



HUMAN FRONTIER SCIENCE PROGRAM

Long-Term and Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships

Application guidelines

AWARD YEAR 2009

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APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR HFSP FELLOWSHIPS

The guidelines below intend to assist candidates who wish to apply for Long-Term Fellowships (LTF) or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships (CDF) of the Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSP) to be awarded in March 2009.

To apply, applicants must register prior to **28 August 2008** on the HFSP extranet site for a password and must immediately login to the site to initiate their application by the same deadline. The deadline for submitting applications closes two weeks later on **11 September 2008 at 16:00 Strasbourg time**.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP) offers fellowships for basic research training in the life sciences across national and scientific boundaries inviting applications for two international programs that support postdoctoral investigators who explore new research areas. Frontiers of science are often found at the interface of biological and physical sciences. Therefore participation of scientists from outside the life sciences is encouraged.

- **Long-Term Fellowships (LTF)** are reserved for applicants with a Ph.D. in biology to embark on a new project in a different field of the life sciences. Preference is given to applicants who propose an original study in biology that marks a departure from their previous Ph.D. or postdoctoral work so as to learn new methods or change study system.
- **Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships (CDF)** are open to applicants with a Ph.D. from outside the life sciences e.g. in physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering or computer sciences who have had little exposure to biology during their previous training. Applicants for the CDF should propose a significant departure from their past research by changing e.g. from material science to cell biology, from physics to cell biology, from chemistry to molecular biology, or from computer science to neuroscience.

In both programs applicants are expected to be exposed to new theory and methods during the tenure of the award while their previous expertise should be reflected in the proposed research project. It is expected that applicants clearly state the innovative aspects of the proposed project in terms of original research questions (hypothesis) and techniques to be learned. In particular, applicants for a CDF should describe the biological techniques they will be exposed to and how their specific skills from their previous training will bear on the biological project they propose.

Fellowship projects can range from biological functions at the molecular and cellular level up to biological systems including cognitive functions. Within this broad area, all levels of analysis are supported: from studies on genes and individual molecules, intracellular networks, intercellular associations in tissues and organs, to networks underlying complex functions of entire organisms. Studies related to disease are only considered if they allow new insights into fundamental biological mechanisms.

The HFSP does not support:

- Projects that involve only large-scale, systematic genome mapping or proteomics analyses.
- Applied research e.g. in a clinical context, in engineering, biotechnology, or nanotechnology.
- Research to alleviate a medical condition, e.g. developing methods of treatment and diagnosis, searching and testing potential drug candidates or drug targets, advanced trials of drugs under development.
- Research directly concerned with agricultural or environmental problems (crop yield, bioremediation) or studies at the population or ecosystem level.

III. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants should read these guidelines with great care and pay particular attention to the eligibility criteria and the scientific objectives of the fellowships. Past experience shows that applications fail because candidates or projects do not comply with the specific HFSP requirements mentioned below. If in doubt about the appropriateness of the research project or formal eligibility criteria you should consult the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) and/or contact the [Fellowship Office](#) prior to submitting an application.

Applicants for a LTF or a CDF must meet the following conditions:

- 1) **A candidate who is not from one of the supporting countries** (*see below*) may apply to work only in a research institution in any of the supporting countries.

A candidate from one of the supporting countries can apply to work in a research institution in any country.

To be from one of the supporting countries is defined as being a national of one of the HFSP supporting countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus (EU part only), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

- 2) Applicants may submit an application before receiving their Ph.D. degree. However, at the start of the fellowship, applicants must **have a research doctorate (Ph.D.)** or a doctoral-level degree comparable to a Ph.D. (e.g. a research based M.D. or medical Ph.D.) with equivalent experience in basic experimental research. In order to be eligible, the doctoral degree must have been **awarded on or after 1 September 2005 and at the latest in December 2009.**

If a candidate obtained his/her Ph.D. before 1 September 2005, exceptions are possible if the applicant claims exceptional circumstances for an interruption of his/her scientific career after receiving the Ph.D. Only exceptional circumstances of a personal, non-scientific nature, such as illness, child care, military or civil service will be accepted. These must be described in detail in the application. Please contact the Fellowship Office prior to submitting your application if you are claiming a personal exemption.

