

2016 International Research Scholars
Program
Questions and Answers

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A. Research Supported

A1. What types of research are supported by this program?

Applications are encouraged from researchers studying any areas of basic biological and biomedical research and in areas of chemistry, physics, computer science, and engineering that are directly related to biology or medicine. Funding decisions are guided by the principle of “people, not projects.” Thus, within the broad research areas named above, researchers have the freedom to explore, and if necessary, to change direction in their research.

A2. Are clinical trials or public health initiatives supported?

No. Research supported by this program must focus on basic biological processes, disease mechanisms, or epidemiology.

B. Eligibility

B1. Who is eligible for grants?

To be eligible for this competition you must:

- hold a doctoral or medical degree and have completed postdoctoral research training;
- hold a full-time position as an independent scientist at a research-oriented university, medical school, or nonprofit institution in an eligible country (see below);
- have trained at the doctoral, medical, or postdoctoral level in the United States or the United Kingdom for a minimum of one year;
- be the first or senior author on at least two peer-reviewed, English-language, original research publications;
- have started your first independent research position on or after April 1, 2009;
- control your own research direction, laboratory space, funding; devote most of your professional time to research, mentoring, and teaching; and have no major administrative duties;

- conduct biomedical research on basic biological and disease mechanisms; your research may also be in areas of chemistry, physics, computer science, or engineering directly related to biology or medicine. *Clinical trials and research on health education, health care delivery, or health services are not eligible research areas in this competition.*

B2. What are the eligible countries?

Countries that are not eligible for this competition include the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and United States), as well as countries identified by the US Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) as being subject to comprehensive country or territory-wide sanctions or where current OFAC regulations prohibit U.S. persons or entities from engaging in the funding arrangements contemplated by this grant program. For this program, such sanctioned countries or territories currently include Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, and the Crimea region of Ukraine. Applicants holding positions in all other countries are welcome to apply.

B3. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

The first part of the application asks a series of questions to determine an applicant's eligibility. Eligible applicants will be granted access to the second part of the application.

B4. Can two or more scientists apply jointly for a single grant award?

No. Applications are accepted only from individual independent investigators.

B5. Can one scientist submit more than one application in the current competition?

No. Individuals are permitted to submit one application only.

B6. Are there any restrictions on the age of an applicant?

No. There are no age restrictions for applicants. You are welcome to apply if you meet all the listed eligibility criteria.

B7. Are applications from tenured faculty accepted?

Yes. Applications are accepted from all individuals meeting the eligibility criteria regardless of their tenure status or the number of years since they completed their terminal degree.

B8. Do I have to be a citizen of one of the eligible countries?

No. You must have a permanent research position at a non-profit institution or organization located in one of the eligible countries. There are no citizenship requirements for this competition.

B9. Am I eligible if I have a joint appointment at an institution located outside the eligible countries?

Yes, provided that your primary appointment is at an institution located in one of the eligible countries.

B10. I have applied for a position in one of the eligible countries but will not know whether I will be offered the position before the grant application deadline. Can I apply for a grant with the understanding that I must have the position by the time the award is made?

No. Applicants must have assumed their position at an institution in an eligible country by June 30, 2016, the deadline for submitting applications.

B11. Currently I am working in an ineligible country but I am a citizen of an eligible country. I plan to return to my country of citizenship to lead my own independent research group. Can I apply for a grant that, if awarded, will support my independent group (in an eligible country)?

No. You must hold a full-time position at a nonprofit scientific research organization in an eligible country by the application deadline, June 30, 2016.

B12. May I apply if I have no affiliation with a research organization or institution?

No. Applicants must hold a full-time position at a nonprofit scientific research organization in one of the eligible countries.

B13. How is doctoral degree defined?

A doctoral degree must be equivalent to a United States Ph.D. or M.D.

C. Components of the Application

C1. Do you require or accept letters of reference and to whom should they be directed?

Only applicants selected as semifinalists (see D1) will be asked to provide two letters of reference; they will be given instructions on how to submit the letters.

C2. What must my application include?

In addition to contact information for you and an official at your institution with the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the institution, you must provide all of the following. **Additional information is available in the Guide to Uploads accessible through the online application system.**

- Curriculum Vitae – Use the downloadable form provided on the Uploads Page; follow instructions in the Guide to Uploads.
- Training Experiences – Describe your predoctoral and postdoctoral research training experiences. For each, include the following in this order: training period; mentor's name; institution and country where training took place; a brief (250 word maximum) summary of the research and training.
- Major Achievements – Summarize your major scientific achievements in 250 words or less.
- Research Program Abstract – Provide a 250-word summary of the primary research directions that this grant would enable.
- Research Program – Describe, in 1500 words or less, your current and planned research program. You may add up to one page of figures, which may be interleaved in the text, and a list of essential references; figures, legends, and

references do not count toward the 1500 word limit. See Guide to Uploads for important information.

