Appendix 1

Postdoctoral IRTA and Visiting Fellow Stipend Ranges - effective May 1, 2023

## Appendix 2

Predoctoral (Graduate Student) IRTA and VF Stipend Levels - effective May 1, 2023

## Appendix 3

Postbaccalaureate IRTA Stipend Levels - effective May 1, 2023

## Appendix 4

Student IRTA Stipend Levels - effective May 1, 2023

## Appendix 5

**Samples of Notification of Traineeship & IRTA Traineeship Agreement. In this Appendix:**


1. Sample Notification of Traineeship
2. Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Traineeship Agreement


**SAMPLE NOTIFICATION OF TRAINEESHIP**

Dear :

I am pleased to officially inform you that you have been selected by the (IC) to receive an NIH Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) [IC should complete entry, e.g. Post-bac, Pre-doctoral, Post-doc Traineeship]. This Traineeship is contingent upon submission of acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship or resident alien status. [If applicable IC should enter the following: In addition, you must have a medical evaluation as directed by Occupational Medical Services procedures.] All policies surrounding the IRTA program can be found at https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-320-7.

*Please note any fellowship offer is contingent on your ability to successfully pass a federal background check, which is required for logical and physical access to NIH facilities and systems. As part of the clearance process, you will be asked "In the last year, have you used, possessed, supplied, or manufactured illegal drugs?" This question pertains to the use of controlled substances or drugs as defined under federal law. Please be aware that while marijuana may be legal or decriminalized within your home jurisdiction it remains illegal under U.S. federal law. The use, possession, supply, or manufacture of marijuana may preclude you from obtaining the necessary clearances to participate in NIH intramural training programs, even if you were initially offered a position. If you have questions about this policy or would like guidance on the clearance process, please reach out to oite@nih.gov (please put eligibility inquiry in the subject line).*

The training preceptor for your IRTA Traineeship will be Dr. , (title) , (organization). The initial Traineeship commitment is for a period of [month(s)/year(s)], beginning through . (For 2 or 3 year commitments, add the following: "Accounting procedures require that this Traineeship be processed one year at a time".) Traineeships may be renewed beyond the initial commitment for one year increments only, up to the maximum duration of year(s). Renewal of IRTA Traineeships beyond the initial commitment is not guaranteed and is based on demonstrated progress in the training assignment, education completed (if applicable), and mutual agreement between the IRTA trainee, the training preceptor, the Laboratory/Branch Chief, and the (IC) Scientific Director.

Your initial stipend will be $ ___ per (month/annum). Additional information concerning program provisions, required proof of citizenship or resident alien status, and other benefits is contained in the "IRTA Traineeship Agreement" that you must complete to signify your acceptance of the Traineeship. Please read the Agreement carefully, sign and date the original, and return it to (the Designated IC Program Administrative Official) in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. The full policies surrounding your traineeship can be found in NIH Manual Chapter, 2300-320-7 – Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program.

**(IF APPLICABLE)** The pre-activation physical examination may be conducted by the Occupational Medical Service, NIH, in Bethesda, Maryland, at no cost to you. Alternatively, it may be completed by a physician of your own choosing, but at your own expense. Please call *NAME* at *NUMBER* to arrange an examination by the Occupational Medical Service or to obtain the necessary forms for completion by a private physician if you choose the latter option.

Under the terms of your IRTA Traineeship, you are required to be covered by adequate health insurance in order to receive training in NIH facilities. This requirement may be satisfied by a policy held either in your name or in another's name with you identified as a family member. One approved plan of health insurance is available through the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES). At your direction, the IC will provide funds in an amount not to exceed the cost of FAES fee- for-service health insurance, individual or family as appropriate, in addition to your regular stipend, for a policy issued in your name.

(Name/Appropriate Office) will contact you regarding arrangements for [**If applicable ICs should enter the following: a medical evaluation**]**,** and will provide you with other pertinent information, as well as instructions regarding activation of your Traineeship.

We are looking forward to your participation in the NIH IRTA Program, and hope you will find it to be a rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

IC Scientific Director or

IC Designated Official

Enclosures: IRTA Traineeship Agreement

**INTRAMURAL RESEARCH TRAINING AWARD (IRTA) TRAINEESHIP**

In accepting this Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Traineeship, I understand that I am not a Government employee. I certify that I agree to comply with the terms outlined and all other policies as written in the NIH Manual Chapter, 2300-320-7 – Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program.

