International Research Fellowship Program (IRFP)

Program Announcement

NSF 00-141

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

DEADLINE(S): November 15, 2000
(In future years, November 1 annually)
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SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Title:

International Research Fellowship Program (IRFP)

Synopsis of Program:

The objective of the International Research Fellowship Program is to introduce scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers to opportunities abroad, thereby furthering NSF's goal of establishing productive, mutually-beneficial relationships between U.S. and foreign science and engineering communities. These awards are available for research in any field of science and engineering research and education supported by NSF. Foreign science or engineering centers and other centers of excellence in all geographical regions are eligible host institutions.

Cognizant Program Officer:

Susan Parris, Division of International Programs, Room 935, telephone: (703)292-7225, email: sparris@nsf.gov.

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

- 47.074 --- Biological Sciences
- 47.070 --- Computer and Information Science and Engineering
- 47.076 --- Education and Human Resources
- 47.041 --- Engineering
- 47.050 --- Geosciences
- 47.049 --- Mathematical and Physical Sciences
- 47.078 --- Office of Polar Programs
- 47.075 --- Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organization Limit: Proposals may be submitted by U.S. universities, organizations, or professional societies in support of individual investigators.

PI Eligibility: See Section III, Eligibility Information
Host Site Eligibility: See Section III
Limit on Number of Proposals: Recipients of previous International Research Fellowship Awards are not eligible
AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Type of Award: Fellowship
Estimated Number of Awards: Approximately 20-30
Anticipated Funding Amount: Approximately $1 Million will be available in 2001, pending availability of funds.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Guidelines

Proposal Preparation Instructions: See the full program announcement for further information.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing Requirements: Not required
Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations: Not Applicable
Other Budgetary Limitations: Not Applicable

C. Deadline Dates

Letter of Intent: None
Preproposal: None
Full Proposal Deadline: November 15, 2000 (In future years, November 1, annually)

D. FastLane Requirements


FastLane Contact(s): Administrative Officer, Division of International Programs, Room 935, telephone: (703) 292-8708, e-mail: intfl@nsf.gov.

PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Merit Review Criteria: National Science Board approved criteria. Proposals are also reviewed for their mutual international benefits. See Section VI.A, NSF Review Process, for information on supplemental criteria.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Conditions: Standard NSF award conditions apply.
Reporting Requirements: Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.
I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the International Research Fellowship Program is to introduce scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers to opportunities abroad, thereby furthering NSF's goal of establishing productive, mutually-beneficial relationships between U.S. and foreign science and engineering communities.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

These awards are available for research in any field of science and engineering research or education supported by NSF. Applicants are encouraged to consider any site that will afford them a unique and beneficial research experience.

Appropriate organizations include institutions of higher education, industrial research institutions/laboratories, government research institutes/laboratories/centers, nonprofit research organizations, and foreign sites or centers of excellence.

Eligible applicants, in addition to being citizens or permanent residents of the United States, must have earned a doctoral degree within six years before the date of application, or expect to receive the doctoral degree by the award date. Women, minorities, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Support may be requested for residence abroad of three to 24 months. The 24-month period may include one year (or some portion of the total duration) at the foreign site and one year (or duration equal to the foreign tenure) used as a "re-entry" year in the United States. Awardees are expected to work full time on their research projects. Support is not provided for teaching, writing textbooks, preparation of prior research results for publication, or similar activities.

Bioscience research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis, or treatment of physical or mental diseases, 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 generally are not eligible for support. However, research in bioengineering with diagnosis or treatment-related goals, that applies engineering principles to problems in biology and medicine while advancing engineering knowledge is eligible for support. Bioengineering research to aid persons with disabilities is also eligible.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Applicants must:

A. be U.S. citizens or permanent residents as of November 15, 2000 (In future years, November 1, annually).
B. have been awarded a doctoral degree within six years before the date of the application or expect to receive the doctoral degree by the award date.
C. desire to conduct scientific research at appropriate academic, government or non-profit research institutions, which are located outside of the United States.

