



COMPUTATIONAL TOXICOLOGY
ROTATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Office of Research and Development
National Center for Computational Toxicology
Research Triangle Park, NC

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Introduction

The Office of Research and Development's (ORD) National Center for Computational Toxicology (NCCT) coordinates and implements EPA's research in the field of computational toxicology. Within the source-to-outcome framework, the NCCT conducts and sponsors research to provide models for fate and transport of chemicals, environmental exposures to humans and wildlife, delivery of the chemical to the target site of toxicity, molecular and cellular pathways of toxicity, and ultimately systems level understanding of biological processes and their perturbation. For priority setting activities, the NCCT helps establish and distribute databases of high quality toxicological information, utilizes high throughput screening tools for understanding the potential to interfere with toxicity pathways across chemicals and chemical classes, develops systems level models of underlying biology to predict toxicity at the organ level, and formulates structure activity models on important toxicity pathways. To improve quantitative risk assessment, it applies newly developed methods and tools to understanding determinants of susceptibility, interspecies differences, dose extrapolation, and risks of exposure to mixtures. NCCT employees also serve as scientific reviewers and advisors in providing technical assistance in the broad area of computational toxicology, to other Laboratories and Centers in ORD, EPA Program Offices, Regions and the States. NCCT communicates the results of its efforts through peer reviewed publications, consultations, presentations, databases, publicly available computational models, training sessions, and web sites. Another facet of the NCCT is to serve as a source of training in computational toxicology by offering seminars, mini-courses, symposia, and staff details. To expand upon its training mission and further facilitate a more in-depth understanding of computational toxicology, NCCT has developed this Computational Toxicology Rotational Fellows Program (CTRFP).

This rotational fellowship program allows the temporary assignment of scientists from other EPA organizations to NCCT. This will enhance the work of EPA and build relationships and collaborations to better equip EPA in addressing the difficult challenges of toxicology in the 21st Century. In addition, this program will enhance the personal satisfaction and professional development of those EPA employees who are involved in the program. Candidates participating in this program will be detailed to unclassified

developmental assignments for up to 1 year in duration, and are expected to return to their home organization with enhanced skills in computational toxicology.

Purpose

The CTRFP will provide EPA scientists the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experience and enhance their professional growth while promoting cross-organization experiences that broaden employee understanding of ORD's Computational Toxicology Program. In addition, the program will assist in developing a motivated, flexible, and agile workforce equipped to meet the complex environmental challenges facing the Agency now and in the future.

The fellowships will be structured to meet the goals identified by program participants. Every effort will be made to ensure that assignment activities enhance or build each participant's portfolio of skills and competencies related to the area of computational toxicology.

Scope

There will be 1 or 2 fellowship positions available at any given time, the final number is dependent on the negotiated costs for each fellowship. The CTRFP provides rotational opportunities for permanent EPA employees in grades GS-12 through GS-15 and ST. The program formally recruits and competitively selects candidates for participation. To gain full benefit from the program, participants must fulfill the fellowship at the NCCT location--RTP, NC.

Program Features

1. Participant Eligibility

A. All permanent EPA employees in grades GS-12 through GS-15 and ST may apply to participate in CTRFP, provided they have been in their current positions for at

least one year and have received favorable (i.e. fully successful, exceeds expectations or outstanding) performance ratings.

B. Each selected fellow should have an Individual Development Plans (IDP) in place that identifies CTRFP as a developmental activity, and the competencies or skills he/she wishes to develop through program participation.

C. Employees must receive approval of their first- and second-level supervisors to participate in the CTRFP.

2. Selection Process and Procedures

A. Participation in the CTRFP is open to all EPA organizations and will be administered and managed by the NCCT Program Manager.

B. NCCT will use the attached template (Appendix A) for announcing and selecting candidates for CTRFP rotational opportunities, and will ensure that all eligible employees receive fair consideration for program selection.

C. Interested and eligible EPA employees will submit complete application materials (see specifics in Appendix A) for program consideration.

D. The Deputy Director of NCCT will convene an evaluation panel comprised of senior ORD employees/managers, including NCCT employees. The evaluation panel is responsible for making recommendation(s) to the NCCT Director.

3. No Grade/Series Changes in Fellowship

A. CTRFP is a developmental program designed to build and or enhance employee skills and competencies, not to provide promotional opportunities for employees.