- 3) Applicants must have **at least one lead author paper** either accepted for publication, in press or published, in a peer-reviewed international journal **on 11 September 2008**. As a lead author, you are either single author, first author or joint first author. In a joint first author paper the applicant may be listed in second place even though he/she has played a primary role. In this case the fact that the first two authors contributed equally to the work must be clearly stated in the published article. Applicants have to upload electronic copies of their lead author papers when submitting the application form.

Review papers and patent applications are not taken into account. Exceptions will be made if the standard publication practice in a given field or in a particular research institution makes first authorship impossible due to e.g. alphabetical listing of authors. These circumstances must be explained in detail in the application.

The papers must be written in English.

The following are grounds for ineligibility:

- 1) Applicants who at the beginning of the fellowship have already spent 12 or more months in the host country or host institution (e.g. during previous exchange visits for collaboration, training, or during the Ph.D.) are not eligible. The combined duration of all previous stays in the host country is taken

into account and cannot exceed 12 months at the start of the fellowship. The sole exception to this rule are prior visits in the host country as part of the formal undergraduate education (up to the Bachelor degree level). The earliest possible date to start the HFSP fellowship is 1 April 2009.

Therefore, applicants who started their current postdoctoral work in the host institution/country prior to 1 April 2008 are not eligible to apply.

- 2) Applications will not be accepted from candidates who wish to work again with their former research supervisors, scientific collaborators or scientists with whom they have already co-authored publications.
- 3) Applications will not be accepted from candidates who obtained the Ph.D. degree in the host country of the HFSP fellowship, even if the applicant is not a national of that country.
- 4) Applications to move from one laboratory to another in the same country are not eligible. For those going to institutions that are classified as extraterritorial such as the EMBL (Heidelberg, Germany, Grenoble, France or Monterotondo, Italy), ICPT or ICGB (both in Trieste, Italy), the country in which the laboratory is located will be taken into account.
- 5) A candidate cannot apply to go to the country of which he/she is a national, even though he/she may have undertaken pre- or post-doctoral studies abroad or obtained his/her Ph.D. in another country.
- 6) Applications to work in a for-profit research environment are not accepted.
- 7) It is not possible to hold an HFSP Long-Term or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship and an HFSP Research Grant at the same time.
- 8) A candidate can only submit one fellowship application for either a Cross-Disciplinary or a Long-Term Fellowship in the same round of awards. Equally, a host supervisor can only endorse the application of one single candidate in the same round of awards, either a Cross-Disciplinary or a Long-Term Fellowship application. The presence of HFSP fellows from previous award years in the host laboratory is not relevant in this regard. The fact that a scientist is part of an HFSP Research Grant team (Program Grant or Young Investigator Grant) does not prevent him/her to act as host supervisor for a candidate.
- 9) It is not possible to submit parallel applications (for a Short-Term and a Long-Term/Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship) to work with the same host supervisor or at the same host institution. In addition, a former Short-Term Fellowship awardee cannot apply for a Long-Term/Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship to return to work with the same host supervisor or at the same host institution.

After the proposal is submitted: The HFSP fellowship committee reviews a submitted proposal on the basis of the specific research project which is to be carried out in a particular host laboratory. Therefore changing the project or host institution during the selection process will lead to withdrawal of the application or the fellowship award.

IV. AWARD PROVISIONS AND REPORTING

- 1) HFSP Fellowships provide support for a period of three years. A renewal is not possible. Former awardees (Long-Term or Cross-Disciplinary) cannot apply for a second time.
- 2) A successful candidate cannot hold concurrently a Long-Term or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship provided by the HFSP and a paid fellowship or employment position (i.e. salary support) from another organization. The awardees must devote themselves entirely to research in the host institutions and may not engage in any other paid activity without the agreement of the HFSP.

It is however acceptable to supplement the salary of the award if the HFSP living allowance is lower than the institutional minimum postdoctoral salary.

- 3) The third fellowship year can be used to support one year of postdoctoral training in the home country and in this case can be deferred for up to two years. Fellows are encouraged to use their third (final)

year to return to their home country. The final year of support can also be used in the host laboratory but must then be started immediately after the second year.

