HFSP LONG-TERM FELLOWSHIPS

For applicants with a PhD on a biological topic

APPLICATION GUIDELINES
Award Year 2023

Deadlines:

Initiation of a Letter of Intent by 1 pm (ET) by May 18, 2022 via:
https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=-1
(registration portal opens March 18, 2022)

Submission of a Letter of Intent by 1 pm (ET) by May 19, 2022 via:
https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=-1

Submission of full proposals for invited applicants by 1 pm (ET) by September 29, 2022 via ProposalCentral

Nota bene: at the full proposal stage, host supervisor(s) and referees must have submitted their sections before the applicant can submit their application.

Applicants should read the guidelines carefully, in particular the scientific objectives of the program and the eligibility criteria. If in doubt about your eligibility or the appropriateness of the proposed research project, you should consult the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) or contact the Fellowship Office (fellow@hfsp.org).

Applicants who hold a doctoral degree from a non-biological discipline and who have not worked in the life sciences before should apply for a HFSP Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship (CDF).

12, quai Saint-Jean
67080 STRASBOURG Cedex – FRANCE
E-mail: fellow@hfsp.org Website: https://www.hfsp.org
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OVERVIEW

Mission and Objectives of the HFSP fellowship program
The Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP) strives to strengthen open scientific inquiry by initiating international collaborative, interdisciplinary and cutting-edge basic research in the life sciences.

Young scientists, driven by adventurous new ideas that may give our view on the world new perspectives, are selected by an expert committee on the basis of the excellence of their research proposal, so that they can test their hypotheses and experiment with new methods and approaches. HFSP is committed to supporting original, frontier-type research to advance current knowledge and opens new pathways for innovation.

HFSP encourages talented young scientists to think broadly; to stretch their work beyond the scope of expertise gained through their PhD and to encounter a new research environment by moving to a new country and working in a different discipline or research area. HFSP enables this transition for carefully chosen highly talented postdocs with the most original and inspiring new research projects by allowing them to move to the best research institutions and laboratories in the world.

The expectations on our postdoctoral fellows are high: incorporate novel investigative approaches at the frontiers of the life sciences and disrupt existing paradigms and established ways of thinking.

HFSP Fellowship Awardees stand out through their utmost dedication, engagement and commitment to innovative science.

The HFSP postdoctoral fellowship program provides a unique opportunity for the most talented young researchers to embark on a new journey that will shape their career trajectory and allows them to pursue their dream of being recognized for research excellence.

HFSP offers two types of postdoctoral fellowships, for 3 years:

- **Long-Term Fellowships** (these Application Guidelines), and
- **Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships** (there are separate Application Guidelines for these here).

Long-Term Fellowships are for applicants with a PhD on a biological topic who want to embark on a novel and frontier project focussing on the life sciences. Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships are for applicants who hold a doctoral degree from a non-biological discipline (e.g. physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering or computer sciences) and who have not worked in the life sciences before. The Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship Application Guidelines can be found here.

Unique Features of HFSP Long-Term Fellowships (LTF)
HFSP Long-Term Fellowships are for applicants to embark on a challenging research project that will broaden their expertise by proposing a project which is significantly different from their previous PhD or postdoctoral work.

HFSP Long-Term fellowships offer
- a two-step application procedure with a fast review result for the initial Letter of Intent stage in less than four months.
- funding for exploratory research at the frontiers of the life sciences without the need to present preliminary data.
- opportunities for establishing and expanding your professional network by connecting with experts from neighbouring disciplines to enable important discoveries in biology.
- exciting professional experiences by moving to a new country and working in a different research environment.
- free choice of the host institution that corresponds to your research interests and project requirements.
- advanced opportunities for career planning by using the final year of the HFSP support in a flexible manner to plan your next career step either by moving back to your home country or by moving to another country.
Scientific scope of the HFSP postdoctoral fellowship program

HFSP attaches highest importance to novelty, scientific merit, internationality, and interdisciplinarity. The postdoctoral fellowship program supports potentially transformative, cutting edge research to investigate important problems at the frontiers of the life sciences. Projects should challenge existing paradigms by using novel approaches and techniques. Fellowship proposals for high-risk/high-reward projects are encouraged and preliminary results are not required.