Limitations on the number of applications that may be submitted by an individual or organization:

Recipients of previous International Research Fellowship awards are not eligible.

Host Site Eligibility:

Appropriate host sites are foreign science or engineering centers in all geographical regions. Appropriate establishments include institutions of higher education, industrial research institutions/laboratories, government research institutes/laboratories/centers, and non-profit research organizations.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Total program support will be approximately $1 Million in FY2001, pending availability of funds.

Anticipated date of awards: March annually.

Approximately 20-30 fellowships will be offered each year to U.S. investigators for research abroad.

Average award size: $60,000.

Tenure Limitations

A Fellow will have a full-time tenure of from three to 24 months. Requests to divide tenure between two institutions should be clearly described in the application.

A recipient of a fellowship must begin tenure within the award year. Any exceptions, such as a delay in completion of the Ph.D. will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement 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 (including electronic forms) is available electronically on the NSF Web Site at: http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpg.
The complete application consists of:


Abstract of Proposed Plan of Study and/or Research (50 words or less)- Use layperson's terms, and describe your project clearly and simply.

Project Description, not to exceed five single-spaced pages. An additional 2-3 pages may be used for forms, graphs and references, if necessary. The Project Description must contain the following items:

1. Detailed project description
2. Detailed justification for conducting the research abroad
3. Identification of the collaborating scientist(s)
4. Clear relationship between the proposed research and the current research efforts at the host institution
5. Description of facilities and any other evidence of the suitability of the foreign collaborator(s) and site.
6. Explanation of the long-term career goals of the applicant and the role of the postdoctoral experience in achieving them, including future plans for collaborative activities
7. Justification of travel within host country or other countries within the region, if such travel is requested by the budget (one or two sentences should suffice).
8. Statement of financial resources anticipated during the award period, including income, and/or financial aid received or applied for (one or two sentences). If none anticipated, type "None" under heading of "Statement of Financial Resources."

 Applicant's Curriculum vita and list of publications with full title and completed references. Please do not send reprints or abstracts.

Cover Page (NSF Form 1207)

Certifications page

Budget - Answer relevant questions to allow Budget Form 1030 (not viewed by applicant) to print at NSF.

Host Scientist's Invitation - Letter of invitation from the prospective host scientist or engineer describing the proposed interaction between the applicant's research plan and ongoing research efforts at the foreign site, and his/her curriculum vita in English (limited to five pages, to be attached following the letter of invitation).
Three letters of reference - From three senior research colleagues familiar with the applicant's research work. References should not be sought from proposed foreign hosts or host institutions. One letter must be from the applicant's Ph.D advisor.

B. Budgetary Information

Allowable Expenses

Round trip economy airfare and necessary ground transportation from the awardee's permanent residence or the place where flag carrier if such service is available (see para. 761.2 and 761.3 of the Grant Policy Manual at http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm

Up to $300 of excess baggage allowance (per award)

Up to $1,000 of in-country travel, if justified in the proposal. Travel between countries may be included if justified in the proposal

Living allowance of $500 to $4,500 per month to be determined (at the time of award) on the basis of U.S. Government per diem rates for the host locality. Per diem rates can be viewed at http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html. The first 30 days of the tenure are calculated at the full per diem rate; the rate is reduced to 50% for all days thereafter

Health insurance allowance costs at a fixed rate of $50 per month

In some regions, modest support for materials, supplies and equipment of up to $5,000, if justified by proposal

Partial support for language training, if justified, with the amount determined on a case-by-case basis

Up to $3,000 per award for a return professional visit(s). May be used for presentation of results at conferences, consultation with colleagues, job interviews, or attendance at professional conferences

Round trip economy airfare, health insurance at a fixed rate of $50 per month, and a supplementary living allowance of $150 per month for each dependent accompanying the awardee for six months or more.

Institutional allowance - up to 10 percent of award amount for the foreign portion. Expenses must be documented at time of award.
C. Deadline Dates

November 15, 2000 (In future years, November 1, annually). The proposals must be submitted via Fastlane by 5:00 PM, local time.

