



**Administrative Guide for the  
SBE POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP  
(SPRF) Program**

Revised May 2019

National Science Foundation  
Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE)  
SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities (SMA)

## FOREWORD

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

The Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) offers Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to encourage independence early in the Fellow's career through supporting his or her research and training goals. The research and training plan of each fellowship must address important scientific questions within the scope of the SBE Directorate and the specific guidelines in the fellowship solicitation. The SPRF program offers two tracks: (I) Fundamental Research in the SBE Sciences (SPRF-FR) and (II) Broadening Participation in the SBE Sciences (SPRF-BP). Additional information about the program is available on the [SPRF program page](#).

This guide outlines the administrative policies and procedures for SBE Postdoctoral Fellows and host institutions and incorporates all policies found in the annual SPRF Program Solicitation. This guide does not supersede the award letter terms and conditions. The current guide applies to the 2019 Fellowship year forward, unless otherwise noted or superseded by an updated version. **Please note that the Fellowship Terms and Conditions are subject to change, and it is the responsibility of the Postdoctoral Fellow to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Fellowship Program.**

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## COMMON ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, TERMS, LINKS, AND CONTACTS

Active	Fellow within the two-year Fellowship Period, not completed or terminated.
AAG	NSF Award and Administration Guide; contains official NSF policies on awards.
Completed	Inactive Fellow with no Tenure years left
Continuing Fellow	Active Fellow in good standing with time left on the Fellowship
Deferral	Only approved for Military/Medical – there is no other deferral of the Fellowship
FASED	Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities
Fellow	Active NSF SBE Fellow
Fellow ID	Fellow Identification Number assigned in FastLane; e.g., 2010123456
Forfeit	Active Fellow on Tenure, or beyond the two-year Reserve limit, who is not eligible to receive SPRF financial support
GPG	NSF Grant Proposal Guide; contains official NSF policies on grants.
Host Institution	Research institution where the Fellow is working
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IRB	Institutional Review Board
Month	14 or more days in a calendar month
NCE	No-cost extension; relevant only in cases of fellowship deferral
New Fellow	Accepted Fellowship Offer and starting the first Fellowship Year
NSF	National Science Foundation
OMB	White House Office of Management and Budget
PAPPG	Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
PI	Principal Investigator
Program Office	NSF unit responsible for SPRF program management and oversight
PO (PD)	Program Officer (Program Director), the person who oversees your grant
SPRF	SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowships
Stipend	Fellowship payment to Fellows on Tenure; prorated in whole-month increments
Tenure	Active Fellow in good standing
Terminated	Fellowship discontinued by NSF or Fellow

### NSF Documents and Publications:

- Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
- SPRF Program Solicitation

### Contacts:

When communicating with the SPRF program by e-mail, please **include your award number in the subject line.**

SPRF Program Director: Dr. Josie S. Welkom, [jwtelkom@nsf.gov](mailto:jwtelkom@nsf.gov)

SPRF Program Specialist: Ms. Lisa M. Jackson, [lmjackso@nsf.gov](mailto:lmjackso@nsf.gov)

## ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

SPRF operates on an annual cycle. The following are critical dates for administrative actions:

April/ May	<p>Program Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Makes new fellowship offers</li> </ul> <p>Fellowship Applicant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submits Fellowship Acceptance Form</li> <li>▪ Provides doctoral degree certification</li> <li>▪ Writes award abstract according to guidelines</li> <li>▪ Submits IRB/ IACUC Approval</li> <li>▪ Provide Host Institution Support Letter</li> </ul>
May/June	<p>New Fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submits Fellowship Starting Certificate (NSF Form 349) to Program Office</li> </ul>
Summer	<p>Division of Grants and Agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Officially notifies New Fellow of award</li> </ul>
June 1 <sup>st</sup> - Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p>New Fellow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Award Tenure begins</li> </ul>
Annually	<p>Continuing Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submits Annual Project Report via Research.gov</li> <li>▪ Updates IRB/ IACUC certification, if needed</li> </ul>
Anytime	<p>Continuing Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contacts program officer (PO) prior to submitting all change requests.</li> <li>▪ With PO approval, submits request for a major change in research direction via a Notification and Request module in FastLane</li> <li>▪ Submits starting certificates (<a href="#">NSF Form 349</a>) for Host Institutions when changing institutions</li> </ul> <p>Program Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reviews and approves/disapproves Fellow requests</li> </ul>
Termination	<p>Continuing Fellows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit final project report <i>via</i> Research.gov</li> <li>▪ Submit Project Outcomes Report for the General Public <i>via</i> Research.gov</li> <li>▪ E-mail signed termination certificate (<a href="#">NSF Form 453</a>) for Host Institution to the Program Office</li> <li>▪ Early terminations must return to the NSF Program Office a prorated portion of the fellowship allowance</li> </ul> <p>Program Office</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviews and approves/disapproves final report</li> </ol>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Your National Science Foundation SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship has been awarded by the National Science Foundation in recognition of your accomplishments to date, and with the expectation that the experience you obtain during the tenure of your fellowship will increase your scientific competence and the scientific potential of the United States.

