

News from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)¹

WHAT RESEARCH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARE SPONSORED BY NIGMS AT THE NIH? HOW CAN I GET INFORMATION ABOUT THIS AND OTHER POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAMS AT THE NIH?

The NIGMS sponsors a unique fellowship program called the Pharmacology Research Associate (PRAT) Program. The PRAT Program is a competitive postdoctoral program designed to enable fellows to pursue research in one of the many laboratories of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is intended for individuals with backgrounds in the basic or clinical sciences who wish to obtain advanced experience in an area of pharmacology, or for those who are already pharmacologists to gain experience in new fields. The research opportunities in pharmacology are broadly defined and can include, for example, molecular pharmacology, biochemistry, signal transduction mechanisms, drug metabolism, immunopharmacology, chemistry and drug design, endocrinology, cell biology, structural biology, neuroscience, gene therapy, or clinical pharmacology. Cross-training is encouraged; what is important is that the candidate justifies how the research training will enable him or her to contribute to the field of pharmacology in the future.

Applicants select a preceptor in advance and prepare a research plan by mutual agreement. The choice of preceptor and laboratory depends upon the candidate's previous training, research interests, and future plans. The preceptors are scientists at the NIH or FDA who have an interest in training fellows through this program and have indicated their commitment through formal submission of their credentials to the PRAT Program. A list of eligible preceptors and descriptions of their research is available from the PRAT Program. In addition to the individualized research experiences and laboratory activities, the fellows arrange and participate in a PRAT Seminar Series each year to broaden their scientific outlook and develop their career skills.

Applicant fellows must have received a Ph.D. or professional degree in a basic or clinical science within the last five

years, and they must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Applications are due January 1; the fellowships are two-year appointments beginning in October of each year. The positions have competitive salary levels, and there are monthly supplies funds and an annual travel allowance. Fellows may participate in the AIDS Loan Repayment Program. Those with professional degrees are eligible to become commissioned officers in the Public Health Service. For further information on the NIGMS PRAT Program or to request an application kit, contact the PRAT Program Assistant, NIGMS, NIH, Building 45, Room 2AS-43D, Bethesda, MD, 20892-6200; telephone (301) 594-3583, fax (301) 480-2802, e-mail prat@gm1.nigms.nih.gov.

There are many other research and clinical fellowship opportunities available at the NIH; information can be found on the NIH Office of Education WWW home page at <http://helix.nih.gov:8001/oe>, or by contacting the Office of Education, NIH, Building 10, Room 1C-129, Bethesda, MD, 20892; telephone (301) 496-2427. Alternatively, individual postdoctoral fellowships are available under the National Research Service Act (NRSA) both to fellows at the NIH and in academia; more information about this grant program can be obtained from the NIH Office of Extramural Outreach and Information Resources at telephone (301) 435-0714, fax (301) 480-0525, or e-mail asknih@odrockml1.od.nih.gov.

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NOTE: As this article was submitted, Dr. Harold Varmus announced the appointment of Dr. Marvin Cassman as the new director of the NIGMS. As director, Dr. Cassman will oversee a \$947 million budget that funds more than 3,300 research grants in the areas of cell biology, biophysics, genetics, developmental biology, pharmacology, physiology, and biological chemistry—about 13 percent of the grants funded by NIH as a whole.

¹ Future topics for this column: research grants to women, program project grants at the NIGMS, and your suggestions

² Send comments on this column to: longr@gm1.nigms.nih.gov (or to request PRAT Program information send to prat@gm1.nigms.nih.gov)
NIGMS homepage: <http://www.nih.gov/nigms>