

## The 2007 – 2008 PRAT PROGRAM - OVERVIEW

The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) established the Pharmacology Research Associate (PRAT) Program in 1965. The PRAT Program is open to individuals with a Ph.D. degree in pharmacology or a related science, and to those with professional degrees such as the M.D., D.D.S., D.O., D.V.M., or Pharm.D.

The goal of the PRAT Program is to develop leaders in pharmacological research for key positions in academic, industrial, and Federal research laboratories. It is intended for those with backgrounds in the basic sciences or clinical fields who wish to acquire specialized training in the pharmacological sciences, or for those who have made a commitment to pharmacology through prior training or research to gain experience in new fields.

### RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

PRAT fellows may conduct postdoctoral research in one of the laboratories of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the Food and Drug Administrations (FDA). 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.

PRAT fellows devote the majority of their time to laboratory research in the biomedical sciences. Additionally, they participate in a PRAT Seminar Series/Discussion Group. Fellows with a professional degree have no formal clinical responsibilities.

### PRECEPTORS

Professional growth is stimulated through guidance by scientists at the NIH or FDA who serve as preceptors. Preceptors are chosen by mutual agreement between the candidate and the mentor scientist in advance of the application process. The choice of a specific preceptor and laboratory depends upon the candidate's previous training and career plans, and their research interests.

The candidate should seek a preceptor with whom to apply to the PRAT Program by contacting eligible NIH scientists and considering research opportunities available and their willingness to serve as a mentor.

NIH scientists and their research projects can be found on the website for Research and Training Opportunities at the NIH:

<http://www.training.nih.gov/postdoctoral/search.asp>

## APPOINTMENTS

Candidates must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have been awarded a doctoral degree, or who have certified by a university as meeting all the requirements leading to a doctorate. The degree must be in a biomedical or related science and must have been received within five years preceding the date of application. Applicants may apply prior to coming to NIH or FDA, or they may have started postdoctoral research at NIH or FDA within the 12-month period prior to the application receipt deadline.

NIGMS makes positions available for PRAT Fellows beginning in October of each year. Earlier start dates via other mechanisms may be negotiated individually by a fellow with the respective host laboratory, following acceptance into the PRAT Program. Appointments are made at competitive salary levels commensurate with other fellowship opportunities at the NIH. In addition, there is a monthly supplies allowance and an annual travel allowance. Appointments are made for three years. In first year, the appointment is as an IRTA and at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the appointment is converted to a NIGMS FTE.

## APPLICATIONS

Additional information and application forms can be obtained by accessing the PRAT website at:

<http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/PRAT1.htm>