This information outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship and provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your fellowship. NSF and your host institution will thus be able to serve you more quickly and efficiently, and unnecessary correspondence will be avoided.

As a recipient of NSF funds, you are responsible for fulfilling the academic and fiscal obligations of your award. Failure on your part to observe all the terms and conditions of this fellowship award constitutes sufficient grounds for its revocation by and repayment to NSF.

## **FELLOW RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Fellowship Acceptance and Degree Certification**

NSF expects that you will begin fellowship activities on the effective date of your fellowship shown in your notice of award, but not later than September 15<sup>th</sup>. If you are not able to begin tenure by this date, you must contact the Program Officer and you may decline the fellowship. This declination will not prejudice any future application.

Before you may begin your postdoctoral fellowship, NSF must have on record a certification of receipt of the doctoral degree and the date of receipt. If the degree is not received prior to the starting date of tenure, you must submit evidence that all requirements for the degree have been completed before beginning fellowship tenure.

### **Entrance upon Tenure**

You agree to start the fellowship tenure by submitting a Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#) to the Program Officer. Fellowships may be started only on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month between June and September. We will not recommend your fellowship for award until we receive your signed Starting Certificate and cannot authorize payments until it is received. If you affiliate with more than one institution over the course of the fellowship, a Starting Certificate is required each time you change institutions.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research**

It is the responsibility of the Fellow, in conjunction with the host institution, to ensure that all academic and research activities carried out in or outside the U.S. comply with the laws or regulations of the U.S. and/or of the foreign country in which the academic and/or research activities are conducted. These include appropriate human subjects, animal welfare, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. All academic and research activities should be coordinated with the appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities, and necessary licenses, permits, or approvals must be obtained prior to undertaking the proposed activities.

Some situations frequently encountered in the conduct of research require special information and supporting documentation before starting tenure. These include research involving:

1. An actual and/or potential impact on the environment;
2. A registered historic or cultural property;
3. The use of *in vitro* generated recombinant DNA molecules;
4. The use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals, or endangered species.

You must provide information on the status of any special permissions, clearances or provisions related to the above items **before** an award notice can be issued. Assessment of environmental impact will be required when appropriate. Specific guidance on the need for such additional documentation may be obtained from your Host Institution's Research Administration Office or the NSF Award & Administration Guide.

### **Use of Vertebrate Animals**

The Fellow is responsible for the humane care and treatment of any vertebrate animals used or intended for use in such activities as field or laboratory research/experiments/testing, development, and training, or for related purposes supported by NSF grants. The latest NSF Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II.D.6 outlines the Fellow's responsibilities with regard to proposals involving vertebrate animals. In accordance with these requirements; fellowship projects involving use of any vertebrate animal for research or education must be approved by the submitting organization's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before an award can be made. For this approval to be accepted by NSF, the organization must have a current Public Health Service (PHS) Approved Assurance.

You must provide this PHS number and get an IACUC approval letter as an amendment which adds you, the project PI, onto the approval for your sponsoring scientist's lab. This letter must contain your name, the exact title of your project and the expiration date of the approval. These amendments are generally applicable for a year, so you may need to send NSF a new approval each year of your grant. If the host institution does not already have a PHS approval, please contact your Program Officer to determine the proper steps.

