

Supporting Statement A

for

OMB Clearance Number: 0925-0299, exp., date 31 May 2024

**NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education –
Application, Registration, and Alumni Systems Office
of the Director**

January 2024

Check off which applies:

- New
- ☒ Revision
- Reinstatement with Change
- Reinstatement without Change
- Extension
- Emergency
- Existing w/o OMB approval

Federal Government Employee Information:

Sharon Milgram, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Intramural Training & Education
National Institutes of Health
2 Center Drive: Building 2 / 2E06
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-0234
Phone: 301-594-9605
Fax: 301-594-9606
E-mail: milgrams@od.nih.gov
Web: <http://www.training.nih.gov>

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Attachments for Accessing Specific OITE Sponsored Training Program Descriptions, Applications, Directions, and Frequently Asked Questions

Attachment-01. NIH-AC Applications
Attachment-02. NIH-AC Reference Letters
Attachment-03. NIH-AC UGSP Financial Need Form
Attachment-04. GPP Interview Experience
Attachment-05. UGSP Interview Experience
Attachment-06. UGSP Contract
Attachment-07. UGSP Evaluation of Scholar Payback Period
Attachment-08. UGSP Deferment Form
Attachment-09. GPP Awards Certificate
Attachment-10. Trainee Climate Feedback
Attachment-11. Trainee Onboarding Survey
Attachment-12. Trainee Exit Survey
Attachment-13. MyOITE User Accounts (NIH-only)
Attachment-14. Event Registration
Attachment-15. Privacy Act Applicability
Attachment-16. Privacy Act Assessment: RTO and RTP
Attachment-17. 60-day Federal Register Comments
Attachment-18. System Generated Emails

Acronym List for Attachment Titles

- GPP = Graduate Partnerships Program
- NIHAC or NIH-AC = NIH Application Center
- OITE = Office of Intramural Training & Education
- UGSP = Undergraduate Scholarship Program
- RTO = Research Training Opportunities
- RTP = Research Training Program

A. Justification

The Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE) administers a variety of programs and initiatives to recruit pre-college through post-doctoral educational level individuals into the National Institutes of Health Intramural Research Program (NIH-IRP) to facilitate their development into future biomedical scientists and to track the placement of former trainees after completion of their training program. Selection of participants in the NIH Intramural Research Program for a series of online collection forms for prospective and current trainees. The collection forms are either open year-round or have specific time periods for submissions. The OITE advertises the collection periods within the website <https://www.training.nih.gov>.

This revision is designed to address collection changes related to a new application software, government requirement for electronic collections, surveys designed to assess the composition of the NIH trainee community, and survey to obtain details about research group conflicts.

A1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE) administers a variety of programs and initiatives to recruit pre-college through post-doctoral educational level individuals into the National Institutes of Health Intramural Research Program (NIH-IRP) to facilitate their development into future biomedical scientists and to track the placement of former trainees after completion of their training program.

The legal authority granted to NIH to train future biomedical scientists comes from several sources. Title 42 of the U.S. Code, Sections 241 and 282(b)(13) authorize the Director, NIH, to conduct and support research training for which fellowship support is not provided under Part 487 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act (i.e., National Research Service Awards), and that is not residency training of physicians or other health professionals. Sections 405(b)(1)(C) of the PHS Act and 42 U.S.C. Sections 284(b)(1)(C) and 285-287 grant this same authority to the Director of each of the Institutes/Centers at NIH.

Identification of participants to matriculate into the programs and initiatives comes from applications, registrations, and related forms hosted through the OITE Web site <https://www.training.nih.gov>.

The principal appointment authority for the training programs is the Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) or Cancer Intramural Training Award (CRTA), which are restricted to U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals of the U.S., and individuals lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States. The IRTA and CRTA appointment mechanisms were established in response to studies showing declining numbers of U.S. college graduates pursuing careers in biomedical research. These mechanisms were designed to facilitate and enhance the systematic development of future U.S. biomedical scientists by making available unique research training opportunities in laboratories of the NIH during the formative stages of their academic training or research careers. The CRTA appointment mechanism is used exclusively by the National Cancer Institute.

The Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) extends admission to foreign citizens enrolled in PhD or equivalent programs through the Visiting Fellowship (VF) appointment mechanism. The VF is an award to a foreign scientist offering advanced research experience and training and not requiring the performance of services for the NIH. VFs are authorized by section 307 of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 242l] and PHS Regulations at 42 CFR, Part 61, Subpart A.

