

NIDA–Inserm Drug Abuse Research Fellowship

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The NIDA–Inserm Postdoctoral Drug Abuse Research Fellowship provides a unique opportunity for U.S. and French scientists to obtain postdoctoral training with French and U.S. mentors, respectively. The binational postdoctoral research fellowships are cosponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) International Program and Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (Inserm).

NIDA may support up to two awards for French scientists to work in the United States with a current NIDA grantee, and Inserm may support up to two awards for U.S. scientists to work in France with a mentor at an Inserm research unit or center.

NIDA–Inserm Fellowships are awarded for a 6- to 12-month continuous period of time. The fellowship may be renewable once (after evaluation of the first fellowship period). Successful candidates will be required to agree to complete the full 6- or 12-month fellowship period.

About The Fellowship

Each fellow benefits from an intensive research training experience designed to enhance the fellow's ability to conduct independent research upon return to his or her home country.

French scientists spending their fellowship in the United States will receive an annual stipend of \$47,484USD for living and personal expenses and \$7,750USD supplemental funding to cover the cost of personal health insurance and professional development activities. The fellowship also provides air travel, for the fellow only, at the beginning and end of the fellowship.

U.S. scientists spending their fellowship in France will be employed by Inserm under a temporary contract providing an annual salary between 34,200€ and 45,600€ (depending upon the number of years of postdoctoral experience), including personal health insurance. The fellowship also provides air travel, for the fellow only, at the beginning and end of the fellowship.

Applicant Eligibility

French applicants must:

- Hold an earned doctoral degree in medicine or biomedical sciences.
- Have completed postdoctoral research demonstrating the ability to engage in independent research.
- Be a citizen or permanent resident of France.
- Live and work in France at the time the application is submitted.
- Be eligible for a J-1 visa to enter the United States.
- Be proficient in written and spoken English.

U.S. applicants must:

- Hold an earned doctoral degree in medicine or biomedical sciences.
- Have completed postdoctoral research demonstrating the ability to engage in independent research.
- Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.
- Live and work in the United States at the time the application is submitted.
- Be eligible for a temporary-stay visa to work in France.

Mentor Eligibility

Fellows must conduct their research with an eligible mentor at an eligible institution.

French mentors:

- Must be conducting research in computational neuroscience, bioinformatics, statistics, genetics, epigenetics, neurobiology, or clinical trials in drug abuse and addiction.
- Must be a researcher with one of the agencies included in the *List of Inserm's Host Laboratories and Research Programs*.

For additional assistance identifying a French mentor, please email the Département des Partenariats et des Relations Exterieures–DPRE, Inserm at inserm-usa@ambascience-usa.org.

U.S. mentors:

- Should be a current NIDA-funded researcher (extramural or intramural) conducting research in computational neuroscience, bioinformatics, statistics, genetics, or epigenetics related to addiction whose project will be active throughout the proposed fellowship period. Researchers funded by other NIH Institutes may be considered on a case by case basis.
- Should be a researcher included in the *List of Prospective NIDA-funded Mentors*.
- Must work at an institution that sponsors the U.S. Department of State “J” Exchange Visitor Program and can prepare and issue the requisite Form DS-2019 for the NIDA–Inserm applicant and his/her dependents.

Preparing To Contact A Potential Mentor

First, write a brief summary of your goals for the fellowship. Outline your proposed research question, the scientific methods you will use to answer that question, and the data needed to complete your investigation. List the skills, techniques, or methods you wish to learn or improve during your fellowship. This exercise will help you identify search terms you will use to identify potential mentors.

- Review peer-reviewed publications indexed by PubMed at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>
- Refer to the research interests included in the NIDA and Inserm mentor listings

- Consult the listing of previous postdoctoral fellows and mentors at https://www.drugabuse.gov/international/fellowships-postdoctoral-training#postdoc_fellow_mentor
- Search the RePORTER database of research projects supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at <https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm>.

Before contacting a potential mentor, you should:

- Update your resume or curriculum vitae (CV) to ensure your information is current.
- Confirm your eligibility for the fellowship by emailing the NIDA International Program at ip@nida.nih.gov.
- Learn more about the potential mentor you've identified, including scientific discipline and specific research interests, by reviewing the potential mentor's publications, research background, and professional website.

When emailing a potential mentor:

- Discuss how your proposed research project is compatible with the mentor's research.
- Provide information about your eligibility, educational and professional background (include your CV and list of publications), and the goals of your fellowship and research project.
- Do not contact more than two or three potential mentors at the same time.