### **Use of Human Subjects**

The Fellow must ensure that subjects are protected from research risks in conformance with the relevant federal policy known as the Common Rule (*Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects*, [45 CFR 690](#)). The NSF Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II.D.8 outlines the Fellow's responsibilities with regard to proposals involving human subjects. All projects involving human subjects must either (1) have approval from the organization's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before issuance of an NSF award or, (2) must affirm that the IRB has declared the research exempt from IRB review.

You must provide the IRB approval or exemption letter with the name of the project PI. This letter must contain your name and the exact title of your project. If the project is to be performed outside of the U.S., evidence of IRB approval is required.

### **Acknowledgement of NSF Support**

All publications, presentations, and creative works based on activities conducted during the fellowship must acknowledge NSF SPRF Support:

"This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation SBE

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship under Grant No. (NSF grant number)."

NSF support should also be acknowledged during all news media interviews, including popular media such as radio, television and news magazines.

You are also responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including Web pages) based on or developed under this award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

You are responsible for assuring that your cognizant NSF Program Officer is provided access to, either electronically or in paper form, a copy of every publication of material based on or developed under this award, clearly labeled with the award number and other appropriate identifying information, promptly after publication.

### **Sharing of Findings, Data and Other Research Products**

NSF expects significant findings from research and education activities it supports to be promptly submitted for publication, with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. It expects Fellows to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of the work. It also encourages Fellows to share software and inventions or otherwise act to make the innovations they embody widely useful and usable.

Adjustments and, where essential, exceptions may be allowed to safeguard the rights of individuals and subjects, the validity of results, the integrity of collections or to accommodate legitimate interests of NSF-supported Fellows.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Annual Reports**

1. Submission Requirement - Fellows are required to submit an annual project report.
2. Content of Annual Project Reports - Fellows are required to submit annual reports electronically via the Project Reports System in Research.gov. The content requirements for annual project reports are specified in the system.
3. Timing of Annual Project Reports - Unless otherwise specified in the award, annual project reports shall be submitted at least 90 days prior to the end of each 12-month award period. It should be noted that the final annual report serves as the project's final report and must be submitted in accordance with the section below. Continued funding for the second year of the Fellowship will be contingent on the approval of annual project reports, and it is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure that annual reports are submitted in a timely fashion so that stipend payments are not interrupted.

## **Final Project Reports and Documents**

1. Final Project Report - Within 90 days following expiration of the grant, a final project report must be submitted electronically via the Project Reporting System in Research.gov.
2. Project Outcomes Report for the general public - Within 90 days following expiration of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted in the Research Spending and Results section of the Research.gov website exactly as it is submitted and will be accompanied by the following disclaimer:

“This Project Outcomes Report for the general public is displayed verbatim as submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) for this award. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the PI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation; NSF has not approved or endorsed its content.”

Fellows are to ensure that the report does not contain any confidential, proprietary business information; unpublished conclusions or data that might compromise the ability to publish results in the research literature; or invention disclosures that might adversely affect the patent rights or those of the organization, in a subject invention under the award. Responses are not to contain any private personally identifiable information such as home contact information, individual demographic data or individually identifiable information collected from human research participants.

3. Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report - At the end of the Fellowship tenure period, Fellows must submit to the cognizant NSF Program Officer the Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report, [NSF Form 453](#).

## **Other Reports**

NSF would be pleased to receive an account of the Fellow's progress at any time, especially if there are particularly significant developments during a given Fellowship year. These reports can be submitted electronically as an interim report, via the Project Reports System in Research.gov.

NSF may periodically ask you to respond to questionnaires or other inquiries as a part of the follow-up activities of the program. Minimally, we like to track each Fellow over 10 years with respect to positions, grants received, lists of publications, and research related honors and awards. Please update your contact information in FastLane after completion of the fellowship and keep NSF up-to-date on your continuing role in science when requested or as you wish.

## **Change in Research Plan**

Minor changes in your research and training plan proposed in your original or revised application may be made at your discretion and with the concurrence of your sponsoring scientist. However, you must obtain prior approval from the Program Office for any major change by outlining and justifying the changes in full. The request should be submitted electronically via the Notification and Request module in FastLane. The Program Officer will determine if the revised research and training plan falls within the intent of the award prior to granting approval.

## Communication

SPRF communications are conducted predominately by e-mail. Therefore, it is the Fellow's responsibility to keep their contact information current (especially e-mail addresses and phone numbers). Fellows completing their fellowships should update their contact information to allow the Program Office to contact them in the future.