**A. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

1. I meet the educational/experience requirements for participation in the applicable IRTA Program Traineeship program and will provide verification as required.
2. I am a U.S. citizen or resident alien. I will provide acceptable proof of my citizenship or resident alien status at the time I report to activate my Traineeship.
3. [If applicable, ICs should enter the following: I understand that I may be required to complete a medical evaluation as directed by the Occupational Medical Services procedures.]
4. *I understand that any fellowship offer is contingent on my ability to successfully pass a federal background check, which is required for logical and physical access to NIH facilities and systems. As part of the clearance process, I will be asked "In the last year, have I used, possessed, supplied, or manufactured illegal drugs?" This question pertains to the use of controlled substances or drugs as defined under federal law. While marijuana may be legal or decriminalized within a jurisdiction it remains illegal under U.S. federal law. The use, possession, supply, or manufacture of marijuana may preclude me from obtaining the necessary clearances to participate in NIH intramural training programs, even if I was initially offered a position. If I have questions about this policy or would like guidance on the clearance process, I can reach out to oite@nih.gov (I will put eligibility inquiry in the subject line).*

**B. DURATION**

I understand that my initial Traineeship commitment is for the period beginning (date) and ending (date), but that the initial appointment will be for one year. Renewal beyond the first year is not guaranteed and will be contingent upon demonstrated progress in the training assignment and the approval of appropriate (IC) officials. I have read the IRTA Manual Chapter section C.6 to understand the duration of my appointment. I agree to notify my training preceptor as soon as possible and negotiate mutually acceptable terms for termination should I wish to leave the Program before the scheduled end date of my Traineeship.

*FOR SUMMER INTERNS/SHORT-TERM IRTAs ONLY-*

*I understand that my initial Traineeship commitment is for the period beginning (date) and ending (date). I agree to notify my training preceptor as soon as possible and negotiate mutually acceptable terms for termination should I wish to leave the Program before the scheduled end date of my Traineeship.*

I understand that Trainees may be terminated for scientific or other forms of misconduct, failure to comply with the terms of the Traineeship, or failure to satisfy the purpose for which it was made. When termination is proposed for such reasons, I understand I will be given an opportunity to address the reasons before a decision is rendered. In the case of interpersonal incompatibility or any unforeseen programmatic circumstances, and absent any conduct issues, the IC may arrange a transfer to another laboratory.

I further understand that upon conclusion of my Traineeship, I am not entitled to future training or employment at the NIH.

**C. STIPENDS**

As a/an (IC should complete entry, e.g., Pre-doctoral) trainee I understand that my monthly stipend will be paid in arrears, and that the payment for a given month will reflect the amount owed from the preceding month. I understand that Stipends are established based on relevant research experience and completed education as outlined in Section C.10 in the NIH Manual Chapter, 2300-320-7 – Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program. Stipends are currently published in Appendices 1-4 in the NIH Manual Chapter, 2300-320-7 – Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Program. I will immediately notify my training preceptor and other appropriate IC officials of any change in my status that might affect my stipend payment, including any supplemental funding or decision to terminate my Traineeship earlier than anticipated. I understand that, if my Traineeship is terminated earlier than anticipated, I am no longer entitled to stipends and that any stipend checks received or deposited to my account inappropriately are inadvertent and do not belong to me, but are the property of the United States. I agree to reimburse the U.S. Government for any overpayment that may occur. I understand that knowingly cashing, depositing, or converting any such check for my use could result in criminal penalties. In addition, any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed to the U.S. Government.

**D. BENEFITS**

1. I agree that I will have adequate health insurance coverage either through the approved plan with the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES), or through another private plan, and will provide proof of such coverage. For the FAES option, I understand that I must submit all required documents to the insurance office within 30 days of my start date. The effective date of FAES health insurance is the same date as the award period start date on page 1 of the FPS form. On that date, I must meet with FAES to complete, sign, and submit all required health insurance forms.
2. I understand that should I separate from NIH that I must terminate my FAES health insurance coverage. If I subsequently return to NIH with less than a 60 days break in the training period and want to enroll again in an FAES plan, I must personally pay the premiums for each of the months since termination of coverage. If a break of more than a 60 days in the training period occurs, I may drop coverage and re-enroll upon return to NIH as a new subscriber. If I separate from NIH, health insurance will continue for 30 days after the award end date **(if extension is elected in FPS by the IC Administrative Officer).** No changes to health insurance coverage (e.g., individual to

family) are permitted during this final 30 days of coverage.

