

Deferring the Service Obligations of the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program

DEFERMENT INFORMATION

For each year of scholarship support, you will incur two service obligations to the NIH: (1) a 10-week summer service as a paid employee in an NIH research lab and (2) after graduation, 1 year of full-time paid employment in an NIH research lab.

Your post-graduating service obligation, however, may be deferred while you complete graduate or medical programs leading to a doctoral degree, as well as the completion of your medical residency, if applicable.

Deferment as an Undergraduate

If you do not receive a renewal of your scholarship and remain as full-time undergraduate, you must submit annual verification of your continued enrollment. (See “Terms and Conditions of Deferment” below.) No prior approval is required; however, deferments cannot be granted for training conducted by any entity that imposes a service obligation, such as a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Deferment for Graduate Training, Medical Training, and Residency

If you are enrolled full-time in a graduate or medical program leading to a doctoral degree that prepares students for careers in biomedical, behavioral or social science health-related research, or if you are completing your medical residency, you must submit annual verification of your enrollment. (See “Terms and Conditions of Deferment” below.)

In general, you do not need prior approval; however, programs that culminate in a master’s-level degree are not eligible for a deferment. Additionally, deferments cannot be granted for training conducted by any entity that imposes a service obligation, such as a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Deferment for Fellowship Training

A deferment for fellowship training is not automatic and must be pre-approved by the NIH Deputy Director for Intramural Research. To request a deferment for fellowship training, you must send your request to the UGSP before accepting a fellowship position. (This often occurs more than a year in advance.) If your deferment is approved, you must submit annual verification of your participation in a fellowship training program. (See “Terms and Conditions of Deferment” below.)

The Terms and Conditions of Deferment

You must:

1. Inform the UGSP in advance of your intended graduate/medical program, residency, or fellowship. The UGSP will inform you if a formal request is needed.
2. Submit annual documentation to the UGSP of your training status. (Each year the UGSP will mail you a *Deferment Form*. This form, once completed by you and your school, serves as verification of your enrollment or training status.)
3. Make no changes in your period or type of training without prior written approval from the UGSP.

4. Notify the UGSP in writing within 30 days of any change of address, intent to terminate training, or similar change.
5. Commence service payback within 60 days of the end of the deferment.

Ending Training to Begin Service

If you decide at any time during your deferment to discontinue your training and begin payback of your service obligation, you should promptly contact the UGSP for guidance. You should plan approximately six months to find an appropriate position at NIH and begin your service obligation.

You are cautioned that once you start your NIH UGSP service obligation, you must complete 52 weeks of your obligation before resuming additional training. An exception may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (such as an unavoidable conflict with an approved graduate or medical training program's start date, which was unknown to you at the beginning of service payback period). Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing to the UGSP.

Medical and Personal Postponements

Postponements may be granted by the UGSP in intervals of up to 1 year. The UGSP determines if compliance with the obligation is temporarily impossible based on information from you and independent documentation from health professionals treating you that you suffer from a physical or mental disability resulting in your temporary inability to comply with your scholarship service obligation. A postponement may also be granted if you can document any problems of a personal nature such as a physical or mental disability, or terminal illness in your immediate family, which the UGSP determines would temporarily render you unable to perform the service obligation you have incurred. "Family member" includes the following relatives of scholars:

- (a) spouse and spouse's parents;
- (b) children, including adopted children, and their spouses;
- (c) parents;
- (d) brothers and sisters, and their spouses;
- (e) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the scholar is the equivalent of a family relationship.

Requests for postponements must be submitted in writing to the UGSP.

Failure to Meet the Terms and Conditions of Deferment

You are responsible for ensuring that your school submits annual documentation of your training status by the deadline assigned by the UGSP. (Submission of a *Deferment Form* satisfies this requirement.) If you fail to submit the form, or fail to comply with the terms and conditions of your deferment, you are subject to the default provisions of the UGSP described in *The Fine Print* section on page 19 and in the contract.