

# HFSP Short-Term Fellowships (STF)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. What are my chances of success?**

**A.** Each year we receive about 60-70 applications for the Short-Term Fellowship (STF) program. In the past the success rate varied between 30 and 40%. Given limitations in the designated budget only applications that clearly reflect the scientific objectives of the short-term fellowship program and that receive excellent to outstanding marks by the reviewers will be funded.

### **Q. What are the characteristics of successful candidates?**

**A.** Successful candidates:

- have published (or have in press) at least one paper in a high impact, peer-reviewed journal. Their major contribution to the work described in the paper(s) is acknowledged by their listing as first or principal author.
- are applying to establish a collaboration in a new area of research, or to learn new techniques or use facilities only available in the host laboratory.

If your application would not fit these characteristics, it is unlikely to be competitive and we suggest that you consider other opportunities for support.

### **Q. On what grounds were applications ineligible?**

**A.** Common reasons for eliminating or rejecting applications in award year 2008 were:

- The description of the project was too short and unfocused with poorly described objectives and/or lack of clarity with regard to the experimental plan
- Important aspects of the application were not sufficiently completed (e.g. Summary of Achievements)
- The application was an obvious continuation of a former or existing scientific collaboration or applicant was seeking support to return to a previous collaborator (exceptions to this rule are applications from former holders of HFSP Long-Term/Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships)
- Applicants had already co-authored publications with the fellowship host (i.e. the fellowship is geared towards continuing an existing collaboration)
- Applicants had no lead author publication
- Applications to extend the PhD training.

### **Q. Which research topics are not supported by the HFSP?**

**A.** Common reasons for eliminating or rejecting applications are:

- Projects centred on drug design or screening of treatment related metabolites (e.g. testing side effects of promising drug candidates, testing new high throughput equipment, changes in a fundamental physiological process after application of a known drug).
- Projects in a purely clinical/medical context with no underlying fundamental research (e.g. exercise/sport physiology, locomotion studies, muscle physiology, bone marrow and/or organ transplantation, infertility studies, genetic screening in human populations).
- Applied projects in food science, plant and animal breeding, bioremediation or environmental monitoring with minimal significance for fundamental research in the life sciences (e.g. functional food with clinical potential, crop improvement, nutraceutical benefits of plant metabolites, biocatalysis of environmental toxins).

### **Q. Are Short-Term Fellowships also open to more senior scientists?**

**A.** Generally there is no age limit to apply for this program but preference will be given to independent young researchers early in their careers.

**Q. Can I submit my application while still finishing my PhD thesis?**

A. It is possible to apply prior to having obtained the PhD degree on the condition that the applicant will have obtained the degree at the start of the fellowship. Fellows should provide a written confirmation stating that they have obtained the PhD or successfully mastered all required examinations for their degree.

**Q. I have a M.D. degree. What does equivalent level of experience in research mean?**

A. Individuals who have doctoral level degrees in the medical sciences (clinical context) must have an equivalent level of research experience as expected from a PhD recipient prior to applying. This should be stated clearly in the online application by listing years of experience in basic research and/or publications in international peer reviewed journals.

**Q. I am a national of a non-member country of HFSP. Can I apply for a STF?**

A. Yes, you may apply for a fellowship, but you must select a host laboratory in one of the [HFSP member countries](#).

**Q. I have many contributions to scientific conferences (abstracts) but no first or shared first authorship publication. Can I apply?**

A. No.

**Q. In my research area publications in conference proceedings are regarded as more important than research articles. Are these contributions accepted as publications?**

A. If the publication tradition in your discipline is different than in many of the life science areas, you should mention this in your application.

**Q. I have no lead-author article published or in press, but submitted manuscripts for publication. Am I eligible to apply for a STF?**

A. No, but you may submit your application at a later stage once you have at least one lead-author publication accepted or in press.

**Q. When can candidates apply for a STF?**

A. Applications are accepted throughout the year. The review process lasts about 3-4 months after receipt of the application. Applicants must provide adequate time for review before the start of the fellowship, as no retroactive funding is provided.