B. CTRFP candidates will be detailed to unclassified fellowships/projects vs. specific positions; therefore, employee job series and grade levels will not change.

C. Employees will return to their positions of record in home organizations following CTRFP rotations.

4. Duration of Fellowships

Fellowships under this program are intended to be 4-months to a maximum of 1 year in total duration, depending on the fellowship project plan. The project will be implemented in 120-day increments. Details will be extended or terminated to affect the agreed upon total duration.

5. Documentation

- A. CTRFP assignments will be affected and documented on SF-52s, "Requests for Personnel Action." Upon notification of selection for the CTRFP, the employee's home organization will complete the SF-52s, obtain the signatures of the employee's first-and second-level supervisors and route to the employee's servicing personnel office. A copy of all SF-52s will be sent to the CTRFP Manager in NCCT.
- B. CTRFP assignments will be officially documented as 120-day "details," and may be extended for up to maximum of 1 year.
- C. At the completion of CTRFP rotations, home offices will process "termination of detail" actions via an SF-52.
- D. An assignee's official position of record, including title, occupational series, and grade level, will not change as a result of participation in CTRFP.

6. Performance Management

According to EPA's Performance Appraisal and Recognition System (PARS) training manual, supervisors are to develop summary ratings for EPA employees on detail assignments for 120 days or more, requiring the establishment of specific performance criteria based on the essential duties and responsibilities of assignments. The NCCT supervisor will:

- A. Establish performance plans for CTRFP assignees with critical elements (CEs) based on the essential duties and responsibilities associated with CTRFP fellowships or projects.
- B. Communicate performance expectations to CTRFP assignees within 30 days of the effective date of assignments.
- C. Complete performance evaluations with assignees at the conclusion of CTRFP rotations.
- D. Provide written evaluations with summary ratings to home supervisors (also referred to supervisors of record) and assignees at the end of rotation period.
- E. Home supervisors will consider CTRFP summary ratings in determining overall ratings at the conclusion of rating period.

7. Program Funding

A. FTE will continue to be covered by the fellow's home office; however a portion (up to a maximum of 50%) of the PC&B costs may be paid by NCCT. This is a negotiable item.

B. A portion of the travel and training expenses to and from fellowships will be paid by each assignee's home office. NCCT is willing to pay a portion of the travel and training expenses and will negotiate the amount with the selected fellow's home office.

C. All travel and training required by NCCT during the fellowship will be paid by NCCT. Any travel and training required by the fellow's home organization will be paid by the home organization.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Home Office Supervisors

Home office supervisors provide important coaching, guidance, feedback, and support to assignees. In addition to responsibilities set forth in this guidance, home office supervisors should:

- A. Write a letter of recommendation for the candidate to include in the application package.
- B. Assist candidates in building specific, measurable individual development plans (IDPs) that set forth the expectations of both the participating office and the candidate, as well as training/education to support skill advancement;
- C. Discuss learning experiences upon assignment completion and identify lessons learned; and
- D. Include summary ratings for CTRFP assignees in determining overall performance ratings.

2. NCCT Supervisor

The NCCT supervisor, like home supervisors, provides important instruction, guidance, and feedback to CTRFP assignees. The success of a rotational experience for both the candidate and the NCCT is to a great extent, a function of the understanding each other's expectations. The NCCT supervisor will:

- A. Assist in preparing rotational agreements that set forth expectations of both the participating office and the candidate;

- B. Provide an in-depth orientation on the organization, its structure, and office protocol;
- C. Provide regular positive and constructive feedback on performance and task completion;
- D. Provide office space as well as the supplies, computers and other tools and equipment needed to be successful during the rotation. Upon termination of the rotation, all space, supplies, equipment, etc. provided by NCCT will be retained by NCCT.
- E. Ensure the establishment of PARS plans, monitor performance, and provide written evaluations with summary ratings at the conclusion of the rotation.

3. CTRFP Assignees

- A. Define personal development objectives within IDPs.
- B. Meet with home office supervisors to discuss how fellowships will support IDP objectives.
- C. Prepare application materials including resumes/curriculum vitae and statements of interest—which address: the knowledge, skills and abilities they will contribute during the fellowship; the desired goals and accomplishments they seek from the fellowship and expect to bring back to their home organization; and the possible opportunities for future collaborations utilizing the field of computational toxicology.
- D. Present final seminar on experience prior to completion of detail
- E. Write narrative summaries of rotational experiences at the conclusion of rotational experience and provide to the information to both home and rotation supervisors.

