

ADVANCE

FAQs for FELLOWS Proposals

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POSTDOCTORAL EMPLOYEES

Q. My position is not formally entitled postdoctoral, but is similar in all essential aspects to a typical postdoctoral position. Who can I contact to find out if I am eligible to apply to the Fellows program?

A. As this designation varies by discipline, questions on whether an applicant's position is a "postdoc equivalent" position should be directed to the applicable NSF research directorate. Check the ADVANCE website (<http://www.nsf.gov/ADVANCE>) to find a list of directorate contacts.

Q. I have not served as a PI on any NSF award; however, I am listed as a co-PI on a current award. Am I eligible to apply to the Fellows program?

A. Applicants who have served as co-PIs on NSF awards are eligible to apply for Fellows Awards if they are currently in a postdoctoral or equivalent status, have never held a tenure-track or tenured position at a U.S. institution of higher learning, and meet the other [eligibility criteria](#) for Fellows Awards.

Q. I received my Ph.D. in 1998. For the past year and a half, I have been a faculty member in a tenure-track position. I am not planning to leave this position since my spouse is also in a tenure-track position at this institution. Am I eligible to apply to the ADVANCE program as a Fellow?

A. You are not eligible to apply for a Fellows Award since you have a tenure-track position. You may wish to apply for NSF research support through the programs in your area of research and also to consider the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program, a Foundation-wide activity that supports junior faculty within the context of their overall career development (<http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/career/start.htm>).

CAREER INTERRUPTION - FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Q. Is a person who has been out of the science and engineering workforce to attend to a seriously ill family member eligible to apply?

A. Yes, persons who have taken 2 to 8 years off to attend to family responsibilities such as child rearing or elder care, or to care for a spouse or an immediate family member with an incapacitating illness or injury, are eligible to apply.

Q. The ADVANCE guidelines list some possible career advancement limitations (child-rearing, elder care, and spouse relocation). Does an applicant have to demonstrate such a limitation to be eligible to apply?

A. The ADVANCE guidelines list three categories of eligibility (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02121/nsf02121.htm#ELIG>) for the Fellows Awards in addition to the requirements that all applicants have to hold a Ph.D. in a field of science or engineering supported by NSF, be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or permanent resident of the United States, and be establishing a full-time independent academic research and education career at an institution of higher learning in the U.S., its territories or possessions, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. You must meet one of the eligibility requirements to apply for a Fellows Award, and when you submit your proposal you will have to certify which of the three criteria you meet. In your proposal, you will need to provide a brief narrative of your career history and accomplishments to date and describe the likely impact of a Fellows Award on your career.

Q. I am currently an adjunct faculty member and I have not been a full-time researcher due to family considerations since 1998. However, I have never held a tenure-track position. Am I eligible to apply?

A. There is no requirement under this part of the Fellows program for an applicant to have had a tenure-track position. It appears that you have been out of the full-time science and engineering (S&E) workforce for 2 to 8 years to attend to family responsibilities and will be out of this workforce on the proposal due date. Therefore, you may be eligible to apply if you meet other eligibility requirements for the Fellows awards.

Q. I left my planned career path as an assistant professor in 1995 in order to raise my children. I am currently employed in a "soft money" position in a nearby university. Though my position could be considered as in the "full-time science and engineering workforce," it is a significant diversion from my planned career path and does not involve research or teaching. I would like to apply for the ADVANCE Fellows program to reestablish my research and teaching experience so that at the end of the program I am in a position to once again secure an academic position at an undergraduate institution. Am I eligible to apply?

A. You would not be eligible for the ADVANCE Program under the criterion you mentioned because the program solicitation requires that the applicant "on the proposal due date, be out of the full-time science and engineering workforce and have been out of this workforce for 2 to 8 years to attend to family responsibilities". Since your position is full-time, you wouldn't qualify under that criterion.

Q. I received my Ph.D. in 1993 and worked in a full-time position at a national laboratory from 1994-1998. I resigned my position in 1998 for my husband's relocation. A year later, I started work as a research assistant professor (a non-tenure-track position). The appointment ends this year. Am I eligible to apply?

A. You would not be eligible under the relocation of a spouse criterion, as your resignation from full-time employment was more than 24 months ago.