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this Program Announcement through the FastLane system. Select Postdoctoral Fellowships on the Fastlane Home Page (https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.htm) for links to detailed information.

All PDF files must be created using the detailed instructions found at https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/pdfcreat.htm. For FastLane user support, call 1-800-673-6188.

Submission of Signed Cover Sheets. The signed copy of the proposal Cover Sheet (NSF Form 1207) must be postmarked (or contain a legible proof of mailing date assigned by the carrier) within five working days following proposal submission and be forwarded to the following address:

National Science Foundation
DIS – FastLane Cover Sheet
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230

VI. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. NSF Proposal Review Process

Reviews of proposals submitted to NSF are solicited from peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research or education project. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. NSF invites the proposer to suggest at the time of submission, the names of appropriate or inappropriate reviewers. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the proposer. Special efforts are made to recruit reviewers from non-academic institutions, minority-serving institutions, or adjacent disciplines to that principally addressed in the proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following general review criteria established by the National Science Board. Following each criterion are potential considerations that the reviewer may employ in the evaluation. These are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. Each reviewer will be asked to address only those that are relevant to the proposal and for which he/she is qualified to make judgements.
What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?
How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.)
To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts?
How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity?
Is there sufficient access to resources?
What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?
How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning?
How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)?
To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships?
Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding?
What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Principal Investigators should address the following elements in their proposal to provide reviewers with the information necessary to respond fully to both of the above-described NSF merit review criteria. NSF staff will give these elements careful consideration in making funding decisions.

Integration of Research and Education

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens - women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities - is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.
Additional Review Criteria

In addition to the above mentioned review criteria, for this program, the reviewers are asked to consider the following International Science and Engineering criteria:

Prospective benefits to the applicant, the scientific discipline and the United States
Qualifications of proposed host and host institution and complementarity
Qualifications of applicant, including applicant's potential for continued growth
Merit of the proposed international collaboration
Expected mutual benefit to be derived from the contribution of the scientists and
engineers in each country

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and signed by each
reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of
reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are mailed to the Principal
Investigator/Project Director by the Program Director. In addition, the proposer will
receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

B. Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

Most proposals submitted to NSF are reviewed by mail review, panel review, or some
combination of mail and panel review. Proposals submitted in response to this
announcement will be reviewed by panel review. In certain cases, when an expert in a
narrow or obscure field cannot be found, a review may be solicited by mail or from
within the Foundation.

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are
experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. Reviewers will be asked to
formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program
Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers
and will formulate a recommendation. In most cases, proposers will be contacted by the
Program Officer after his/her recommendation to award or decline funding has been
approved by his/her supervisor, the Division Director. This informal notification is not a
guarantee of an eventual award.

NSF will be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or
recommended for funding within six months for 95 percent of proposals. The time
interval begins on the proposal deadline or target date or from the date of receipt, if
deadlines or target dates are not used by the program. The interval ends when the
Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended
for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of
business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or
other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may
make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure
of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at its own risk.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to the submitting organization by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program Division administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See section VI. A, for additional information on the review process.)

B. Grant Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (NSF-GC-1)* or Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Terms and Conditions * and (5) any NSF brochure, program guide, announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreement awards also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions (CA-1). Electronic mail notification is the preferred way to transmit NSF awards to organizations that have electronic mail capabilities and have requested such notification from the Division of Grants and Agreements.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's web site at http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants/grants_gac.htm. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (301) 947-2722 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the PI must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

Within 90 days after the expiration of an award, the PI also is required to submit a final project report. Approximately 30 days before expiration, NSF will send a notice to remind the PI of the requirement to file the final project report. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for that PI. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

NSF has implemented an electronic project reporting system, available through FastLane. This system permits electronic submission and updating of project reports, including information on: project participants (individual and organizational); activities and findings; publications; and other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system.

