**9/12/22 Virtual Office Hour Recap – Postdoctoral Fellowship Program in Biology**

**Q: Can you provide some examples of what NSF wants to see in terms of \*how\* proposed research specifically targets diversity at the postdoc level? E.g., workshops, collaboration with other PhDs?**

A: Workshops, collaborations with other programs or societies focused on increasing diversity are all okay. As long as the activities proposed are focused explicitly on broadening participation at the postdoctoral level.

**Q: Can you expand on the differences between a “proposal” and an “application”? Are PRFB applications like the Graduate Research Fellowship Program?**

A: To some degree, proposals communicate the “what” and “how”, while applications focus a bit more on the “who”. Proposals describe on the science and how you plan to implement the research strategy and accomplish the broader impacts. Applications capture your research, but also your career goals and why you selected the sponsoring scientist. But better than any rule of thumb, just pay close attention to the solicitation instructions and you will stay on track.

**Q: Is the PRFB strictly for basic research? For example, if one’s research focuses on ecological restoration, would that be considered a broader impact?**

A: The proposal must address a basic research question in biology. Broader impacts for your proposal can include ecological restoration, disease, biomedical outcomes, or other applications of fundamental biology, but the underlying research question of the proposal must be basic research to fit the program.

**Q: If your research fits under the purview of NSF BIO but not specifically under one of the three competitive areas, can you still apply?**

A: Research that does not fit one of the Competitive Areas described in the solicitation would not be eligible for support. If you have questions about whether your research fits one of the competitive areas, we recommend that you contact a Program Director associated with the program to help decide the best fit for your project.

**Q: Can you have two faculty sponsors at the same institution? For example, the potential lab is unusual in that there are multiple PIs in the lab (rather than a single PI). Alternatively, can one advisor support multiple applications?**

A: Yes, you can have co-sponsorships at the same institution. There is only one sponsoring scientist statement allowed. Both must work together to provide description of how they will mentor and train you. And yes, an advisor can support multiple applications.

**Q: Can the PRFB apply towards research outside of the US? Do fellows need to have an academic advisor within the US?**

A: Fellowships are awarded to the PI, not the institutions, and can be applied to research outside of the United States. An academic advisor within the US is not required. Location of fellowship depends on the research you plan to conduct, the training needed, and who would be the best mentor.

**Q: What can the $20,000 fellowship allowance portion be used for? Is it for specific supplies, conference, or fieldwork travel, or?**

A: Yes. The fellowship allowance can cover costs related to supplies, travel, and conferences, as well as fringe benefits. Please refer to the [Administrative Guide](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2022/nsf22109/nsf22109.pdf) for a complete list of allowable costs for the research stipend.

**Q: If awarded, is there room to push back the start date? If so, how long?**

A: Yes. Start dates can be adjusted. Please reach out the program officer managing the award to work out the details.

**Q: If someone is not awarded PRFB this year, could they submit a similar/revised application next year?**

A: Yes, if you are still eligible (i.e., not in a position which requires a PhD for more than 15 months) Applicants can only submit one fellowship application to BIO per fiscal year and can’t apply in more than two successive years.

**Q: "Predictive" in Competitive Area 2: is finding support or rejecting a hypothesis ruling broad-scale relationships between environments/phenotypes/genotypes considered predictive, or do we need to propose developing an explicit model/simulation/etc.?**

A: You don’t need to propose developing an explicit model/simulation per se. You will want to describe how your work goes beyond your particular model or would be applicable other more generalizable biological processes.