HFSP postdoctoral fellowships aim to expose awardees to new theories and methods which complement or build on their previous experience and expertise.

Research projects may range from biological functions at the molecular and cellular level up to the level of biological systems, including cognitive functions. All levels of analysis are supported: for example, studies on genes and individual molecules, intracellular networks, intercellular associations in tissues and organs, and networks underlying the complex functions of entire organisms, populations, or ecosystems.

The proposed research

HFSP funds only basic research. The International Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSPO)’s mission is to “fund basic research focused on the elucidation of the sophisticated and complex mechanisms of living organisms for the benefit of all humankind, through international cooperation”.

The quality of the proposed research is judged against specific criteria and applicants should study these assessment criteria that can be found here, as they develop their applications.

Successful Long-Term Fellowship proposals

- incorporate novel investigative approaches at the frontiers of the life sciences with the potential to disrupt existing paradigms and current ways of thinking. The results of the research are expected to have an impact beyond the immediate field.
- demonstrate the change of field of the applicant and demonstrate the ability to formulate a research project with a frontier-extending, risky nature and describe how the applicant’s unique training and special skill set will allow them to address biological problems in a novel and distinct way. The applicant may consult with the host supervisor in the development and writing of the proposal, but the project should be primarily the idea of the applicant.
- provide a prospect for novel directions in the host laboratory.
- clearly show how the proposed project is different from the applicant’s research to date (PhD or previous postdoctoral positions) and how it will help the applicant to learn new research approaches and methodologies.

HFSP does not fund

1. Projects of a purely applied nature. For example:
   - projects of a primarily clinical and pharmaceutical nature; those projects are only considered if they allow new insights into fundamental biological mechanisms of a disease.
   - projects aimed at developing methods of diagnosis or treatment, including the search for potential drug targets or advanced trials of drugs under development.
   - applied research in engineering, biotechnology, or nanotechnology, that does not address a fundamental biological problem.
   - projects directly concerned with agricultural problems such as crop yield or breeding and environmental problems such as pollution, or forestry.

2. Research aimed at developing novel methods or the study of analogs or models of biological activity unless these methods allow new biological questions to be answered in the context of the aim of the HFSP to fund fundamental research.

3. Observational projects or systematic screening approaches.

4. Large-scale data collection studies or large-scale studies on populations or ecosystems. However, studies of the mechanisms of species-species interactions or their co-evolution are eligible.

5. Research in for-profit environments (but collaborations are allowed).
Proposals representing standard or incremental approaches, obvious next steps in the field or for the host laboratory (routine projects) or proposals that do not represent a significant change in research direction from previous work of the applicant (i.e. PhD thesis or previous postdoctoral work) are less likely to receive funding.

APPLICATION RULES, INCLUDING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

General
There is one competition per year for HFSP postdoctoral fellowships.

Only one HFSP postdoctoral fellowship Letter of Intent application is allowed in each competition year. However, unsuccessful candidates can apply in subsequent years, provided they still meet all eligibility criteria.

An HFSP postdoctoral fellowship may only be held once.

All applicants must propose a change in country and in research topic.

Nationality
Applicants may be from any country and of any nationality.

A candidate who is a national of one of the HFSP member countries can apply to work in a research institution in any country. HFSP member countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus (EU part only), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Republic of Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

A candidate who is not a national of one of the HFSP members (see list above) can apply to work only in a research institution in one of the member countries.

Candidates cannot apply for a fellowship to work in the country of which they are a national, even if their pre- or post-doctoral studies were completed abroad and/or the PhD was obtained in another country.

