



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for EAR Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (EARPF) Program

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1. Can I submit the proposal as an individual, not going through any university or institution?
2. Do I need to be affiliated with the postdoctoral institution at the time of submission? If not, can I propose more than one institution?
3. I am already a postdoctoral fellow. Can I propose to continue my fellowship at the same institution?
4. Can I have more than one host mentor? If yes, do they have to be at the same institution?
5. Can I submit reference or recommendation letters?
6. Can I choose a foreign institution (and a mentor at that site) for my postdoctoral work?
7. I do not have my dissertation defense scheduled. What is the latest date I could defend and still be eligible to apply?
8. May I be on a temporary visa when I submit the proposal?
9. What documents other than the Data Management Plan may be submitted as supplemental documents?
10. What documents should be submitted as single copy documents?
11. Do I need to submit the Biographical Sketches of my Ph.D. advisor and host mentor?
12. My research idea is not on the solicitation theme; may I submit a proposal on my research idea?

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### 1. Can I submit the proposal as an individual, not going through any university or institution?

EAR Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are awards to individuals. Thus, proposals must be submitted directly by the fellowship candidate to NSF.

### 2. Do I need to be affiliated with the postdoctoral institution at the time of submission? If not, can I propose more than one institution?

No, applicants do not need to be affiliated with the host institution at the time of submitting the proposal. However, candidates must identify a **primary** host institution with which they will be affiliated by the time of the award. The host mentor must be affiliated with the same institution.

**3. I am already a postdoctoral fellow. Can I propose to continue my fellowship at the same institution?**

Yes, if you meet all eligibility criteria regarding: 1) time in a position that requires a doctoral degree; 2) time at the institution; and 3) engagement of a new collaborator as a second mentor.

**4. Can I have more than one host mentor? If yes, do they have to be at the same institution?**

Yes, but it must be justified within the project description. If you propose to have more than one host mentor, they can be at the same institution or at different institutions. A letter of commitment must be submitted by each mentor if they are at different institutions. Please keep in mind that a mentor plays a very different role from collaborators.

**5. Can I submit reference or recommendation letters?**

No, the EAR Postdoctoral Fellowship program does not use letters of reference or recommendation.

**6. Can I choose a foreign institution (and a mentor at that site) for my postdoctoral work?**

Yes, you may choose to implement the fellowship at a foreign institution.

**7. I do not have my dissertation defense scheduled. What is the latest date I could defend and still be eligible to apply?**

You can apply as a graduate student. You will be expected to start the fellowship within one year after notification that you have been selected as a Postdoctoral Fellow.

**8. May I be on a temporary visa when I submit a proposal?**

No, the applicant must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident at the time of application. If you are on a temporary visa you may want to consider partnering with a scientist or group at a US institution to submit a regular research proposal where you are identified as the postdoc working in the project. You may also want to check the Research Associateship Program managed by the US National Academies.

**9. What documents other than the Data Management Plan may be submitted as supplemental documents?**

The letter from the mentor documenting their support as noted in the solicitation. Only the items in the solicitation should be included in this letter. It is not a letter of recommendation.

Any other collaborators may submit letters of collaboration following ONLY the proscribed format in the PAPPG (quoted below):

"If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the proposal title] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal."

Letters of recommendation are not allowed.

**10. What documents should be submitted as single copy documents?**

The lists of collaborators from the applicant, the proposed mentor(s) and the Ph.D. advisor should be submitted as single copy documents and should follow the format for collaborators as described in the PAPPG. A list of suggested reviewers for the project who are not current collaborators in the submitted lists is appreciated but not required.

**11. Do I need to submit the biographical sketches of my PhD advisor and host mentor?**

No, the only biographical sketch that you should submit is your own.

**12. My research idea is not on the solicitation theme; may I submit a proposal on my research idea?**

No, the EARPF program will only accept proposals that fall within the research theme described in the solicitation.

For further questions contact the program staff at: [earpf@nsf.gov](mailto:earpf@nsf.gov).