Research Fellowships: Why, What, and How?

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Why Apply for Funding

• Prepare for a career as an independent investigator
• Be an active member of the larger research community and participate in the discovery process
• Secure resources for training & research expenses
• Write up your findings (for future publications)
Pre-Doctoral Sponsored Funding

- Fellowships
- Training Grants
- Dissertation Grants
Where to Apply

• Federal
  – NIH
  – NSF
  – Department of Defense
  – Other federal sponsors as relevant funding programs are made available
• Foundations
• Internal (via Deans Office and Development)
Resources for Finding Funding Opportunities

• SR-PD
  – **Predoctoral Fellowship Funding Sources**
  – **Funding Opportunities** Database
  – SR-PD weekly Funding alerts
  – **Pivot database**
  – Other **Grant Seeking Resources** maintained by Program Development
  – Mentor and peers
Opportunities for non-US Citizens

- While some sponsors have citizenship requirements, many opportunities exist for international students
  - Opportunities Restricted to US Citizens/Permanent Residents
  - Opportunities Restricted to Other Citizenship/Nationalities
  - Unrestricted Opportunities

- Review [Predoctoral Fellowship Funding Sources](www.rockefeller.edu/sr-pd/)
NSF GRFP Application

• Submitted directly by applicant via NSF FastLane
• Review GRFP announcement NSF 16-588
• Application Components:
  – Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
  – Graduate Research Plan Statement (2 pages)
  – Transcripts, uploaded into FastLane
  – Three letters of reference required
NSF’s Merit Review Criteria

• Intellectual Merit
  – Demonstrated potential to advance knowledge
    • Strength of Academic Record
    • Research Plan
    • Previous Experience and/or publications
    • Institution

• Broader Impacts
  – Potential of applicant to benefit society
    • Educational Experiences
    • Integration of research & education
    • Potential to reach diverse audiences and benefit society
Broader Impacts Criterion

• From FAQs for applicants to GRFP:

Reviewers may consider the following with respect to the Broader Impacts Criterion: the potential of the applicant to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes based on a holistic review of the complete application, including personal experiences, professional experiences, educational experiences and future plans. Broader impacts can be achieved through your research, research-related, and non-research activities and achievements, including any that broaden participation in STEM and STEM education.
Changes to NSF GRFP

• Application Deadlines
  – Life Sciences applications are due 10/23/17

• Reference letter deadline
  – November 2, 2017

• Grad students are limited to only 1 submission, either in the first or second year of grad school.
  – Must have completed no more than 12 months full time grad school by August 1
NDSEG Fellowship

• **National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship**

• Eligibility
  – US citizenship requirement
  – Field of study must fit into one of the supported disciplines – Biosciences
  – At or near the beginning of doctoral studies (less than 2 years graduate study)

• Fellowship is for up to 4 years and covers tuition, fees, and stipend

• Applications due 12/31/17

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NDSEG Fellowship - Application

• Personal Statement (1 Page)
  – Short and long-term goals
  – How did goals develop and what foundation has already begun
  – How does fellowship fit into these goals

• Proposed Research Relevant to DoD (3 pages)
  – A proposal relevant to the DoD agency
  – Show why the project will make an important contribution to
    the Agency and why the project/proposed training is
    meritorious

• Official undergrad transcripts and GRE score

• 3 Letters of Reference
NIH Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA)

- **F31 Predoctoral** supports promising doctoral candidates who will be performing dissertation research and training in scientific health-related fields
- **F32 Postdoctoral** supports promising applicants with potential to become productive and successful independent research investigators in scientific health-related fields
- **T32 Institutional Training Grant** supports institutions with established programs of supervised research career development in the fields of biomedical and behavioral research

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American Heart Association

- No citizenship requirements (must have approved Visa)
- Objective: to initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research
- Next deadline: 11/1/17
- You should be done with coursework and devoting 100% effort to research at time of award activation (Jan 1)
- $23,844 stipend plus $1,000 for health insurance and $2,000 for project costs (supplies, travel, etc.) for two yrs
- Review Criteria: Trainee potential; Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment; Evaluation of Research Proposal

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Tips for All Fellowships

• Follow guidelines to the letter!
  – Some sponsors are especially interested in more novel/innovative projects
  – Many are focused on applicant’s potential and track record (transcript, publications, etc.)
  – Many also ask for mentor’s track record and institutional environment
  – Always keep the review criteria in mind!
Additional Elements

• Provide easy to read, carefully proofed, logical, succinct and coherent narrative.
• Meet format requirements:
  – Font type and size
  – Margins
  – Other as needed
• Never exceed the sponsor’s page limit
Steps To Beginning Your Proposal

- Start early!
- Review the funding program you deem relevant
- When available, review recently funded proposals
- Find out success rate at target agency/institute
- Discuss your research/proposal with your mentor
- Contact the Program Official/Director
- Secure reference letters
- Register with sponsor
- Work with your Sponsored Programs Officer

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Summary of Key Resources

- Mentor
- Peers
- RU Office of Sponsored Programs Administration
  - Forms and format
  - Budget (e.g personnel effort & costs, indirect costs)
  - Boilerplates
  - Your Sponsored Programs Officer
  - Website
  - NIH Fellowship Checklist
- Sponsor’s website
- NIH
  - RePORT
  - Program Official
  - Office of Extramural Research
Preparing the Proposal

- Review scope of the funding opportunity announcement
- Make note of the deadline
- Verify eligibility with your Sponsored Programs Officer
- Get your Mentor’s consent
- Read closely the guidelines/instructions – including special submission requirements
- Design your outline and research plan according to the sponsor’s instructions
- Discuss training and research plan with your mentor
- Fully address the review criteria in the order presented by the sponsor
Questions and Suggestions