To contact the program office, Fellows should e-mail [jwelkom@nsf.gov](mailto:jwelkom@nsf.gov) for program-related issues and [lmjackso@nsf.gov](mailto:lmjackso@nsf.gov) for financial-related issues. All communications should include the Fellow's full name, Award ID, and details of the issue or request. Please ensure spam filters do not block the NSF e-mail address.

## HOST INSTITUTION

By law, as a Fellow, you must affiliate with an appropriate research institution during the entire fellowship tenure. You are responsible for making all arrangements for such affiliation with the host institution. A clear relationship should be established with the chosen institution before beginning tenure, to assure both you and NSF that it will be possible for you to carry out the program of research and training for which the fellowship was awarded. Therefore, you should share information about your fellowship (e.g., a copy of the award notice and this administrative guide) with both your sponsoring scientist and administrative personnel at your host institution. They may have no experience with NSF fellowships and may not be familiar with the special conditions of fellowships versus research grants and cooperative agreements.

### Sponsoring Scientist

Your application named a staff member(s) at the host institution to serve as your sponsoring scientist(s). The sponsoring scientist will be the institutional representative responsible for your activities during the fellowship and must sign your starting and termination certificates in this role unless your host institution has other requirements for signatures or your sponsoring scientist is absent, in which case an appropriate official of the host institution may sign. If you have arranged co-sponsorship, only one sponsoring scientist at each location needs to sign the certificates.

Any questions relating to your status at the host institution, which cannot be answered by your sponsoring scientist, should be referred for resolution to other appropriate officials within the host institution, such as a department chair, dean, or a designated institutional representative.

### Change of Host Institution

If it becomes necessary or desirable to affiliate with an institution other than the one listed in the application and/or with a different sponsoring scientist, you must request permission from your Program Officer **prior to** making the change via the Notification and Request module in FastLane. The request must state the reasons for the proposed change and explain the appropriateness of the new institution for the proposed plan of study. The request must contain a new postdoctoral mentoring plan using the format from the fellowship instructions as in the original application, including the new sponsor's biosketch. This must be done **before** final arrangements with the new institution are completed. **You may not begin tenure at the new institution until the Program Officer approves all changes.**

If the change in institutions is because your sponsoring scientist is moving to a new institution, an e-mail explaining the move will suffice as long as the new institution provides you the same or equivalent opportunities to conduct the research and receive your planned training.

## **FELLOWSHIP STATUS OPTIONS**

### **Tenure Status**

SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are awarded for a 24-month continuous period. The maximum tenure of your fellowship is 24 months, barring any extension as outlined below. If the fellowship start is delayed beyond the effective date stated in the award notice, NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the delay and permit the full tenure. You (as an individual registered in FastLane) must request the extension through FastLane. The sponsored projects office at your host institution cannot grant a no-cost extension to your fellowship.

During the tenure of the fellowship, you are expected to devote full time to the scientific research and training outlined in the application for which the award was granted. You may not engage in any activities for compensation (except for teaching as approved by the program office and brief military obligations) or receive another fellowship or research award without the prior approval of NSF. Such approval is granted only under exceptional circumstances.

### **Paid Leave**

Within the fellowship period, one month per year of fellowship duration may be used for paid leave, including parental or family leave. The paid leave cannot be used to increase the level of NSF support beyond the duration of the fellowship.

### **Unpaid Leave**

Interruptions in tenure or extensions without additional cost to NSF are permitted only for extenuating circumstances, including medical leave or dependent care. The leave cannot be used to increase the level of Fellow salary support beyond 24 full-time-equivalent months. A no-cost extension may be requested to extend the fellowship award in order to complete the research and broadening participation goals, but no supplemental funds will be provided for this purpose.

### **Military Deferral Status**

Military Deferral is intended for Fellows who must interrupt their postdoctoral research for Active Duty. Fellows must request Military Deferrals from the Program Office. Military Deferral must be renewed each year, and a new copy of duty orders must be submitted to the Program Officer. Failure to renew Military Deferral Status may result in termination of the fellowship.

Within a given fellowship year, duly authorized military service or training is permitted without penalty to the Fellow with the approval of the NSF, if the service does not compromise the Fellow's research progress. Requests for such interruptions of tenure should be directed to NSF in writing as soon as plans are final. Interruptions of less than four days do not require approval.