RELOCATION - FOLLOWING SPOUSE

Q. Last year my husband finished his residency at a hospital in Chicago. He has started a position with the Washington Hospital Center. I am a research professor at Northwestern. I will be resigning this position next December to join him in the Washington area, where I will attempt to affiliate with one of the universities to continue to pursue my goal of an independent academic career. Am I eligible?

A. You would be eligible if you have resigned a full-time science and engineering position within a two-year period prior to the next Fellows deadline due to your husband's relocation.

Q. For the last ten years, I have been on the faculty at an institution in a different state from the university where my husband teaches. I would like to relocate to seek a job closer to my husband. Am I eligible to apply to the ADVANCE Fellows program?

A. No. To be eligible your spouse has to have relocated in the 24 months preceding or the 12 months following the proposal due date.

Q. I am writing to ascertain whether applicants for a "Fellows Award" can be male. I relocated (leaving behind a tenure-track appointment) so that my wife could accept a tenure-track appointment in computer science. I accepted a temporary visiting position, at significantly lower rank and wages, and with a significantly higher teaching load than my counterparts who were recently hired in my department with tenure-track status. Indeed, my salary dropped significantly relative to my previous position. On the ADVANCE web page, the word "spouse" (rather than "husband") is used throughout, which leads me to believe that it might also be your intention to support men who have delayed

their own careers to support their wives. Please let me know.

A. Yes, you are eligible to apply for a Fellows Award **if** your resignation from the tenure track position occurred in the 24 months preceding the proposal due date. You must also hold a Ph.D. in a field of science or engineering supported by NSF; be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or permanent resident of the United States; and, at the time of award, be establishing a full-time independent academic research and education career at an institution of higher learning in the U.S., its territories or possessions, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Q. My husband is planning a sabbatical in the year 2002. We have both received invitations to spend the year at the national laboratory where I was formerly employed. The ADVANCE Program would be an ideal opportunity for me to initiate a new program with the laboratory and perhaps continue it with a student when I return to my institution. Would I be eligible for funding to cover a portion of my salary plus the \$25,000 in ancillary expenses?

A. If you are taking a leave of absence, and you plan to return after your husband's sabbatical, you would not be eligible.

Q. I will be getting married three months after the proposal due date. Currently I am research associate professor in biology. My husband to be is a research associate professor of biology in a university in the same city. He has been offered a tenure track position across the country, starting a month after we are married. I will be resigning at that time, and will follow him to his new location where I have an offer for a research associate position in the biology department.

A. Yes, provided that you do get married as stated above. Your (future) spouse will be relocating and you will resign your current position due to his relocation.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

Q. How are Fellows proposals evaluated? Does NSF give priority to people who have had a really hard time because of personal circumstances?

A. Fellows proposals are reviewed by disciplinary reviewers and panels using the NSF merit review criteria, which address the quality of the science and the broader impact of the proposed research and education activities. In addition, there are Fellows-specific criteria, which are available in the solicitation <http://www.nsf.gov/advance>. This is an extremely competitive program that in its first year of competition had a success rate under 20%, considerably lower than the success rate of the Foundation overall.

Applicants should submit the strongest research proposal possible, and give careful thought to a well-designed career advancement plan, since these are the most important elements in determining which proposals are competitive for funding.

Q. I am a young, female Assistant Professor with a Ph.D. in chemistry. I am interested in applying for the affiliated PI, Fellows Award but I am not certain I would qualify since I am not a postdoc anymore.

A. Since you are no longer in postdoctoral or equivalent status and do not meet the other eligibility criteria, you would not be eligible to apply for a Fellows Award. You may wish to apply for NSF research support through the programs in your area of research and also to consider the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program, a Foundation-wide activity that supports junior faculty within the context of their overall career development (<http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/career/start.htm>).

Q. I received my DVM in 1971 and practiced for many years. In 1994, I received a PhD in Veterinary Medicine. I am currently employed as Research Associate Professor. I need to establish my own research funding. Am I eligible to apply?

A. The date of your PhD would make you ineligible for a Fellows Award. You might be eligible for support in one of the other Fellows eligibility categories, but we would need more information to determine that. There are also restrictions on the type of research NSF supports. For example, research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis or treatment of physical or mental disease, abnormality, or malfunction in human beings or animals, is normally not supported. Animal models of such conditions or the development or testing of drugs or other procedures for their treatment also are not eligible for support. This is obliquely referenced in the solicitation: "Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement/solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF Web Site at: <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?nsf012>."