D. New Awardee Information

If the submitting organization has never received an NSF award, it is recommended that the organization's appropriate administrative officials become familiar with the policies and procedures in the NSF Grant Policy Manual which are applicable to most NSF awards. The Prospective New Awardee Guide (NSF 97-00) includes information on: Administration and Management Information; Accounting System Requirements and Auditing Information; and Payments to Organizations with Awards. This information will assist an organization in preparing documents that NSF requires to conduct administrative and financial reviews of an organization. The guide also serves as a means of highlighting the accountability requirements associated with Federal awards. This document is available electronically on NSF's Web site at: http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm.

VIII. CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General inquiries should be made to the International Research Fellowship Program, Susan Parris, Division of International Programs, Room 935, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, telephone (703)292-7225, email:sparris@nsf.gov.

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact the INT Administrative Officer, telephone: (703) 292-8708, e-mail:intfl@nsf.gov or the Fastlane Help Desk, telephone: (800) 673-6188, e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.
IX. OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

The NSF Guide to Programs is a compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering. The NSF Guide to Programs is available electronically at http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gp. General descriptions of NSF programs, research areas, and eligibility information for proposal submission are provided in each chapter.

Many NSF programs offer announcements or solicitations concerning specific proposal requirements. To obtain additional information about these requirements, contact the appropriate NSF program offices listed in Appendix A of the GPG. Any changes in NSF's fiscal year programs occurring after press time for the Guide to Programs will be announced in the NSF E-Bulletin, which is updated daily on the NSF web site at http://www.nsf.gov/home/ebulletin, and in individual program announcements/solicitations. Subscribers can also sign up for NSF's Custom News Service (http://www.nsf.gov/home/cns/start.htm) to be notified of new funding opportunities that become available.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. Awardees are wholly responsible for conducting their project activities and preparing the results for publication. Thus, the Foundation does not assume responsibility for such findings or their interpretation.

NSF welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists, engineers and educators. The Foundation strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to compete fully in its programs. In accordance with Federal statutes, regulations and NSF policies, no person on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from NSF (unless otherwise specified in the eligibility requirements for a particular program).

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF-supported projects. See the program announcement/solicitation or contact the program coordinator at (703) 292-8636.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090, FIRS at 1-800-877-8339.
The National Science Foundation is committed to making all of the information we publish easy to understand. If you have a suggestion about how to improve the clarity of this document or other NSF-published materials, please contact us at plainlanguage@nsf.gov.

PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to applicant institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies needing information as part of the review process or in order to coordinate programs; and to another Federal agency, court or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 267 (January 5, 1998), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 268 (January 5, 1998). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

Pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(b), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0023. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, Division of Administrative Services, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, or to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for National Science Foundation (3145-0023), 725 - 17th Street, N.W. Room 10235, Washington, D.C. 20503.

OMB control number: 3145-0023.
APPENDIX A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

1. Am I eligible to apply for this program?

Yes, if you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident within six years of your Ph.D. You do not have to have your degree to apply, but if you are recommended for an award, you must prove you have obtained the degree to receive funds.

2. What is the deadline, and how strict is it?

The deadline is November 15, 2000, then, in future years, November 1, annually. All applications must be sent electronically by 5 pm local time, November 15, 2000 (November 1, in future years). All parts of the application must be received by that date. If the application is incomplete, or lacks the three required reference letters, the proposal will be sent back without review.

3. What countries can be considered hosts?

All countries are included in this program. Applications may be for research in any country in the world, although travel restrictions by the State Department to certain countries, such as Cuba, may impose an additional level of review.

4. Is there any particular host country I should apply for, to increase my chances of obtaining an award?

Competition is very strong for applicants who want to travel to Western Europe and, in general, to the more developed countries. All proposals are ranked based on scientific merit. However, given two equally ranked proposals, priority will be given to the proposal with an underrepresented country in the program. In addition, for heavily subscribed countries, we may limit the number of awards for that country in the interest of widening the geographical scope of the program. If you are confident that your project and qualifications are strong, do not let country considerations deter you from applying.

5. May I apply to more than one country?

You may. If you have a project that involves several hosts and countries, make sure that it is very clear on what will be done where and when. If you want to apply to two different countries merely to increase your chances of receiving an award, we would caution you against it. In the past, our panelists have looked negatively on that practice.