### **Paid Teaching**

The Fellow may opt to accept a teaching position paid by the host institution. Limited amounts of teaching activity (no more than one course at a time) may be incorporated into the training activities, if such teaching experience is valuable for the Fellow's future career development. If teaching was not included in the original proposal, program officer approval and a revised Research and Training plan will be required before teaching activities commence.

## Vacations

NSF fellowships provide paid leave during fellowship tenure. You are entitled to the short holiday periods observed by your host institution, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring holidays. These holiday periods cannot be accumulated for use at a later date as vacation. If your host institution should "close" for a period in excess of two weeks, you will be expected to have made prior arrangements for the use of necessary facilities to carry out the approved program. If it is not possible for you to make these arrangements at the host institution, other arrangements must be made, with prior NSF approval, to carry on the work; or suspension of the fellowship for that period of time should be requested from your Program Officer.

## Fellowship Completion and Termination

At the end of the fellowship tenure period, you must submit by e-mail the Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report, [NSF Form 453](#) to the Program Officer. This certificate must be signed by your sponsoring scientist or an appropriate official at your host institution and should show the date you actually completed fellowship activities. If you affiliate with more than one institution, a Termination Certificate is required from each institution. Submission of this certificate is necessary to comply with governmental accounting procedures. In the event the certificate is not submitted, you may be requested to return to NSF all fellowship funds that were received during fellowship tenure.

## FELLOWSHIP DETAILS AND CONDITIONS

### Fellowship Stipend

1. **Amount:** An annual stipend of \$54,000, paid directly to the Fellow in three-month increments totaling \$13,500.
2. **Payments:** Stipend payments will be authorized after submission of a properly completed Fellowship Starting Certificate, NSF Form 349 (06/2009), and a completed FastStart Direct Deposit Form 1379 (10/2017). These documents are provided to the Fellow by the program office.
  - o **Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#)** (06/2009). The fellow must complete and submit to the cognizant Program Officer the Fellowship Starting Certificate, NSF Form 349. This form will serve as the authority to begin your stipend payments and will provide the Fellow's statement of tenure information. The form is countersigned by your sponsoring scientist or other appropriate official at your Institution.
  - o **FastStart Direct Deposit Form, [NSF Form 1379](#)** (10/2017). In order to receive payments from the Fellowship, the Fellow must complete the FastStart Direct Deposit Form, NSF Form 1379. The form must be submitted directly to the NSF Division of Financial Management (DFM). Do **not** send Form 1379 to the Program Office. To confirm receipt, the Fellow will need to contact DFM directly at 703-292-4443. The Fellow's signature is required as it certifies the accuracy of the information contained on the form and states that the individual has read the Privacy Act Statement.

### No funds will be released to the fellow without submission of this information.

3. The first stipend will be paid on the start date of the award tenure. Although every effort will be made to process the first payment as scheduled, it is incumbent upon the Fellow to provide all required documents in a timely manner. Fellows are encouraged to make arrangements for accounts prior to the start of their fellowship tenure, so that initial processing may proceed without delay. In addition, Fellows are advised to use the same account for the entire period of their fellowship tenure, as any changes may involve significant delays in the processing of stipends.

## Drawing Funds in ACM\$ Management System

The National Science Foundation is using a new mechanism to process the payments of postdoctoral fellowships. This new process will allow the fellows to directly draw funds on a monthly basis. Once the Program Office has verified that you have successfully set up your account in the payment system, we will send you another set of instructions on how to draw down your funds from the ACM\$ System. Regardless of any problems you may encounter with setting up your system, we here at NSF, are committed to making sure that the funds are transferred to your account at the appropriate time. In order for us to better facilitate assisting you, there are a few guidelines we would like you to follow:

1. Please use Mozilla Firefox when using the ACM\$ management system with research.gov as it is the most effective method to ensure processing of all actions with this particular program.
2. Lisa Jackson is the contact person for all financial-related questions. You must always include your proposal/award number.
3. Once you have been sent a notification via email that you have registered into the system, send an email notification to Lisa in order to proceed to the second phase of the process.