**Q. When can I start working in the host laboratory?**

A. After having received notification of award by the HFSP.

**Q. What happens if I move to the host laboratory before having received notification of award?**

A. Your fellowship will not be awarded or will be withdrawn.

**Q. Is there a deadline to start the STF?**

A. The fellowship must start within 12 months after notification of award. This is of particular importance for PhD students who want to apply prior to receiving their doctoral degree.

**Q. May individuals with training outside the life sciences, such as physicists, mathematicians, chemists, or engineers consider applying for the HFSP STF?**

A. The HFSP views interdisciplinary approaches and broad research training as being important for the career development of young scientists. Thus candidates trained in physics, chemistry, engineering, computer sciences and mathematics are greatly encouraged to apply for the ST in order to obtain training or establish collaborations in the life sciences. The HFSP also encourages biologists to use fellowship support to receive training in disciplines outside the life sciences or to start collaborations with researchers from outside the life sciences.

**Q. What are the provisions of the Short-Term Fellowship program?**

A. The Short-Term Fellowship program provides 2 weeks to 3 months of support for young scientists to establish collaboration in a new scientific area or to learn new techniques in another country. The

fellowship provides a per diem living allowance and covers the cost of the travel from and to the host laboratory. There is no support for laboratory supplies or research equipment.

**Q. What are the application procedures?**

**A.** STF online application forms and guidelines are available on the [HFSP home page](#). Applications must be submitted electronically.

**Q. What criteria are used for selecting STF awardees?**

**A.** The proposed fellowship project will be evaluated for its coherence with the scientific objectives of HFSP funded research. Applicants will be reviewed on the basis of their 1) background and accomplishments based on information provided, as well as publications 2) scientific excellence of the research project and the proposed collaboration.

**Q. Who reviews the Short-Term Fellowship applications?**

**A.** External Mail Reviewers with adequate expertise review the applications. The chairman of the Fellowship Review Committee takes the final decision concerning the awards.

**Q. What conditions are placed on STF awardees?**

**A.** Short-Term Fellows are required to provide a scientific report at the end of the fellowship.

**Q. Is a STF applicant/awardee eligible to apply for a HFSP Long-Term (LTF) or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship (CDF)?**

**A.**

- An applicant cannot submit parallel applications for an HFSP STF and a LTF/CDF to work with the same host supervisor or at the same host institution.
- A (former) STF awardee cannot apply for a LTF/CDF to return to work with the same host supervisor or in the same host institution.
- A STF applicant is eligible to apply for an HFSP LTF/CDF if the proposed project is carried out in a different country, with a different research supervisor.

**Q. Is a former HFSP LTF/CDF awardee eligible to apply for a STF?**

**A.**

- Former HFSP LT/CD Fellows are eligible to apply for a Short-Term Fellowship at the same conditions as other applicants.
- Former HFSP LT/CD fellows may utilize the Short-Term Fellowship for a visit back to the former HFSP research supervisor to complete experiments or prepare publications.

**Q. Is a (former) HFSP CDA or Research Grant holder eligible to apply for a STF?**

**A.** Former or current CDA or Research Grant holders may apply for and receive a Short-Term Fellowship.

**Q. Can I receive other funding concurrently with the HFSP Short-Term Fellowship to carry out the proposed project?**

**A.** The HFSP fellowship cannot be combined with funding from another organization granted for the same visit at the host institution.

**Q. Can I receive a salary from my institution of affiliation during the HFSP fellowship?**

**A.** Yes, during the fellowship you may continue to receive the salary at your home institution.

**Q. Can the HFSP fellowship be used to extend the visit in the host laboratory?**

**A.** No, the STF cannot be used to precede or follow a visit at the host institution in order to extend the stay there.

**Q. Is the number of STF awards limited?**

**A.** Yes, individuals are limited to 2 fellowship awards each in a different country with a different research supervisor.