Candidates with dual nationalities may apply to work in a research institution in one of the countries for which they have a dual nationality provided they have never lived or studied in this country or they have left this country during their early childhood (normally before formal schooling). In such cases applicants need to contact the Fellowship Office and claim an exemption.

Host country
Candidates must propose to work in a country different to the one in which they did their PhD research or previous post-doctoral research. That is, they cannot propose to take up the HFSP postdoctoral fellowship in the country where they obtained their PhD, even if they are not a national of that country. They can also not apply to move from one laboratory to another in the same country.

Candidates must not have worked (consecutively or not) in their proposed host country for more than 12 months at the activation date of the fellowship.

The combined duration of all research-related stays in the host country (e.g. research positions, collaborations, internships, Master/PhD work, time spent either as a visiting scientist or as a technician, etc.) is taken into account.

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1 For those institutions that are not classified as national, i.e. international or extraterritorial institutions such as EMBL, ICPT or ICGEB, the country in which the laboratory is located will be considered the host country.
Host institution
Fellows must begin their fellowship by activating it between April 1, 2023 and January 1, 2024. Candidates may have spent up to 12 months in their proposed host institution at the activation date of the fellowship. Also note that the total time spent in the host country (including previous research-related stays) may not exceed 12 months by the time the fellowship is activated (see above).

For-profit research environments are not eligible host institutions.

Host supervisor
Applicants cannot propose to work with:

- former scientific collaborators
- former research supervisors
- any other scientist with whom they have worked or published.

Applications will be ineligible if,

- The candidate has spent more than 12 months (consecutively or not) with the proposed host supervisor by the time the fellowship is activated. This is regardless of any institution changes by the host supervisor.

Applicants should note that host supervisors can endorse only one fellowship application (LTF or CDF) per competition. The proposed host supervisor may, however, concurrently mentor HFSP fellows from previous award years, and/or be part of an HFSP Research Grant team (Program or Early Career Grant, previously known as Young Investigator Grant).

Doctoral degree
A doctoral degree (usually a PhD) must be conferred by the start of the fellowship and by December 31, 2023 at the latest, but is not required at the time of application.

If already conferred, the doctoral degree must have been conferred within 3 years prior to the submission deadline of the full proposal, i.e. between September 29, 2019 and September 29, 2022.

The “conferral date” of the official doctorate documentation will be taken as the date of conferral.

Exceptions are possible in some circumstances for post-PhD career interruptions such as illness, parental leave, providing full time care for an immediate family member, military or civil service. Unemployment and work outside science are not considered eligible interruption periods. Eligible interruption periods will not be counted; the remaining duration between the PhD conferral and the submission of an application in September 2022 must be less than 3 years.

Research proposal
Applicants must propose a research topic different to that of their PhD and previous postdoctoral work.

The proposal must align with the mission and objectives of HFSP and the scientific scope of the HFSP Fellowship program (see above).

The proposal must be for a basic research project. Your application will be removed from consideration if, in the opinion of HFSP, it is not for basic research (see above for a list of research that HFSP does not fund).

- The Letter of Intent should succinctly summarize the scientific content of the planned project.
  - The Proposed Research Plan (section 6 in Proposal Central) should briefly outline
    - the background of the proposed research project
    - the aims of the proposed research project
    - the central hypotheses
    - the experimental system
- conclusions

Please structure the text in section 6 according to the above listed type of information.

The Proposed Research Plan is limited to 3,000 characters (including spaces).

- The Full Proposal should introduce the problem in more detail. It should also describe the innovative and novel components of the project, the expected impact on the field and the expected outcomes of the research. Applicants are asked to provide details on the experimental design and study system so that the reviewers can assess its originality, feasibility and how it will diversify and contribute to their training in research. Applicants should also describe how the proposed project differs from their previous work, which novel techniques and methods they will learn and explain their reasons for choosing the proposed host laboratory.

Publications
Applicants must have at least one lead author publication by the submission deadline of the Letter of Intent which can be a manuscript (i) published in a recognized OA preprint repository, or, (ii) accepted for publication, (iii) in press or (iv) already published by a peer reviewed journal.

