

## Distinguished International Scientist Collaboration Award Program Description and Application Instructions

Application Deadline: Open | Award Notification: 6 weeks after submission

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), as part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offers a competitive senior researcher collaboration opportunity for eligible NIDA-funded senior researchers and their colleagues from outside the United States. NIDA sponsors the Distinguished International Scientist Collaboration Award (DISCA) program to advance scientific understanding of drug abuse and addiction through cooperation on new research methods and techniques; data analysis; collaborative research reports or proposals; and basic, clinical, and applied research. Applicants will propose innovative collaborations that can produce outcomes—such as a new investigative finding, scientific publication, or research grant proposal—and that fall within the NIDA research mission.

The DISCA program allows collaborators to apply to work together in the most suitable location for their joint research collaboration. There are two program options:

- DISCA** This option is appropriate when the best location to conduct the research exchange visit is in the United States at the NIDA grantee's institution, which will be known as the host institution.
- USDISCA** This option is appropriate when the best location to conduct the research exchange visit is outside the United States at the non-U.S. senior researcher's institution, which will be known as the host institution.

Successful candidates will be highly qualified researchers, and priority will be given to new collaborations.

### Program Requirements

- The U.S. NIDA-funded senior researcher and the non-U.S. senior researcher must each have a:
  - Minimum of 7 years' experience in drug abuse research beyond the postdoctoral level.
  - Documented scientific record that includes peer-reviewed publications.
- The U.S. NIDA-funded senior researcher must be a current NIDA grantee throughout the award period.
- The non-U.S. senior researcher must be a citizen or permanent resident of a country other than the United States.
- The research exchange visit should be planned to be:
  - At least 4 weeks in length.
  - Focused on finishing a project that could not be completed without face-to-face consultation.
  - Completed within 12 months of the award announcement.

### Program Stipend

The award provides for a one-time stipend of up to \$8,000US to offset the cost of round-trip air travel and living expenses incurred during the research exchange visit.

### **Application Instructions**

A complete application requires contributions from the U.S. NIDA-funded senior researcher, the non-U.S. senior researcher, and the host institution. Application contributors should note the following information:

1. Incomplete applications will *NOT* be reviewed.
2. The application form and all accompanying materials must be written in English only.
3. Each researcher will need to complete his or her respective sections of the application form.
4. A complete application must include an Abstract and a Project Statement. The project statement should be well thought out, specific, and informative, and it should avoid redundancy.
  - For DISCA applications, the non-U.S. researcher completes the abstract and project statement with input from the U.S. NIDA-funded researcher.
  - For USDISCA applications, the U.S. NIDA-funded researcher completes the abstract and project statement with input from the non-U.S. researcher.
5. For DISCA applications, the U.S. NIDA-funded researcher must obtain and submit a letter from his or her institution confirming the institution as a U.S. Department of State designated sponsor authorized to issue Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. Non-U.S. researchers must obtain a J-1 visa to complete the short-term exchange visit in the United States.
6. A complete application must include a formal Letter of Invitation from the host institution. The letter must be issued on the host institution's letterhead and signed by the department chair or dean of the host institution. A signature from the collaborating researcher is not acceptable. The letter of invitation must:
  - a. Describe the institutional resources available to support the research exchange visit (including, but not limited to, laboratory or office space, use of computers and software, biological specimens, supplies, and libraries).
  - b. Outline the relationship between the research exchange visit and ongoing collaboration between the two scientists or institutions.
7. The applicants must comply with the U.S. Government regulations on the conduct of research supported by NIH. For a complete discussion of NIH regulations, consult the:
  - a. NIH Grants Policy Statement at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf> particularly Part II, section 4, Public Policy Requirements, Objectives, and Other Appropriation Mandates.
  - b. Part III, Section 2 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service Grant Application, PHS 398 Instructions at <https://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>.
8. The Certification and Acceptance sections of the application form must be completed and signed by each collaborating researcher before the application is submitted. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

## **Review Criteria**

Applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Successful candidates will be highly qualified research collaborators who meet the program requirements as identified earlier in this document.

Priority will be given to new initiatives, to projects demonstrating defined support from the U.S. or foreign host institution, or to proposals that will enhance research skills in the United States or the non-U.S. senior researcher's home country. A successful application will:

- Include a specific purpose that clearly falls within the NIDA research mission.
- Have the potential to advance scientific understanding of drug abuse and addiction (as assessed by significance, approach, innovation, and qualifications).
- Be likely to produce a product or other outcome within 1 year such as a new investigative finding, scientific publication, or research grant proposal.

**Applications and supporting materials are to be submitted electronically to:**

DISCA Program  
NIDA International Program  
Email: [ip@nida.nih.gov](mailto:ip@nida.nih.gov)

## **Assistance**

For assistance, contact the NIDA International Program at [ip@nida.nih.gov](mailto:ip@nida.nih.gov).