- 4) Fellows may begin their fellowship on **1 April 2009 at the earliest** and **not later than 1 January 2010**. At the start of the fellowship a candidate must have worked less than 12 full months in the host country or host institution.
- 5) After each year of support, fellows must submit a detailed scientific report of their research, endorsed by the research supervisor. Reports should be prepared following specific instructions that will be provided by the HFSP. Support will be continued only upon approval of the reports.
- 6) If the fellow spends the third year in the host institution, he/she will have to submit a final financial report at the end of the third year which will take into account the total duration of the fellowship.
If the fellow repatriates for the third year, a financial report will have to be submitted at the end of the second year and another one at the end of the third (final) year.
- 7) It is not possible to change the host supervisor, the research topic, or to transfer the fellowship to another institution. Any unauthorized change will lead to the immediate termination of the award. Fellows who consider a change or transfer due to exceptional circumstances should contact the Fellowship Office directly before making any decision.
- 8) If for any reason the fellowship is terminated earlier than scheduled, the HFSP must be informed immediately.
- 9) HFSP fellows returning to their home country either in their third year or at the end of their fellowship will be invited to apply for an HFSP Career Development Award.

V. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will initially be screened by an *ad hoc* scientific committee for formal eligibility and conformity of the proposed research with the scientific objectives of the HFSP. Any application that does not meet key requirements given in these guidelines will not be sent for review and the applicant will be informed shortly after the submission date. Eligible applications will be evaluated by members of the HFSP Fellowship Review Committee based on the following criteria:

- The training potential of the fellowship based on the degree of the proposed change in research direction from the candidate's previous work. For both types of fellowships a clear change in research area is viewed favourably (see Frequently Asked Questions).
- The accomplishments and potential of the candidate relative to previous and current opportunities in terms of career stage and field of research.
- The quality of the host and the host environment.
- The scientific originality and excellence of the proposal.
- The information given by the candidate regarding his/her motivation, goals and achievements.

HFSP does not impose a percentage weighting among the individual selection criteria listed above. The final selection considers all individual criteria on an equal basis. Fellowships are only awarded to applications that are ranked 'outstanding', while applications in the next lower rank ('excellent') are awarded only if funds permit (see table below). Each application is initially evaluated by two reviewers assigning categorical rankings. In a second step a shortlist of the highest ranking applications is discussed during a 3-day panel meeting.

RANK	DESCRIPTION
OUTSTANDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel and innovative research project of high quality proposed by candidate • Accomplished candidate • Significant departure from the previous research in terms of topic, ...technology and species/study system
EXCELLENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel and innovative research project proposed by candidate • Accomplished candidate • Lesser degree of change in research direction
VERY GOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality research project but not entirely original (lab project) • Solid candidate • Minor change in research direction (e.g. applying new techniques to the same species/study system; extension of Ph.D. or previous postdoc project)
GOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality science but lack of originality (applicant continues a lab project) • No change in research direction (continuation of Ph.D. project)
FAIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable project but of less significance
POOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project scientifically flawed or inappropriate

Applicants that were not shortlisted for final discussion during the meeting of the fellowship Review Committee will be informed end of January about the result. Applicants shortlisted for awards will receive written notification regarding the outcome of their applications by early April 2009. The list of successful candidates will be published on the HFSP website. The selection process is confidential; no information can be provided about the rating of applications or the reasons for not being selected.

VI. PROVISIONS AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

(1) Advisory notice on social security benefits and taxation

The HFSP values the uniqueness of stipends vs. employment contracts for international research scholars. Therefore it maintains the policy that mandatory contributions for social security charges (i.e. retirement plans, unemployment insurance, ...) cannot be deducted from its fellowship allowances. HFSP fellows may only use their living allowance to pay for their health insurance should this not be covered by the host institution. HFSP advises all applicants to clarify this in advance. If awarded a fellowship from HFSP, the fellow, host supervisor and host institution must sign the following acceptance:

Mandatory contributions for retirement benefits or unemployment insurance cannot be deducted from the allowances provided by the HFSP fellowship. Only health insurance may be paid from the HFSP living allowance. Should a host institution or a country require postdoctoral researchers to be administered under specific terms incurring additional charges for the fellows, it is necessary that these charges be covered by institutional or other national funds since these are not eligible for deduction from the HFSP stipend.

The fellowship payments will be activated only after receipt of the signed acceptance form. Applicants should contact the host institution/supervisor well in advance to assure that the HFSP policy on stipends is accepted as is.

Thus far the HFSP has supported fellows from over 60 different nationalities working in many different host countries. It is impossible for us to be informed about income tax regulations of all these countries, all the more so that these regulations may change from one year to the next. This is why the HFSP Fellowship Office is not able to answer any questions regarding tax liability. **Each fellow is responsible for determining his/her own tax liability status in the host/home countries** by contacting appropriate authorities.