Preparing The Application

The application is now submitted through the online application system. A complete application requires careful and thorough coordination between the applicant and mentor. The applicant and selected mentor should review the following information:

1. **Incomplete applications will NOT be reviewed.**
2. Applications must be written in English language only.
3. The sample application form, available on the NIDA International Program's website, shows the type of information needed to complete the online application.
4. When starting the online application, the applicant can select only one type of application (NIDA-Inserm, INVEST, INVEST/CTN, or U.S.–Mexico Prevention) for which to be considered.
5. The applicant will be required to upload a full research plan developed in cooperation with and approved by the selected mentor.
6. The mentor must complete the mentor online application.
7. When completing the online application, the mentor will be required to upload his or her Mentor Statement.
8. The "Certification and Acceptance" section of the Applicant's and the Mentor's application must be completed before the online application can be successfully submitted.

9. Once the online application is successfully submitted
 - a. **For U.S. applicants**, the NIDA International Program will forward all documentation to the Inserm Department of National and Foreign Affairs (DPRE). Inserm will coordinate the review of applications successfully submitted by applicants and their French mentor.
 - b. **For French applicants**, the NIDA International Program will coordinate the review of applications successfully submitted by applicants and their U.S. mentor.

U.S. Mentor Institution as A Sponsor for The U.S. State Department “J” Exchange Visitor Program

For French applicants, the U.S. mentor will obtain, from his or her institution, a letter confirming the institution as a sponsor for the U.S. State Department “J” Exchange Visitor Program (J-visa). The letter should also confirm the institution’s eligibility to prepare and issue the requisite Form DS-2019 for the French applicant and his/her accompanying dependents, if a fellowship is awarded to the applicant. By the application deadline the mentor institution J-visa letter must be emailed directly to the NIDA International Program at ip@nida.nih.gov.

The Applicant’s Professional References

Using the Reference Report Form downloaded from the website, the applicant should complete Part I of the form. The applicant should provide a copy of the Reference Report form to his or her two professional references (preferably one from the home country supervisor and one from a research colleague).

Each reference will complete Part II of the Reference Report including the rating scale. Each reference must also attach a letter of reference, on institution/organization letterhead, explaining his or her association with the applicant. The letter should also comment on the applicant’s training and experience, including other areas as appropriate. Identify strengths and weaknesses that should be considered in evaluating the applicant’s potential for a research career.

- For French applicants, each reference must email the completed Reference Report and letter of reference by the application deadline directly to the NIDA International Program at ip@nida.nih.gov.
- For U.S. applicants, each reference must email the completed Reference Report and letter of reference by the application deadline directly to the Inserm at inserm-usa@ambascience-usa.org.

Submitting The Application and Supporting Documentation

Application Deadline: April 1

Notification of Award: June 1

Each applicant and mentor will need to complete all sections of the electronic application form and upload the required documentation (e.g., fellowship research plan, mentor statement) by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time U.S. on April 1**.

By the application deadline, the professional references with letters of recommendation and the mentor institution J-visa letter must be emailed to the appropriate agencies as previously indicated.

For More Information

- <http://www.international.drugabuse.gov>
- Email: ip@nida.nih.gov

OR

inserm-usa@ambascience-usa.org

Preparing Your NIDA–Inserm Fellowship Research Plan

The Research Plan is the most important part of the application. The plan 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 mentor while preparing the Research Plan. The 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 3 pages** not including literature citations. 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:
 - a. The research design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims
 - b. Sampling design, if conducting primary data collection
 - c. The analytic plan detailing the statistical approach to addressing the hypotheses
 - d. Any precautions necessary for procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel
 - e. Potential limitations of the proposed project
 - f. The timeline for completion of the proposed investigation
 - g. The contributions that this project will make to the field of drug abuse research.
4. **NIH Regulations on the Conduct of Research.** Research conducted in the United States as part of a NIDA–Inserm Fellowship is subject to the same U.S. Federal regulations, policies, guidelines, and review considerations as are all National Institutes of Health (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](#) or Part III, Section 2 of the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service Grant Application, PHS 398 Instructions*.

5. **Inserm Regulations on the Conduct of Research.** Research conducted in France as part of a NIDA–Inserm Fellowship is subject to the same French and European regulations, policies, guidelines and review considerations as are all research projects and activities performed within and/or supported by Inserm. 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 Inserm regulations, consult the Inserm website at:

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/recherche>

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/recherche-pre-clinique>

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/ogm>

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/importation-et-exportation-d-elements-issus-du-corps-humain>

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/conservation-et-preparation-des-elements-issus-du-corps-humain>

<http://extranet.inserm.fr/informations-juridiques/traitement-des-donnees-personnelles>

6. **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 and Inserm's research missions, adequacy of the applicant's education and experience to conduct the proposed research, likelihood that the proposed research can be completed within the proposed timeline, and compatibility of the 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 and experiences will be gained in the process of working with the mentor, why that proposed 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 fellowship period.