6. What is the average size of an award?

Average award - $60,000
7. How do I decide on the duration? Will my chances be increased if I ask for only 12 months instead of 24?

No. We offer awards for a duration of 3 to 24 months. Most are funded for 12 months (due to budget constraints), even if the applicant requests 24 months. If you need 24 months for your project, write up your proposal in two one-year parts (project description for the first year, project description for the second year, budget for first, budget for second). (You still must stay within the five page limit!) You can elect to spend two years at the foreign site or one year abroad and one year back in U.S. as a reentry year. If you chose the latter, we encourage a contribution from the U.S. institution. (Please contact the IRFP program manager for additional information on this issue.) REMINDER: No dependents will be supported for durations of less than six months and we do not support dependents during any re-entry period.

8. If I have had international experience, or other postdoctoral awards, will I still be able to apply?

Applicants who have had previous international experience or other postdoctoral awards may be at a SLIGHT disadvantage because priority may be given to applicants without previous international experience or funding in the event of two equally merit-ranked proposals.

9. Will it help to get my application in much earlier than November 15, 2000 (or November 1, for future years)?

No. Please do not submit applications before October 1.

10. How much should I request for living allowance?

The living allowance (stipend) is computed using a formula based on the existing U.S. government per diem rate for the locale you are visiting. The per diem rate information, regularly updated by the Department of State, may be useful to you in planning your visit (http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html). The rate is calculated at the full per diem rate for the first 30 days; and 50 percent of that rate for the remaining time, but cannot exceed $4,500 per month. You may also consult with your host to determine a fair allotment. It will not be held against you to ask for the maximum rate.

11. When is the earliest date I can start my fellowship?

We suggest April 1 as the earliest starting date. If an earlier start date is required, please consult the IRFP Program Manager. Decisions are announced in March, but it takes time to process the paperwork. We make every effort to get awards processed quickly, but there are many variables that cannot be controlled.
12. Can I apply to other postdoctoral award programs at the same time as I apply for this one?

From the point of view of the IRFP program, we have no objections for you to do so. Please be aware, however, that other postdoctoral programs have limitations on multiple applications and it is recommended that you consult with them. The Foundation does not encourage submission of duplicate applications to different programs, but you may apply to different programs with different projects. Keep in mind, that if you are recommended for support by more than one postdoctoral program, you may have to choose one or the other.

13. How competitive is this program?

The success rate for proposals in this program is about 30 percent. The number of applications in the past has ranged from 74 to 130 each year.

14. How are the applications reviewed?

Review is done by a panel of multi-disciplinary experts, not all of whom may be familiar with your particular area. For this reason, it is important that your application be understandable by someone not in your area of expertise and detailed enough to convey to an informed expert your grasp of the field.

15. What if I am not affiliated with an institution?

We prefer that you be affiliated with a U.S. institution from an administrative standpoint, but at least 50 percent of our applicants do not have such an affiliation. Proposals without an institutional affiliation are treated the same way as those with one for the purpose of funding.

16. What fields are supported?

Generally, fields in the areas of the basic sciences and engineering are eligible for support by this program. NSF does not support research in the clinical-medical or disease related fields and, therefore, proposals in those fields are not eligible for support. If in doubt, please call the IRFP program manager.

17. Does my host have to submit a counterpart proposal?

No counterpart proposal is required by the host. The only requirement on their part is to send a letter of invitation and their cv (limited to 5 pages, please).

18. Do the five pages for the project description have to include the bibliographic references and/or any graphs or drawings?

We will allow up to three additional pages for those.
19. Who should the host be? Would it be the head of the institute that I am going to or the person that I will work with?

It should be the person you will collaborate with. The review process takes into account the contribution that your host may make to the collaboration.

20. What does the panel look at in reviewing proposals for the program?

In addition to the criteria described in announcement Section VI.A, NSF Proposal Review Process, past panels have been most influenced by strong publication records, enthusiastic reference letters, and clear and well written proposals. It also helps if your host provides as much detail as possible about what part they will have in your research collaboration.