3. I also understand if I have a qualifying life event ((e.g., marriage, birth, loss of other health insurance coverage), I must notify the IC Administrative Officer and FAES of the qualifying event to change my health insurance coverage within 30 days. Births are covered by FAES health insurance on day one, but I must notify FAES of the child's birth within 30 days to continue coverage.
4. Alternatively, I may purchase another private health plan in my own name, in which case an allowance will be provided by NIH not to exceed the cost of FAES fee-for-service health insurance, individual or family, as appropriate. Also, NIH will reimburse me for any additional health insurance cost incurred as a result of my being covered under a parent's or spouse's policy with my name listed as "family member" not to exceed the cost of the FAES fee-for-service health insurance. I will be prepared to indicate my choice of health plan or to provide proof of existing coverage before or at the time I report to begin my IRTA Traineeship.
5. I understand that I may be reimbursed for travel costs for me, my dependents, movement of household goods, and temporary storage of household goods, NTE $3,000 at IC discretion and that there is no allowance for return travel. To obtain reimbursement for travel to NIH to begin my Traineeship, I will provide the ticket coupon for travel by commercial carrier (e.g., bus, train, air) or odometer readings for travel by private automobile, and lodging receipts, if any. I understand that all reimbursement will be in accordance with applicable Government regulations. Further, I will submit a personal check covering any travel advance overpayment to the Cashier's Office, attached to a copy of the travel voucher and that any un-recovered overpayment will be treated as a debt owed the U.S. Government.
6. I will seek advance approval for travel to scientific meetings and understand that the authorization of any travel allowances is discretionary. In addition, I will seek advance approval for travel reimbursements funded by an outside entity and understand that the funding source should be non-Federal.
7. I will seek advance approval for payment/reimbursement for training/tuition directly related to the purpose of my Traineeship. I understand that payment for any training/tuition must be discussed with my supervisor. I understand that the authorization of allowances for additional training must be in accordance with applicable Government regulations and is at the discretion of the IC.
8. I understand that since I am not an employee of the NIH that I do not earn annual or sick leave. However, I should be excused for Federal holidays and any other time the government is closed. I have 20 days of excused absence with stipend per year for illness, personal emergencies, and vacations if my award is for more than 90 days. These excused absences do not accrue year-to-year and reset every year on the date of renewal.

   Twelve weeks of excused absence will be granted for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child or other family health care.

**E. DEDUCTIONS**

1. I understand that I am not eligible for coverage under the Federal Employees Retirement System and that deductions for this program, as well as Social Security and

Medicare taxes, will not be withheld from my stipend.
2. I understand that my Traineeship is subject to Federal, State, and Local income taxes; however, NIH will not withhold taxes from my stipend and I am fully responsible for filing the appropriate income tax documents and paying anything due. As required, I will file quarterly estimated returns with the appropriate agencies.

**F. LEAVE OF ABSENCE, OUTSIDE AWARDS AND OUTSIDE WORK**

I will seek advance approval from my training preceptor for any leave of absence and will seek advance approval from my preceptor and other appropriate officials to accept outside awards and to engage in outside employment. Guidelines for outside Activities and Awards are found in the NIH Sourcebook.

**G. PUBLICATIONS AND INVENTIONS**

1. I will seek advice from my preceptor and request clearance for any publication resulting from my Traineeship in compliance with NIH's publication policies.
2. I will be bound by all provisions of Executive Order 10096, and any orders, rules, regulations or policies issued there-under where NIH determines the rights of the Government and the trainee to inventions conceived or actually reduced to practice during the period of the Traineeship, as well as by HHS Technology Transfer Procedure Manual, Chapter 203.1, "NIH Procedures Related to Disposition of Rights in Inventions by Non-Employees Working at NIH, Receiving NIH Intramural Training Support or Working On-Site under Research Collaborations" https://www.ott.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdfs/203-1-Procedure.pdf (NIH only). Furthermore, I will promptly disclose to my preceptor and other appropriate officials all inventions that are conceived or first reduced to practice during the term of my Traineeship and will sign and execute all papers necessary to convey to the Government the rights to which the Government is entitled in accordance with any determination made under the provisions of Executive Order 10096.

**H. PRIVACY ACT**

I understand that all Records must be maintained in accordance with Privacy Act System Notice: 09-25-0158.

**I. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

While on the premises of NIH, I will conform to all applicable administrative instructions, policies, and requirements of NIH and the Department of Health and Human Services, including all regulations and procedures concerning conduct, safety, and animal care.

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| Signature of Trainee | Date: |
| Signature of Parent or Guardian<br>(if a minor under 18 years of age) | Date: |
| IC Scientific Director or Other IC authorized delegated official | Date: |