Rotation Agreements

1. Rotation agreements will be developed in conjunction with the NCCT Supervisor, after the participants are selected and will include the following information:

- A. The time frame for the rotation;
- B. Funding arrangements and anticipated trips home;

- C. Project needs for supplies, computers and other expenses;
- D. A plan and timeline for what specific tasks are to be performed or skills developed during the rotation;
- E. Estimated time and topic for candidate's seminar upon completion of the rotation.

2. Agreements should be signed by each assignee, his/her home office supervisor, and the NCCT supervisor, and a copy of the agreement should be provided to the CTRFP Program Manager in NCCT.

Travel Information

For general Agency travel-related information, please see: "On the Way with EPA: A Reference Guide for Travel," published by the EPA Office of the Comptroller, April 1999. This program meets the criteria of a rotational assignment; therefore, after approval by the employee's Training Officer, training/expense funds (rather than travel) may be used to pay for the per diem costs associated with this program.

1. Timeframe for Rotation Planning

Candidates must submit all application materials to the CTRFP Program Manager by the announced deadline. Failure to make these arrangements in a timely manner may delay the start of the employee's rotation.

2. Travel Authorizations

Prior to travel, each assignee is to prepare a Travel Authorization (TA) to cover a 4-month (120-day) rotation, plus additional TAs for each extension for up to a maximum of 1-year, according to the final agreement.

3. Estimating Rotation Expenses

In order to calculate the costs of a fellowship outside of the assignee's geographical location, the round trip airfare/train fare/POV expenses for the appropriate number of round trips, per diem (at 55% of the location's daily allowance), lodging (at a maximum of 55%), must be included. The round trip airfare/train fare/POV must be paid from the travel ceiling and is not included in the example below. The 55% lodging

and per diem is based on what the Agency allows for 120-day rotational details. An example is provided below for the breakout of how the 55% lodging and per diem (meals and incidental expenses) works for a candidate doing a rotation to RTP is (based on 2008 per diem rates): Per diem allowance = \$49/DAY; Maximum full lodging (based on hotel rates) = \$97/day.

**ESTIMATED TRAINING/EXPENSE COSTS
(TRAVEL FUNDS NOT INCLUDED)**

EXPENSE FUNDS	4 MONTHS	6 MONTHS:	1 YEAR
Candidate MI &E allowance \$49 X 0.55 X # days = \$ +\$36 X .055 X 2 days = \$39.60	\$3,273.60	4,837.42	\$9,674.84
Candidate lodging maximum \$97 X 0.55 X # days =\$	\$6,402	\$9,603	\$19,206
TOTAL	\$9,675.60	\$14,440.42	\$28,880.84

(We hope to lower this figure substantially by using nice, furnished apartments with all utilities and local phone included.)

4. Rotation Housing

All housing arrangements must be coordinated with and approved by NCCT. The NCCT administrative staff will assist the candidate in locating the best available housing within a reasonable distance of the NCCT-RTP facility.

A. Federal travel policy does not permit EPA to pay any lodging costs for candidates who choose to stay with relatives or other federal/EPA employees during their rotations. (We can still pay for incidentals and per diem, however.)

B. To be reimbursed for lodging, candidates must submit a rental certificate or official receipt from a housing complex or landlord.

5. Travel Vouchers

A. Travel vouchers are the mechanism used to claim reimbursement for travel expenses. Each assignee will submit travel vouchers on a monthly basis, for the duration of the rotation.

B. Requests for advance payments for rotational costs can be submitted on day one of a rotational assignment. Advance payments can include air fare, lodging, per diem, subsistence, and transportation for the first month of a rotation; however, vouchers must be submitted monthly so that reimbursement of authorized travel expenses can be paid.

C. Candidates should complete Direct Deposit Forms to ensure that travel voucher reimbursements go directly into checking/savings accounts rather being sent to home addresses.

