

THE NIGMS 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 basic 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 Administration (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 the research opportunities available and their willingness to serve as a mentor.

NIH scientists and their research projects can be found on the home page for the NIH Office of Education at <http://www.training.nih.gov/postdoctoral/>.

APPOINTMENTS

Candidates must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have been awarded a doctoral degree, or who have been 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. Candidates with a professional degree or certification are eligible to apply for entry into the Public Health Service as commissioned officers.

NIGMS makes positions available for PRAT Fellows beginning in October of each year. Appointments are made for three years. Earlier start dates via other mechanisms may be negotiated individually by a fellow with the respective host laboratory, following acceptance into the PRAT Program.

The stipend is determined by the candidate's educational and professional experience. There is a annual allowance of \$2400, which includes an annual travel allowance of \$1,500.

Applicants interested in doing AIDS-related research may qualify for the AIDS Loan Repayment Program.

APPLICATIONS

Additional information and application forms can be obtained by contacting:

PRAT Program Analyst/Assistant
National Institute of General
Medical Sciences
National Institutes of Health
Room 2AS-49B
45 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-6200

Telephone: (301) 594-3583
Fax: (301) 480-2802
E-mail: PRAT@NIGMS.NIH.GOV

Applicants should submit the materials on the forms provided in the application kit. **Completed applications must be received by January 29, 2010 (Close of Business, COB) for appointments beginning in October of the following year.** 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. Preceptors may sponsor only one application per year.

SELECTION

Each candidate's qualifications will be evaluated by the PRAT Selections Committee. Selection is made on a highly competitive basis, with preference given to applicants with outstanding potential. Considerations include intellectual attainment, demonstrated research interest, and research accomplishments. The credentials of the preceptor will be considered, as well as the scientific merit of the research plan, and the significance to the field of pharmacology. Emphasis will be placed on the value of the research experience relative to the candidate's training and career goals, and the appropriateness of the choice of mentor.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

Under provisions of applicable public laws enacted by Congress since 1964, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, handicap, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity (or, on the basis of sex, with respect to any education program or activity) receiving Federal financial assistance. In addition, Executive Order 11141 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age by contractors and subcontractors in the performance of Federal contracts, and Executive Order 11246 states that no federally funded contractor may discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Therefore, the programs of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences must be operated in compliance with these laws and Executive Orders.