Submission of a fellowship proposal at the full proposal stage however is only possible with a published research article according to points (ii) to (iv) above. HFSP only accepts full-length original research publications in English that were peer reviewed and for which the applicant must either be the single author, first author or joint first author. In a joint first author paper the applicant does not need to be listed in the first position, but the equal contribution of the authors must be clearly stated in all cases.

If the standard publication practice in your laboratory or your research field makes first authorship impossible (e.g. alphabetical listing of authors), these circumstances must be explained in the “Additional Comments” section of the application. HFSPO also recognizes that publication practices differ across scientific fields (e.g. in physical sciences) and those cases should also be explained in the “Additional Comments” section. Review articles and patents are not taken into account.

Listings of preprint repositories are available through the online resources of ASAPbio (https://asapbio.org/) or the Open Access Directory (http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Main_Page)

If you have queries about any of these eligibility criteria, please contact the Fellowship Office at fellow@hfsp.org.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Note: Please keep your intended host supervisor and institution aware of your application and check the institution’s policies for postdoctoral fellows and visa requirements for the proposed host country.

The application process involves two steps: an initial Letter of Intent statement which will be peer reviewed and the results communicated as quickly as possible. The top applicants (approximately 15-20%) will be invited to submit a full proposal to be again peer reviewed.

Letter of Intent (to be submitted by May 19, 2022)
Applicants submit a ‘Letter of Intent’ (LOI) which must contain the following information:

- title of proposal
- keywords of proposed research plan
- Proposed Research Plan: summary of the scientific content of the proposed project, including a short description of the background, aims, hypotheses, experimental approach, and conclusions (see above: Research Proposal/LOI)
- personal information
- CV
• field and title of PhD
• information on the proposed host supervisor and host institution
• disclosure on previous collaborations and publications with the host supervisor (if any)
• confirmation that the host supervisor is aware of and supports the application
• publication list

No other documents are required. Neither the host supervisor nor the host institution need to sign or access the LOI or provide any further information at this stage.

The online application platform for submitting your fellowship proposal is available at [https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=1](https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=1) and it will be open from March 18, 2022 onwards.

The Letters of Intent will be assessed for eligibility and undergo review (see the following section).

After the review of the Letters of Intent, all applicants will be contacted by HFSP and will be informed if they are invited to submit a full proposal or not.

**Full Proposal (to be submitted by September 29, 2022)**

Note that you will be contacted by HFSP if you are invited to progress to this second stage.

Full proposals must contain the following information:

• a summary of previous work (the same as the short summary of the LOI)
• a summary of the proposed research project (the same as the short summary of the LOI)
• a detailed research plan of the proposed project
• information on why and how the proposed project is a significant change from previous work
• information on why and how the proposed project is of a frontier nature
• information on why the chosen host lab is a good fit
• information on how the applicant will benefit from being in the host lab (e.g. unique infrastructure, mentoring, exposure to new techniques etc.)
• an updated publication list
• recommendation letters from two referees
• a recommendation letter from the host supervisor, explaining how the proposed research plan is a new direction for the host lab and a significant change from the applicant’s prior work (either during PhD or postdoctoral training); the host supervisor should also explain how and why their lab is particularly suited to supporting the aims and missions of HFSP to enable the most talented young researchers to embark on a frontier research project that will shape their career trajectory; the host supervisor should also outline a mentorship plan for the applicant.
• PDF files of lead-author publications

No other documents are required.