D. The maximum travel reimbursement for assignees who choose to drive their private vehicles to RTP, NC is limited to the amount of the least expensive roundtrip government airfare from his/her home office to RTP, NC

APPENDIX B

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
PREPARE ON YOUR HOME ORGANIZATION'S LETTERHEAD**

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

DATE:

SUBJECT: Application for Computational Toxicology Rotational Fellowship Program (CTRFP)

FROM: _____
(Applicant's Name, Organization)

THRU: _____
(Applicant's First-line Supervisor's Name, Organization)

THRU: _____
(Applicant's Second-line or Division Director's Name)

TO: Karen Dean
CTRF Program Manager
NCCT (MD-B-205-01)

This memorandum and its attachments provide the information required for my application to the CTRFP. Below are my signature and those of my first and second-level supervisor which certify the accuracy of the information provided below and signify our understanding of the terms and commitments being made as part of this application.

Applicant Information:

Organization and Mail Code:	
Position Title:	
Grade/Series:	
Time in Current Position:	
Office Telephone Number:	
Travel Preparer's Name & Phone#	

FUNDING AND FTE

1. If the applicant named above is accepted to the CTRFP, we are aware of and commit to cover a portion of their travel/training expenses to and from the rotational assignment, as well as for those costs during the rotation. Our portion of the travel and expense costs will be negotiated with NCCT, but the maximum amount to be covered by NCCT is 50% of the total costs.
2. We understand that the FTE will continue to be charged to the candidate's home organization. However, PC&B costs are negotiable and NCCT may cover up to 50% of the total costs while on the rotation.
3. All travel and training required by NCCT during the rotational assignment will be paid by NCCT.
4. In the rare event that the home organization requires the candidate to travel or be trained during the rotational assignment, the home organization will pay for those expenses.

PROGRAM FEATURES

1. CTRFP is a developmental program designed to build and/or enhance employee skills and competencies in computational toxicology, not to provide promotional opportunities for employees.
2. CTRFP candidates will be detailed to unclassified rotational assignments/projects vs. specific positions; therefore, employee job series and grade levels will not change.
3. Employees will return to their positions of record in home organizations following CTRFP rotations.
4. Rotational assignments under this program will be a minimum of 120 days, up to a maximum of 1 year, depending on the projects undertaken during the rotation.
5. For candidates requiring temporary travel, home visits may be funded, as agreed to in advance by the assignee, NCCT supervisor and home supervisor.
6. For candidates requiring temporary housing, NCCT staff will assist in finding suitable lodging within per diem while on the rotation.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

We certify that the applicant's latest performance rating was favorable (e.g., fully successful, exceeds expectations or outstanding).

According to EPA's Performance Appraisal and Recognition System (PARS) training manual, the NCCT supervisor will develop summary ratings for EPA employees on detail assignments for 120 days or more, requiring the establishment of specific performance criteria based on the essential duties and responsibilities of assignments.

APPLICANT & MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

We certify and agree to the terms and conditions stated in this MOU.

Applicant	Signature/Date
First Line Supervisor	Signature/Date
Second-Line Supervisor/Division Director	Signature/Date

APPENDIX C

Candidate's Statement of Interest **Computational Toxicology Rotational Fellowship Program**

Describe how the CTRFP aligns with what you hope to achieve at EPA over the next few years. Please limit to **no more than 1 page.** Please use Times Roman 12 point font.

Address the following elements in your description:

1. The knowledge, skills and abilities you will contribute during the fellowship.
2. The desired goals and accomplishments you seek from the fellowship and what you expect to bring back to your home organization.
3. The possible opportunities to utilize the field of computational toxicology in your work once you return to your home organization, including future collaborations.

APPENDIX D

COMPUTATIONAL TOXICOLOGY ROTATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

I. APPLICATION MATERIALS TO BE SUBMITTED BY CANDIDATE:

Required Items	Completed
Application MOU signed by candidate & managers (see Appendix B)	
Candidate's Statement of Interest (see Appendix C)	
Candidate's Biosketch, CV or Resume	
Candidate's Supervisor's Recommendation	

II. SELECTED CANDIDATE'S HOME ORGANIZATION PREPARES:

Required Items	Completed
SF-52s for duration of assignment, including termination SF-52 (provide copy to NCCT)	
IDP which includes CTRFP	
Travel Authorizations for CTRFP (for joint funding, done in conjunction with NCCT)	

III. SELECTED CANDIDATE AND NCCT SUPERVISOR PREPARE:

Required Items	Completed
Rotation Agreement	
PARS plans	
PARS summary ratings at end of assignment	

IV. UPON COMPLETION OF ROTATION, SELECTED CANDIDATE PREPARES:

Required Items	Completed
Rotational Assessment	
Exit Seminar	