(2) Living, family support and child allowances

Both fellowships provide a living allowance, a research/travel allowance, plus other allowances as requested by the fellow or depending on the fellow's family situation. These allowances vary depending on the country of destination and are paid in 6 months instalments. The family support allowance is paid if the fellow has (a) child(ren) and/or is married and the spouse has no income. The marriage certificate, birth certificate(s) of the child(ren) and a declaration on the spouse's income must be submitted after notification of award. The family support allowance is paid only once per family regardless of the number of dependents. Fellows with children are also entitled to receive a child allowance for each of their children, as a contribution towards the cost of day care.

(3) Research and travel allowance

A yearly research and travel allowance is provided to cover the expenses for materials and supplies which are needed specifically for the performance of the fellow's research and which cannot be provided by the host institute. Subscription to scientific journals or books, memberships in scientific or professional organizations as well as publication costs (e.g. editing costs and page charges) are accepted as research expenses. Funds to support participation in scientific/academic meetings and travel costs associated with collaborators in different institutions are included in this allowance.

The research and travel allowance cannot be used to cover health insurance costs or to pay for (income) taxes or other institutional overheads.

(4) Language training allowance

A language training allowance may be requested for the first year. This allowance provides funds for the fellow to learn the language of the country in which the host institution is located.

(5) Parental leave

HFSP Fellows have the possibility to apply for up to 3 months paid parental leave during the course of their fellowship. The payment of the living allowance will be continued during this time and the duration of the fellowship will be extended for a corresponding period. Fellows should inform the HFSP Fellowship Office and their host supervisors/host institutions of their intention of taking a parental leave prior to the interruption.

HFSP support for parental leave cannot be taken during a deferral of the fellowship while receiving financial support from other sources. If both parents are supported by HFSP, each parent may take a portion of the leave, for a combined maximum of 3 months. Additional time necessary for child care beyond the 3 months paid leave will count as an interruption of the fellowship (without pay by the HFSP).

(6) Relocation allowance

This allowance is a fixed amount aimed at covering the costs of travel of fellow and family members and shipping of personal effects to and from host country. Fellows are entitled to receive the relocation allowance only if they move to the host institution no more than 3 months prior to the start of the HFSP fellowship. Fellows choosing to use the third year of support for repatriation will be entitled to the relocation allowance to return to their home country. Fellows remaining at the host institution may request a relocation allowance if their move takes place within 6 months after terminating the fellowship.

2009 ALLOWANCES

COUNTRY	Currency	Living allowance (per year)	Family support allowance (per year)	Child allowance (per year)	Research and travel allowance (per year)	Language training allowance (first year only)
Argentina	ARS	71,400	7,140	3,576	20,000	3,000
Australia	AUD	60,900	6,090	3,048	10,000	1,500
Austria	EUR	39,200	3,920	1,956	6,000	1,000
Belgium	EUR	39,200	3,920	1,956	6,000	1,000
Brazil	BRL	84,000	8,400	4,200	19,000	1,500
Canada	CAD	48,300	4,830	2,412	9,000	1,500
China	CNY	210,000	21,000	10,500	61,000	5,500
Denmark	DKK	347,700	34,770	17,388	57,000	8,500
Finland	EUR	46,800	4,680	2,340	6,000	1,000
France	EUR	37,600	3,760	1,884	6,000	1,000
Germany	EUR	37,800	3,780	1,896	6,000	1,000
Greece	EUR	27,800	2,780	1,392	6,000	1,000
India	INR	1,260,000	126,000	63,000	294,000	35,000
Ireland	EUR	39,900	3,990	1,992	6,000	1,000
Israel	ILS	142,100	14,210	7,104	33,000	4,000
Italy	EUR	33,500	3,350	1,680	6,000	1,000
Japan	JPY	6,027,000	602,700	301,356	982,000	159,000
Korea	KRW	30,450,000	3,045,000	1,522,500	7,445,000	771,000
Luxembourg	EUR	39,300	3,930	1,968	6,000	1,000
Mexico	MXN	264,600	26,460	13,236	73,000	7,000
New Zealand	NZD	74,100	7,410	3,708	12,000	1,500
Norway	NOK	377,900	37,790	18,900	62,000	9,500
Poland	PLN	95,000	9,500	4,740	27,000	2,000
Portugal	EUR	27,000	2,700	1,356	6,000	1,000
Spain	EUR	31,800	3,180	1,596	6,000	1,000
Sweden	SEK	429,500	42,950	21,480	70,000	11,000
Switzerland	CHF	73,200	7,320	3,660	9,000	1,300
The Netherlands	EUR	39,200	3,920	1,956	6,000	1,000
UK	GBP	24,700	2,470	1,236	4,000	750
USA	USD	39,900	3,990	1,992	6,500	1,000

The HFSPO reserves the right to review the fellowship stipend levels.

