

## INVEST Drug Abuse Research Fellowship

### Application Instructions

#### Annual Application Deadlines: April 1 and October 1

The INVEST Fellowship provides a unique opportunity for non-U.S. researchers to obtain postdoctoral training with a U.S. mentor who is an active NIDA grantee. Each Fellow receives training in drug abuse research methods, develops and conducts a research project with the NIDA grantee, and participates in professional development activities. Fellowship applications are peer-reviewed through a competitive process and are awarded for 1 year. Fellows may conduct their research in any aspect of the biomedical, social, or behavioral components of drug abuse and addiction. Previous Fellows have conducted research in all aspects of NIDA research, including basic neuroscience, epidemiology, prevention, treatment, preclinical, and clinical sciences.

Each Fellow receives a stipend of US\$36,000 to cover living expenses. The Fellowship also provides round trip travel for the Fellow only and a US\$4,000 allowance to cover the cost of health insurance and professional development activities.

INVEST Research Fellows learn about the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants application process from a U.S. researcher who has successfully sought NIDA support. Previous Fellows and their U.S. mentors have received NIH support for jointly developed collaborative research projects conducted in the Fellow's home country. INVEST Fellowship alumni from eligible countries have also received support through such NIH Fogarty International Center programs as the Global Health Research Initiative Program for New Foreign Investigators (GRIP) or the Fogarty International Research Collaboration Award (FIRCA). Fellows and their U.S. mentors are part of a network of international scientists who exchange information and collaborate on drug abuse research nationally, regionally, and globally.

#### Eligibility:

Requirements for INVEST applicants include:

- An earned doctoral degree in medicine, public health, biomedical, behavioral, or social science
- A *minimum* of 2 years of postdoctoral research experience including a demonstrated ability to engage in independent research
- Written assurance from an institution in the home country that there is a position to which the applicant can return after completing the Fellowship
- Proficiency in written and spoken English
- Citizenship or permanent residency of a country *other than* the United States
- Living and working outside the United States at the time the application is submitted
- Eligibility for a J-1 visa to enter the United States.

### **Application Overview:**

NIDA encourages outstanding early career scientists to apply for the competitive INVEST Fellowships. Interested persons should:

1. Contact a NIDA-supported researcher in the United States who is willing to serve as a mentor, and develop a joint research plan for the Fellowship application. For assistance in locating a potential mentor, examine the online database of research supported by NIH at <http://crisp.cit.nih.gov>; review journals online at PubMed, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>; and e-mail the NIDA International Program, [ip@nih.nida.gov](mailto:ip@nih.nida.gov).
2. Write a detailed plan for working with the U.S. mentor (a NIDA grantee) to conduct biomedical or behavioral research on the causes, consequences, prevention, and treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Follow the detailed Research Plan instructions below.
3. Complete the application, which requires contributions from the applicant, the mentor, the applicant's current employer, and the applicant's references.

### **Application Deadlines: April 1 and October 1**

### **Notification of Award: June 1 and December 1**

Fellowships awarded in June must begin by December 31 of the current year.

Fellowships awarded in December must begin by June 30 of the following year.

### **Submitting Your Application Forms**

- **Incomplete applications will *NOT* be reviewed.**
- Applications must be typed or computer-generated, single-spaced and single-sided, in black ink.
- Applicant completes Part I (items 1 through 12) on Page 1, Pages 2 through 8, and the shaded portion of the Reference Report Form on Page 13. Attach all supporting documents listed on the Application Checklist, Page 2.
- Forward your section of the application to the NIDA grantee who has agreed to be your U.S. mentor, who will then complete Part II (items 13 through 16) on Page 1, plus Pages 9 through 12 before submitting the entire application.
- Obtain three references (preferably one from your home country supervisor and two from research colleagues). Please complete the shaded portion of the Reference Report Form, and then ask your references to mail all the forms directly to the NIDA International Program.