Note that HFSP will also seek agreement from the potential host institution that it is willing to accept the applicant under the HFSPO rules

**Summary of important dates and deadlines**

All applications (LOIs and Full Proposals) must be submitted via: [https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=1](https://proposalcentral.com/ProposalGI.asp?SectionID=9703&ProposalID=1)

• March 18, 2022 the HFSP application portal will open for Letter of Intent applications.
• May 18, 2022 at 1 pm (ET): Deadline for initiating LOI applications.
• May 19, 2022 at 1 pm (ET): Deadline for submitting LOI applications.
• September 29, 2022 at 1 pm (ET): Deadline for submitting invited Full Proposals.
REVIEW PROCESS

Eligibility assessment
All Letters of Intent are checked for compliance with formal eligibility criteria by HFSP in accord with the criteria above. In addition, LOIs are screened by the three scientific directors of HFSP and members of the Fellowship Review Committee for alignment with the objectives of HFSP and its Fellowship schemes (e.g. basic, interdisciplinary research).

Ineligible LOIs or those with research proposals that do not align with the scientific scope of HFSP will not be sent for review and the applicant will be informed.

Eligible LOIs will then be peer-reviewed by the HFSP Fellowship Review Committee (see below).

Please contact the Fellowship Office prior to submitting your application with any questions regarding eligibility or on the alignment of the proposed research with the scientific scope of the HFSP Fellowship program (fellow@hfsp.org). You may also consult the FAQ section.

Scientific review

Review of Letters of Intent
Eligible LOIs will initially be assessed by two Fellowship Review Committee members who will use a letter score from A to D to provide a component score for the proposal and the applicant. In cases in which the two reviewers score significantly different from each other, applications will be sent to a third reviewer.

Letter score aggregates will be used to establish a first ranking that will result in a first cut-off. HFSP then invites the top LOIs to submit a full proposal. Approximately the top 15-20% of eligible LOIs will be invited.

Review of Full Proposals
The Full Proposals will be confirmed for eligibility and forwarded to the Fellowship Review Committee for evaluation.

The applications will be sent to the same two (or three) Review Committee members who reviewed the Letter of Intent, plus to 2-3 external mail reviewers with suitable expertise. The Review Committee members will rate each of the proposals assigned to them again, now also taking into account the reviews from the mail reviewers.

For the Full Proposals, Review Committee members assign numerical scores from 1-10 based on the following criteria:

- Excellence of the proposed research plan: based on the scientific originality and novel character of the proposal; potential impact of the project beyond the immediate field; whether the proposal challenges existing paradigms and whether it is going to disrupt the current way of thinking; whether it addresses an important new problem or a barrier to progress in an established field; level of intellectual contribution of the applicant to the proposed research project; a clear departure from the previous research is necessary.

- Excellence of the applicant: based on the readiness of the applicant to embrace the risk of a frontier-extending project and to step beyond the scope of expertise gained through previous work; potential of the applicant to succeed in their new field and project; matching of the background and experience of the applicant to the need of the proposal.

- Suitability of the host lab and environment: Is the chosen host lab a good fit for the proposed project and does it provide the best opportunities for the applicant to achieve their scientific goals? Does the letter of support show clear commitment and willingness of mentorship from the host supervisor?

The Fellowship Review Committee then meets in late January or early February, 2023. At the meeting, each full proposal will be discussed, and each of the original reviewers defends or revises their rating. The numerical scores of the original reviewers are used as a basis for suggesting a final numerical score for each proposal. Based on the discussions during the committee meeting, each review committee member provides a numerical
score from which an average score for each proposal is calculated, to generate a ranked list of proposals recommended for funding.

For details on the review process and the assessment criteria and scoring guidelines please refer to the document called ‘HFSP Postdoctoral Fellowships: Information on review process and assessment criteria’, which can be found here.

Notification of outcome
Applicants are notified of the outcome of their applications once internal HFSP formalities are complete (usually towards the end of March 2023).

The application and selection processes are confidential. Fellowship Review Committee members are also bound by confidentiality.

SUMMARY OF HFSP CONDITIONS OF AWARD AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If you are offered a postdoctoral fellowship by HFSP, you will be sent the detailed Conditions of Award, which you and your institution will be required to sign before the activation of the award.

The following is a summary only.

Administrative
The HFSP Long-Term Fellowship is awarded for three years. It cannot be renewed.

HFSP administers all fellowship allowances through the host institution.