Once you have successfully registered in the ACM\$ Management System, below is the process that you will be using throughout the 24-month fellowship. The following are some things to know as well as take into consideration when drawing funds:

1. Please use Mozilla Firefox when using the ACM\$ management system, it has been identified as being the browser most compatible with ACM\$.
2. When drawing funds, you will receive a notification email that your funds have been released to you. You cannot draw funds until the next day after the date given. **For example, funds released on December 28, 2018, cannot be requested until December 29, 2018.**
3. On the day you draw down funds from the ACM\$ system, you must allow 2-3 days for processing before you can expect to see payment in your account.

## Fellowship Research & Training Allowance

The fellowship allowance is paid at the rate of \$15,000 per year of the fellowship. This allowance is intended to cover costs of research and training and may also be used for fringe benefits. Allowable costs for fringe benefits include individual or family health insurance (any combination of medical, vision, and/or dental) whether purchased as a group or individual plan, disability insurance, retirement savings, dependent care, and moving expenses. The fellowship allowance is paid annually at the beginning of each fellowship year. The fellowship allowance is spent at the Fellow's discretion, except for foreign travel, which requires prior NSF approval. Allowable research costs include travel, such as short-term visits to other institutions or laboratories, field work, and attendance at scientific meetings, training, special equipment, IT equipment and software, supplies, publication costs, access fees for databases and other research-related expenses. The Fellow should keep records to document expenditures. All payments are made directly to the Fellow as an electronic funds transfer into a personal account at a financial institution.

If a fellowship is terminated early, a prorated portion (calculated as a fraction of the completed fellowship versus the planned duration) of the fellowship allowance may need to be returned to NSF. No funds may be spent after the expiration date of your fellowship and funds cannot be converted to another use.

## Income Tax

No income tax will be withheld from any stipend or allowance. Provision, therefore, must be made by you for payment of any tax, domestic or foreign, when due. Final authority as to the taxability of awards rests

with the Internal Revenue Service and the courts. Specific questions should be referred to the Internal Revenue Service. IRS Publication 970 and Tax Topic 421 address tax issues on fellowships. Fellows going abroad may find it helpful to consult IRS Publication No. 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad.

Fellows are **not** employees of the National Science Foundation. Therefore, no funds will be deducted from the stipends; no Social Security taxes will be paid by NSF; **no W-2 or 1099 forms will be issued; and provision must be made by you for the filing of any necessary estimate of taxes due and for payment of all income taxes which may become due.** A statement of funds received (including the fellowship allowance) will be issued by NSF's Division of Financial Management upon your written request.

## **Travel**

There is no separate allowance for travel and moving expenses to the fellowship institution. You may use your fellowship allowance to pay these costs once the fellowship begins. You may use your fellowship allowance for your expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence and related items when you are in travel status on business related to your NSF-supported project. Travel within the U.S. does not require prior NSF approval. Information regarding foreign travel can be found in the International Activities section of this document.

You must travel using economy airfare. If this is not possible, please contact your Program Officer. Train, bus, or other surface carriers may be used in lieu of, or as a supplement to air travel at the lowest first-class rate by the transportation facility used. If such travel could have been made by air, the allowance will not normally exceed that for economy airfare.

## **Stipend Supplementation**

Each Fellow is expected to devote full time to research during tenure of the Fellowship. However, because it is generally accepted that teaching or similar activities constitute a valuable part of the education and training, a Fellow may participate in these activities to the extent that they do not interfere with or duplicate the proposed research and training plan. It is expected that furtherance of the Fellow's educational objectives and gain of substantive teaching or other experience, not service to the institution as such, will govern these activities.

Sponsoring scientists and host institutions may supplement a Fellow's stipend with non-Federal funds contingent upon NSF approval. Fellows may solicit and accept non-Federal support within the host institution for research expenses, such as laboratory supplies, instrumentation usage fees, field-station usage fees, travel expenses, conference/registration fees, workshop expenses, and subscription fees.

## **Health Insurance**

Health insurance is not available through NSF but you are strongly encouraged to secure health insurance as it is now required by law. The fellowship allowance may be used for its purchase. You should discuss with your host institution whether you can participate in a group plan or if you need to purchase your own policy.

## **Veteran's Benefits**

As a result of the enactment of P.L. 91-219, effective March 26, 1970, educational benefits payments from the Veterans Administration may now be received concurrently with and supplementary to fellowship payments from the National Science Foundation.