- Submit the completed application by the deadline (**April 1 or October 1**) to:

INVEST Drug Abuse Research Fellowship Program  
c/o IQ Solutions  
11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 901  
Rockville, Maryland 20852 USA  
Telephone: +1-301-984-1471  
Fax: +1-301-984-1473  
E-mail: [ip@nida.nih.gov](mailto:ip@nida.nih.gov)

## Preparing Your INVEST Fellowship Research Plan

The Research Plan (Application Form Page 7) is the most important part of the application. This section should be well formulated and presented in sufficient detail so that reviewers can evaluate its scientific merit. The applicant should actively seek the advice and cooperation of the U.S. mentor while preparing the Research Plan. The U.S. mentor's collaboration is important, but the *applicant* must write the Research Plan. Be specific and informative, and avoid redundancy. Brevity and clarity in the description of the Research Plan are considered indicative of an applicant's approach to the research objective and ability to conduct a superior project. The Research Plan *should not exceed 10 pages* in addition to the face page. Literature citations are not included in the page limit. The applicant should use the following format:

- (1) ***Specific Aims.*** State the specific purposes of the research and the hypotheses to be tested.
- (2) ***Background and Significance.*** Briefly describe the background of the Research Plan. This is an important consideration in the initial review of your application. Concisely state the importance of the Research Plan by relating specific aims to broad, long-term objectives.
- (3) ***Research Design and Methods.*** Discuss in detail the following:
  - The research design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims
  - Sampling design, if conducting primary data collection
  - The analytic plan detailing the statistical approach to addressing the hypotheses
  - Any precautions necessary for procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel
  - Potential limitations of the proposed project
  - The timeline for the completion of the proposed investigation
  - The contributions that this project will make to the field of drug abuse research.
- (4) ***NIH Regulations on the Conduct of Research.*** Research conducted as part of an INVEST Fellowship is subject to the same U.S. Federal regulations, policies, guidelines, and review considerations as are all NIH research project grant applications. In this section of the Research Plan, applicants must demonstrate that they understand and have planned to comply with those rules, particularly if the research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals. For a complete discussion of the NIH regulations, consult the NIH Grants Policy Statement at <http://grants.nih.gov/policy/policy.htm> or "Section 8 – Research Plan" of the *Application for a Public Health Service Grant, PHS 398 Instructions*, <http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>.
- (5) ***Literature Citations.*** Provide literature citations at the end of the Research Plan. Each citation must include the authors' names, book or journal titles, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.

## **Review Criteria**

Applications are peer-reviewed through a competitive process and assessed according to scientific merit, the proposal's relevance to drug abuse and NIDA's research mission, adequacy of the applicant's education and experience to conduct the proposed research, likelihood that the proposed research can be completed within 1 year, and compatibility of applicant's and mentor's objectives. Several factors may enhance the rating of an application, even though all of these items are not necessarily required.

### ***Applicant***

- Previous experience and education are commensurate with the proposed study.
- Although not yet considered a senior scientist, the applicant has demonstrated sufficient research experience to successfully complete the proposed study.
- The letters of reference support the applicant's scientific record.
- The applicant has authored a peer-reviewed scientific article in the area of the proposed research.

### ***Research Plan***

- Describes how the proposed study is unique, how it will expand or advance the field of drug abuse research, and how it is consistent with the applicant's career goals.
- Clearly and concisely states proposed aims, goals and objectives appropriate to the stated hypotheses, conveying scientific sophistication and strong analytical skills.
- Thoroughly reviews the relevant literature.
- Acknowledges any potential regulatory issues or methodological limitations.
- Clearly states the applicant's role in the proposed research and the collaborative plan between the applicant and the mentor.
- Describes what skills will be gained in the process of working with the mentor, why that training would not otherwise be available to the applicant, and how those skills will be utilized when the applicant returns home.
- Includes a realistic timeline for completing the proposed study within the 1-year Fellowship.

### ***Research Resources and Environment***

- Mentor has significant expertise in the research area.
- Mentor has a NIDA grant that will remain active throughout the Fellowship period.
- Mentor has experience training Fellows or other graduate-level students.
- Mentor's institution is able to provide the resources necessary for the successful completion of the Fellowship.
- Mentor's research complements the applicant's proposed study.
- Demonstrates how the mentor will ensure that the applicant is knowledgeable about and able to comply with NIH regulations regarding the conduct of research.