The fellowship award consists of a living allowance and a research and travel allowance.

The host institution agrees to pay the fellow the full living allowance. However, legally compulsory deductions may be made (e.g., for taxation, social security charges, health insurance or pension contributions), if required under legislation in the jurisdiction.

No other deductions are allowed. The host institution is not permitted to deduct any additional charges from the fellowship such as institutional overheads or bench fees from any of the fellowship allowances.

The living allowance takes into account the difference in cost of living between countries. Applicants may gain an understanding of the living allowances in the Appendix. The offer of a fellowship will specify the relevant amounts.

The research and travel allowance part of the fellowship award is intended as a small grant to the fellow to spend in accord with HFSP regulations.

HFSP fellows with children are entitled to receive a child allowance and this is set at 10% of the applicable Living Allowance of year 1.

HFSP fellows are eligible to apply for up to 3 months paid parental leave for children born/adopted during the award period.

A relocation allowance may be provided as a fixed amount to assist with moving costs.

Fellows must begin their fellowship between April 1, 2023 and January 1, 2024.

HFSP fellows cannot concurrently hold an HFSP Fellowship and another paid employment position (i.e., a position supported by a salary) or another paid fellowship from another organization. However, the HFSP Fellowship can be supplemented from other sources (e.g., from a host supervisor’s grant or from institutional funds).

HFSP fellows may apply for and hold additional research grants themselves, provided those funds will not be used as a salary for the fellows and are to assist their conduct of the Fellowship research project as presented in the fellow’s successful application.
HFSP fellows must devote themselves entirely to their research project in the host institution and may not engage in any other paid activity without prior agreement of HFSP.

Fellows may interrupt ('defer') HFSP support for up to two years after having completed at least one year of work in the proposed host laboratory. During the deferral period, fellows may change host laboratory and/or host supervisor, but they need to continue working on the HFSP-funded project. Any change in host laboratory and/or host supervisor needs prior approval of the review committee members.

In the third year of the fellowship, fellows may choose to continue work in the host laboratory, to return to their or their spouse’s/partner’s home country, or to move to another HFSP member country.

Generally, it is not possible to change the host supervisor and/or the host laboratory (exception: during a deferral) or the research project, except for the third year of the fellowship.

Please note:
- HFSP does not provide additional funds to cover health insurance costs, pension contributions or other benefits.
- Fellows should investigate their tax liabilities and such other costs as visa application.
- The host institution may deduct from the stated total allowances any and all legally compulsory fees that the university is required to deduct under a national law.
- Publications arising from HFSP fellowship must acknowledge HFSP support.

**Intellectual property**

HFSP will not assert any claim to intellectual and industrial property rights.

**Research misconduct and the responsible conduct of research**

HFSP expects high standards in the conduct of research by its awardees. The HFSP Policy on Research Misconduct and the Responsible Conduct of Research can be found here (https://www.hfsp.org/funding/hfsp-policies/hfsp-policy-research-misconduct-and-responsible-conduct-research).

**Protection of personal data**

HFSP is committed to safeguarding your personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) on data protection and privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) and transfers of personal data outside the EU and EEA areas. The HFSP Privacy Policy explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about you as an applicant for the HFSP Fellowship program or as any other person that interacts with our Organization. This Policy also explains how we collect, store and use personal information in connection with you if you are a successful candidate.
APPENDIX. HFSPO TABLES OF ALLOWANCES

Note that these allowances are interim and may be subject to change through the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees before a final offer of a HFSP Postdoctoral Fellowship is made to successful applicants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Gross yearly living allowance Year 1</th>
<th>Gross yearly living allowance Year 2</th>
<th>Gross yearly living allowance Year 3</th>
<th>Yearly child allowance (per child)</th>
<th>Yearly R/T allowance</th>
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### 2023 Relocation allowance (in USD)

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

Fellows, their spouses/partners and their children are all eligible to receive the relocation allowance according to the following calculation:

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