However the GPG clarifies that research in bioengineering, with diagnosis or treatment-related goals, which applies engineering principles to problems in biology and medicine while advancing engineering knowledge is eligible for support. Bioengineering research to aid persons with disabilities also is eligible, as is research on the ecology of infectious disease.

U.S. National

Q. What is meant by U.S. national?

A. The term "nationals of the United States" designates citizens of the United States or native residents of a possession of the United States such as American Samoa. It does not refer to citizens of another country who have applied for U.S. citizenship.

Permanent Residents

Q. I applied for a green card some time ago and have been assured that I will have it by the end of the calendar year. Am I eligible to apply for a Fellows Award?

A. In order to qualify as a permanent resident, Fellows applicants must have their green card in hand at the proposal deadline date.

Institutions of Higher Learning

Q. Do 2-year (community) colleges that award A.A.S. degrees qualify as "academic institutions of higher learning" for purposes of the ADVANCE Program?

A. Yes.

Institutional Support

Q. Must supporting institutions guarantee a tenure-track or "hard money" position at the end of an ADVANCE fellowship (as in NSERC Women's Fellowships)?

A. No, there is no requirement that institutions offer a tenure track position at the end of an ADVANCE fellowship.

Supportable Activities

Q. Can fellowships be used to allow a scientist to re-tool her/his research and teaching expertise?

A. Yes, if the fellow meets the eligibility criteria and makes a good case for the proposed career development plan.

Q. Must an "independent academic research and education career" involve undergraduate teaching, or may it involve only supervision of graduate theses?

A. There is no requirement that undergraduate teaching be part of the independent academic research and education career.

Q. Can fellowships be used to establish a part-time academic career to accommodate family obligations?

A. No. In order to be eligible for a Fellows Award, a PI must, at the time of award, be establishing a **full-time**, independent academic research and

education career.

Q. I am very interested in research questions related to mechanisms underlying brain injury and recovery and have been working in the area of somatosensory physiology, specifically the neural control of active touch. However, I am not sure that this research is in field of science supported by NSF.

A. NSF does not support research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis or treatment of physical or mental disease, abnormality or malfunction in human beings or animals. For such research, the National Institutes of Health and private foundations would be the most likely sources of support. However, research in normal somatosensory physiology, is supported by NSF's Sensory Systems Program and would be supportable research under the ADVANCE guidelines. You can obtain more detailed information on the types of research supported by the NSF through the NSF Guide to Programs at <http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/news/publicat/nsf013/how-to/toc.htm> and the NSF directorate Web pages.

Q. What are my chances of getting funding in the ADVANCE Fellows competition?

A. Our last Fellows competition had a success rate lower than 20%, which is below the average success rate of most NSF research programs.

Q. Who were the successful applicants in the last competition?

A. You may retrieve that information by searching NSF's web page, under: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/servlet/A6QueryPgm>

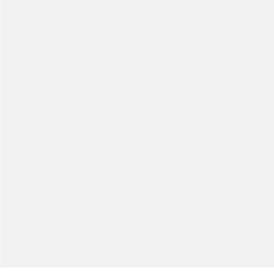
Select the Program name ADVANCE-FELLOWS, and press the Generate List button.

As soon as the awards have been recommended, you will be able to see a list of awardees and download the abstracts to their proposals.

Deadline ([Guidelines](#))

Q. What happens if my proposal arrives after the directorate deadline for proposal submissions?

A. Only proposals submitted by your institution through FastLane before 5:00 p.m. (your local time) on or before the Directorate/Office deadline will be accepted. Because the volume of ADVANCE Fellows may be quite large and individuals who are not submitting through an institution must register as



a FastLane organization before submitting a proposal, you are encouraged to start your FastLane proposal submission well before the ADVANCE Fellows deadline. Refer to the ADVANCE Guidelines for Submission and the FastLane Web page for more details. Any proposal received after the Directorate/Office deadline will be returned to the preparer without review. Please note that NSF program officers are not authorized to grant extensions to the deadline for the ADVANCE program.