Participants in the Undergraduate Scholarship Program (UGSP) are appointed as FTEs and therefore must be U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents, or qualifying foreign nationals.

Postdoctoral trainees come to the NIH for 3-5 years to enhance their research skills and career development. The appointment mechanisms covering this trainee group are the following: IRTA, CRTA, Visiting Fellow, Research Fellow, Clinical Fellow, Special Volunteer, and Guest Researcher.

The financial support provided to participants comes from a variety of sources: appropriated funds, management funds, NIH-IRP investigators' budgets, supply & service funds from OITE, donations from foundation(s), university programs, scholarship programs, or other non-NIH sources. If the trainee does not receive financial support from NIH, then the appointment mechanism used for onboarding is the Special Volunteer, regardless of the educational and citizenship status. On rare occasion, Guest Researcher may be used when financial support is incompatible with federal government guidelines.

A2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The purpose of this information collection is to support the NIH Intramural Research Program (NIH-IRP) by providing application forms that prospective trainees may provide information about their strengths to become an NIH-IPR trainee. Since the previous approval, the OITE has implemented many changes to coincide with changes in the NIH administration interests and NIH investigator needs. A brief list of changes include, but not limited to the following:

- Restructuring of Training Programs – Some NIH training programs have been renamed to reflect new focus areas while others were terminated.
- MyOITE Guest Accounts – The OITE is no longer creating guest-accounts from the general public. MyOITE accounts are now restricted to the NIH community: investigators, administrators, and trainees. (Attachment-13)
- RTO Database Configuration – Updating configuration to minimize the number of databases, thereby improving information security.
- NIH-AC – Development of a universal application template with features than may be added or omitted based on program need. (Attachment-01; Attachment-02; Attachment-03)
- Event Registrations – OITE reviewed and minimized what information is needed for events in order to prepare for the participant composition. (Attachment-14)
- Compliance with Transition to Electronic Records (28-Jun-2019; M19-21) – The OITE moved to an all-electronic configuration for prospective trainee applications and supporting materials. (Attachment-03)
- The NIH-IRP administration is interested in learning about the composition of the trainee population. Therefore, two trainee surveys were created, one for onboarding and one for departing trainees. (Attachment-11; Attachment-12)
- The NIH-IRP created a survey to help trainee's experiencing problematic research group experiences to collect information in a non-verbal format for documentation of events and determining how to proceed with rectifying the situation. (Attachment-10)
- GPP Interview Experience – To assess the interview experience for admission into the GPP, a standardized template of key questions was streamlined, removing unnecessary questions. (Attachment-04)
- UGSP Interview Experience – To assess the interview experience of prospective UGSP scholars, a new template was created for this revision. (Attachment-05)
- UGSP Eligibility Questions – These questions are presented in the UGSP program description. Acceptance of not having any of these items is required to advance to the UGSP application form: non-delinquent status, information is true, complete, and accurate, authorization of release of information about academic, financial, services, etc...

These changes were designed to streamline the application process, improve information security, assess NIH-IRP trainee community composition, and assess the climate of NIH-IRP research groups.

The following items were not modified from the previous clearance request:

- UGSP Contract (Attachment-06)
- UGSP Evaluation of Scholar Payback Period (Attachment-07)
- UGSP Deferment Form (Attachment-08)

A3. Use of Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The OITE applications are web-based and accessible through the OITE website:
<https://www.training.nih.gov>.

In addition, prospective trainees can review webpages hosting application directions, registration directions, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) prior to submitting a collection form for admission consideration. The details posted within the webpages ensure adequate time to carefully complete and submit a well-organized application.

OITE's online system reduces the burden on every applicant by streamlining the application process, improves agency efficiency and responsiveness to the public, and reduces the financial cost to applicants (there is no application fee for OITE programs).

Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA) have been updated and submitted for the application database systems for the OITE training programs: Research & Training Opportunities and Research & Training Programs (Attachment-15; Attachment-16).

A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

In general, applicants for admission into the OITE programs must complete and submit the appropriate collection form through the RTO (Research & Training Opportunities) or Research & Training Programs (RTP) software programs because there are no duplicate sources available, except for the Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) application. Applicants to the Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) may have a university application that contains much of the information required for admission consideration; however, this information is considered proprietary, and is therefore inaccessible by the GPP staff and admission committees.

Trainees wishing to participate in an OITE sponsored event or activity must register through their MyOITE account. There is no other option for registration.

A5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

No small business or other small entities will be affected by the implementation of the Office of Intramural Training & Education application or registration systems.