For information concerning the amounts of allowances in other countries please contact the Fellowship Office.

RELOCATION ALLOWANCE (in USD)

FROM:	TO:							
	West USA/Canada	East USA/Canada	Europe	Middle-East	Asia	Oceania	Africa	Central & South America
West USA/Canada	1,500	1,500	3,000	3,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,500
East USA/Canada	1,500	1,500	2,000	2,000	2,500	2,500	1,500	1,500
Europe	3,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	3,000
Middle-East	3,000	2,000	1,000	●	3,800	3,800	1,600	3,000
Asia	2,000	2,500	4,000	3,800	●	2,200	3,000	2,500
Oceania	2,000	2,500	4,000	3,800	2,200	●	4,000	2,000
Africa	2,000	1,500	1,000	1,600	3,000	4,000	●	3,000
Central and South America	1,500	1,500	3,000	3,000	2,500	2,000	3,000	●

- Relocation allowances from/to other areas will be calculated on a case-by-case basis.

For a family, the following calculations will be used:

Spouse: same basic allowance
 Child 2-12 years: 50% of basic allowance
 Child under 2 years: 10% of basic allowance

IX. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The online application forms will be available on our website **mid-July 2008**. Applications must be submitted electronically in time for the annual deadline.

The deadline for pre-registering on the HFSP website in order to receive a password to access the online application documents is 28 August 2008. The deadline for submitting applications for award year 2009 is 11 September 2008 at 16:00 Strasbourg time. On receipt of the password applicants must immediately login to the site and initiate their application by the same deadline.

Before submitting the application, applicants should also upload up to 6 PDF files of their lead author publications. Candidates should not upload manuscripts of papers that are not printed or in press nor mail paper copies of their publications. After submission an e-mail acknowledging receipt of the application will be sent automatically to the candidate.

Publication update

Candidates can inform the HFSP Fellowship Office via the website about any papers published or accepted for publication after 11 September 2008. Information that has already been submitted electronically must not be duplicated. **The deadline for informing the HFSP of any addition to the publication list is 4 December 2008.**

Change of address notification

Please notify the HFSP Fellowship Office promptly of any change in your address or email after submission of your application.

X. PUBLICATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Results of research funded by the HFSP must be published promptly in internationally recognized scientific journals. **An acknowledgement of support by the Human Frontier Science Program** must be included in any publication resulting from work carried out under the Fellowship, including abstracts presented to congresses. A PDF file of each publication should be sent to the HFSP Fellowship Office.

The assignment of intellectual and industrial property rights generated from research conducted under the HFSP will be determined by the parties concerned (researchers, their research organizations or institutions) on a case-by-case basis. The HFSP will not assert any claim to the intellectual and industrial property rights. When a collaborative program is conducted between laboratories in different countries, agreement on the ownership of such rights, or on the distribution of income derived from them, will be negotiated between the collaborating laboratories/institutions. The HFSP will not claim any intellectual or commercial property rights that may be generated through the research it sponsors, nor will it become involved in any disputes which may arise about the ownership of such rights.

XI. BIOETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The HFSP requires that the awardee(s) observe the highest ethical standards in conducting all research sponsored by the Organization. In accepting an award from the HFSP, awardees and host supervisors agree to conform strictly to the codes of practice, regulations and laws which govern the ethical conduct of scientific research in their own laboratories/institutions. They are solely responsible if any of these regulations are infringed. Furthermore they also agree not to undertake any research jointly with scientists in another country where experimental procedures which are forbidden in their own laboratories/institutions are permissible.

XII. LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE

The HFSP will assume no responsibility for any damage or injury to awardees in connection with research conducted under the HFSP Long-Term or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship. In accepting a fellowship award from the HFSP, awardees release the HFSP of all liability for any damage or injuries which may occur while carrying out the funded research project.