- Institutional Support – Download, complete, and upload the Institutional Support document found on the Uploads Page. Information on this page will be verified with an official at your institution before a grant is awarded.
- Publications of Note with Statements of Significance and Impact – Provide at least two and up to three peer-reviewed publications that document your most important scientific contributions. These publications can describe work carried out as a graduate student, postdoctoral trainee, and/or independent researcher. For each publication, provide a statement that begins with the complete journal citation and then summarizes, in 300 words or less, the importance of the selected publication. Only published papers or papers that have been accepted for publication as of June 20, 2016 should be included. Do not include manuscripts that are under review or that have been submitted for review.
- Reference Letters – If you are a semi-finalist, you will be notified in November of 2016 and asked to solicit two reference letters.

C3. Can my Research Program summary include work that is already supported by other funding sources?

Yes. We are interested in the full range of the work you are doing and planning to do, regardless of current sources of funding.

C4. Should I include specific program aims in the Research Program summary?

You may. We hope and expect that those selected to receive grant awards will use the support as an opportunity to pursue creative projects, including those that are unlikely to be funded by other organizations, but have potential to develop into scientific programs of exceptional merit.

C5. Do I need endorsement or approval from my institution in order to apply for this competition?

Approval or endorsement of your application by your institution is not part of the application process, but an official at your institution will be required to confirm the employment status of semifinalists. Additionally, grant awards are made to research institutions on behalf of individual award recipients. If you are selected to receive a grant, your institution will be required to agree to the terms and conditions governing the grant award.

D. Review Process

D1. How does the review process work?

The review process will be conducted as follows:

- A two-stage review will lead to the selection of semifinalists; all applicants will be notified of their application status in November of 2016.
- Semifinalists will be asked to solicit two letters of reference in November, 2016.
- A third and final review will identify winning applications. This review stage is expected to involve in-person interviews with a distinguished panel of reviewers.

- Those selected to receive grants will be notified in April, 2017.

D2. What are the criteria for selecting grant recipients?

Reviewers will be guided by the principle of “people, not projects”. This means that reviewers will seek to understand the impact of your past work and the promise of your future directions, and they will not focus solely on the details of a specific proposed project.

D3. Who are the reviewers?

Reviewers include distinguished scientists selected by the funding Partners. These may include current and past members of Scientific Review Boards as well as researchers that are presently funded by the Partners.

D4. Can I get a list of potential reviewers who might be assigned to my application?

No. We do not make public the roster of reviewers.

D5. Can I request that my application not be reviewed by a specific individual?

No. However, we will ask reviewers about conflicts of interest and will not assign reviewers with conflicts.

D6. Will I receive written comments on my application from the reviewers?

No. No written comments on applications submitted for this competition will be provided to applicants.

E. Award Information

E1. How many grants will be awarded?

Up to 45 awards.

E2. Will awards be made in each of the eligible countries?

Award recipients will be selected based on the record of their past achievements and potential for future accomplishments, independently of the country in which their research is conducted.

E3. Are grant awards made directly to individuals?

No. All awards are made to the institution where the individual holds their primary appointment. Institutions must agree to the terms and conditions governing the grant award prior to award activation.

E4. How much money will each grant provide?

Awards are for five-years and will provide \$250,000 USD in the first year and \$100,000 per year in years 2 – 5.

E5. How will grants be paid?

Grant payments will be made in U.S. dollars or UK pounds, and no adjustments will be made for currency exchange fluctuations.

E6. Are the grants renewable?

No. These grants are for a single five year term.

E7. Are award recipients expected to participate in Partner-sponsored scientific meetings?

Yes. International Research Scholars will participate annually in a scientific meeting sponsored by a program Partner. These meetings facilitate the exchange of ideas, stimulate new research, and provide an opportunity for collaborative endeavors within the scientific community. The cost of participating in these meetings will be borne by the hosting Partner and will not be taken from the grant funds.

E8. Can awards be transferred to another research institution if the award recipient moves?

Transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will only be approved if the eligibility requirements continue to be met at the new institution.

F. Funding Partners

F1. Who are the Funding Partners?

The Funding Partners are the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.