A6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

Without approval to collect information for the various training programs, the OITE would be compromised in the ability to identifying highly qualified trainees of various educational levels for the NIH-IRP: summer interns, post-baccalaureates, and graduate students. Applicant information remains active for one year and is then archived and disposed based on the NIH policy for Keeping and Destroying Records (<http://oma.od.nih.gov/manualchapters/management/1743/>).

A7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

Collected information is consistent with these guidelines. Individuals that complete and submit an application and/or registration collection form do so voluntarily.

A8.1 Comments in Response to Federal Register Notice

Notification of this information collection for the OITE Training Programs was originally published on November 1, 2023, in Volume 88, Number 210, Pages 75007-75008. **One comment (Attachment-17) was received during the 60-day notice; does not pertain to the collection review.**

A8.2 Efforts to Consult Outside Agency

Since the inception of the Office of Intramural Training & Education both formal and informal consultations with the NIH Office of Human Resources, Intramural Research Programs of the Institutes-Centers, and university communities have been convened to discuss concerns and ideas about training future biomedical scientists within the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP). Specific areas of interest and discussion included but were not limited to the following:

- Recruitment of high-ability trainees
- Application and interview process
- Requirements for advanced degrees
- Structure of NIH-University partnerships
- Trainee support and stipends
- Development of the NIH trainee community
- Monitoring, steering, and evaluation of training programs
- Faculty composition

A9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

Neither payments nor gifts will be distributed to individuals to encourage the completion and submission of an application or registration collection form. However, students matriculating into the NIH-IRP may receive a stipend, health benefits, and tuition based on eligibility regulations and outside support. For select OITE programs, financial support is renewable annually up to 5-years based on factors such as citizenship, research progress, etc. All trainees are supported by NIH investigators' budgets, InstituteCenter budgets, university contributions, and/or other sources. First-year graduate students enrolled in institutional partnerships are supported by the GPP through pooled funds collected from Institute-Center donations; the NIH mentor for dissertation research supports subsequent years. The UGSP provides scholarship funding up to \$20,000.00 for reasonable educational expenses, while selected UGSP Scholars are at their respective universities. When scholars return for their payback, the UGSP provides the salary and benefits for students returning without a terminal degree. For those returning with a terminal degree to conduct their payback, the UGSP provides half of the salary and benefits.

A10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Information collected is available only to NIH scientific and program officials who recommend or approve awards and to administrative, human resources, and financial officials who prepare the necessary documentation to arrange for stipend payments and to activate, renew, and terminate approved awards. These individuals are assigned login credentials that require Single-Sign-On (SSO) access, conforming to standards used by the NIH Center for Information Technology, and the online tools these individuals use to access applicant data are restricted to OITE-approved users. Applicants must use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to create an account for admission consideration. References and financial aid offers will be assigned user-applicant specific passcodes to upload their recommendation letters, evaluation form, and assessment of financial need, as needed.

The information collected is subject to the Privacy Act, and is collected and maintained in accordance to the following records system numbers:

- OPM/GOVT-1 – General Personnel Records
- OPM/GOVT-5 – Recruiting, Examining, and Placement Records
- 09-90-0020 – Suitability for Employment Records
- 09-25-0014 – Clinical Research: Student Records
- 09-25-0108 – Personnel: Guest Researchers, Special Volunteers, and Scientists Emeriti
- 09-25-0140 – International Scientific Researchers in Intramural Laboratories
- 09-25-0158 – Administration Records of Applicants and Awardees of the Intramural Research Training Awards Program
- 09-25-0165 – Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship (OLRS)

OITE uses two systems for the management of information obtained from the collection forms: Research & Training Opportunities (RTO) and Research & Training Programs (RTP) systems. The contractors who manage each system use web-based software for the maintenance of collected information. The RTO Contractor develops software on a shared NIH server residing inside the NIH firewall. Development occurs on contractor-owned servers, with staging occurring on NIH servers. Information contained in the archive database is protected in a similar manner as the original database. The RTP Contractor uses contractor-owned servers for the creation and production of software and a cloud service provider for hosting.

A11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The OITE applications do not contain sensitive questions as described in the Points to Consider in A.11. These applications do collect Personally Identifiable Information (PII), including name, contact information, education, financial aid history, and employment history.

Information about whether an applicant has a relative at the NIH is collected to ensure compliance with the NIH Nepotism Chapter 2300-310-1 (see <https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-310-1>).