## **Future Employment**

The award and acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellowship does not obligate a Fellow, the National Science Foundation, or the United States Government with regard to future employment or future service of any kind.

## **Federal and/or Armed Forces Employees**

If, during any part of a Fellowship tenure, you will be a member of the Armed Forces or on leave from a position in the Federal Service, a statement must be filed from a cognizant official of the Government organization involved specifying (1) the funds, if any, that will be made available to you during tenure and the purpose for which they will be provided, and (2) the funds, if any, that will be made available to your host institution on your behalf. NSF and your host institution must reach a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding your support during tenure before any funds can be provided under the fellowship.

## **Liability**

NSF cannot assume any liability for accidents, illnesses or claims arising out of any work supported by your award or for unauthorized use of patented or copyrighted materials. You are advised to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to insure or protect yourself and your property.

## **Rights to Inventions or Writings**

NSF claims no rights to any inventions or writings that may result from its fellowship awards. However, you should be aware that NSF, other Federal agencies, or private parties may acquire such rights through other grant support.

## **Referrals to the NSF Office of the Inspector General**

The NSF Inspector General is responsible for investigating all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as allegations of research misconduct in connection with NSF programs and operations. You shall promptly refer to the NSF Inspector General ([oig@nsf.gov](mailto:oig@nsf.gov); [www.nsf.gov/oig](http://www.nsf.gov/oig) or 1-800-428-2189) any allegations or credible evidence of research misconduct or criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to misappropriation, fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct involving NSF funds.

## **INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

AAG Chapter VI.F details NSF requirements for international travel and research.

### **Foreign Tenure**

International collaboration (not to substitute the U.S. host institution), as outlined in the Research and Training Plan are allowed. All arrangements for affiliation with a fellowship institution abroad and provision for housing are the responsibility of the Fellow. Some Fellows, particularly those with families, have experienced difficulty in finding suitable housing in foreign countries. Fellows should be aware that housing shortages exist in many foreign cities, and that living costs may exceed those in comparable cities in the U.S. Early correspondence with the international collaboration site regarding housing needs is recommended.

### **Foreign-Travel**

If you and your sponsoring scientist judge it appropriate for you to travel abroad, you must seek NSF approval before you travel. You can request prior approval by e-mail from your Program Officer. The only fellowship funds available for such travel are within the Fellowship Allowance. In your e-mail,

please include the purpose of the trip and an itinerary. If you are attending a scientific meeting, it is expected that you will be giving a presentation; therefore, please give the title of your presentation and the name, place, and date of the meeting in the request for approval.

You are responsible for making all arrangements for securing a passport and visa. Visa regulations vary greatly by country, and to avoid the possibility of lengthy delay, you should make the necessary applications well before departure.

All travel to be reimbursed from Federal funds must be made via use of U.S. flag carriers if such service is available per the Fly America Act (for restrictions concerning the use of non-U.S. Flag carriers while on foreign travel, see [AAG Chapter VI.F.1.](#))

## **APPENDIX I.**

### **Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities**

Fellows who have disabilities may apply for funding for special assistance or equipment through the Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) program, GPG.II.D.4 ([http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf15001/gpg\\_index.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf15001/gpg_index.jsp)). The Fellow will be responsible for submitting the NSF proposal for a Supplemental funding request to the existing SPRF Award. If multi-year funding is requested, the Fellow is responsible for requesting continuation of the FASSED, based on a Fellow's satisfactory progress.

#### **Proposal**

Fellows should discuss their accommodation needs with their host institution and sponsoring scientist and prepare a proposal including any ancillary documents. The proposal should include an overview of current research and a detailed budget (annual and cumulative) and justification. The Fellow submits the proposal as a supplemental funding request to the existing SPRF award. Requests must be submitted at least two months before funds are needed. Funding decisions will be made on the basis of the justification and availability of program funds, with any resultant funding provided through a formal amendment of the existing SPRF award. FASSED proposals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the SPRF Program Office.

#### **Reporting**

Once a supplement is awarded, Fellows are required to address how the FASSED award facilitated their research in their Annual Activities Reports (i.e., include a paragraph that begins with "FASSED:" under the "Fellowship Summary" section in the Activities Report).