Participants of the HiSTEP program provide name and contact information (including phone number, email address, and relationship) for their parents / legal guardians for participation in an orientation and completion of appointment paperwork two months before the start of the program.

Current NIH trainees completing the onboarding survey, climate feedback, and exit surveys will be asked to respond to sensitive questions, such as races, cultures, genders, sexual orientation, countries of origin, age, disability, etc. NIH trainees may select 'prefer not to answer' to acknowledge the question but provide no details. Financial support or placement in a training position is not contingent upon providing a response to these surveys.

A12.1 Estimates of Hour Burden Including Annualized Hourly Costs

The estimated time to complete a collection form is based on the number and configuration of questions. The burden times for the collection forms range from 3-minutes to 45-minutes (see Table 12A-1) for each response.

Table A12-1. Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

	Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Time / Response (hours)	Total Annual Burden Hours
1	NIH-AC Application	10,000	1	45 / 60	7,500
2	NIH-AC - Reference Letters	25,000	1	10 / 60	4,167
3	NIH-AC Exceptional Financial Need (EFN)	125	1	10 / 60	21
4	GPP - Interview Experience Survey	90	1	10 / 60	15
5	UGSP - Interview Experience Survey	30	1	10 / 60	5
6	UGSP - Contract	25	1	10 / 60	4
7	UGSP - Evaluation of Scholar PayBack	40	1	10 / 60	7
8	UGSP - Deferment Form	50	1	10 / 60	8
9	GPP - Award Certificate	75	1	3 / 60	4
10	Trainee - Climate Feedback	500	1	20 / 60	167
11	Trainee - Onboarding Survey	1,575	1	10 / 60	263
12	Trainee - Exit Survey	1,575	1	10 / 60	263
13	MyOITE - User Accounts (NIH-only)	3,000	1	3 / 60	150

14	Event Registrations	5,000	1	3 / 60	250
	Totals	47,085	47,085	n/a	12,824

Table A12-2. Annualized Cost to Respondents:

The following table indicates the annualized cost to respondents.

	Type of Respondent	Total Annual Burden Hours	Hourly Wage	Burden Cost
1	NIH-AC Application	7,500	\$25.73	\$192,974.00
2	NIH-AC - Reference Letters	4,167	\$65.02	\$270,935.00
3	NIH-AC Exceptional Financial Need (EFN)	21	\$37.50	\$788.00
4	GPP - Interview Experience Survey	15	\$25.29	\$379.00
5	UGSP - Interview Experience Survey	5	\$18.43	\$92.00
6	UGSP - Contract	4	\$18.43	\$74.00
7	UGSP - Evaluation of Scholar PayBack	7	\$65.02	\$455.00
8	UGSP - Deferment Form	8	\$25.29	\$202.00
9	GPP - Award Certificate	4	\$27.55	\$110.00
10	Trainee - Climate Feedback	167	\$32.81	\$5,480.00
11	Trainee - Onboarding Survey	263	\$25.56	\$6,721.00
12	Trainee - Exit Survey	263	\$32.49	\$8,544.00
13	MyOITE - User Accounts (NIH-only)	150	\$32.81	\$4,922.00
14	Event Registrations	250	\$32.81	\$8,204.00
	Totals	12,824	n/a	\$499,880.00

Hourly wage rates for trainees are based on the following issues:

2023 NIH Trainee Stipends -

<https://www.training.nih.gov/stipends/> 2023

Federal GS Schedule -

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2023/DCB.pdf>

Bureau of Labor and Statistics 2022 19-0000 Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations -

<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes190000.htm>

Bureau of Labor and Statistics 2022 13-2011 Accountants and Auditors

<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes132011.htm>

A13. Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers There are no capital costs, operating costs, or maintenance costs to report.

A14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

Over the last decade, the OITE has been using online application systems for the collection and processing of information submitted by prospective trainees for participation in NIH-IRP training programs and special events. Through the years, these applications have been merged and enhanced based on changes in the trainee environment and administration needs. At present, the OITE has two contracts for the collection of information: Research & Training Opportunities (RTO) and Research & Training Programs (RTP). A summary of both contract costs, federal employees, and office staff contractors are presented in the table below. On average, the annual cost of the OITE application system is \$760,722.

Table A14-1. Cost to the Federal Government

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Salary*	% of Effort	Fringe (if applicable)	Total Cost to Gov't
Federal Oversight					
Directors	G15-S10	183,500	1		1,835
Program Analysts	G13-S10	145,617	25		36,404
Contractor Cost					
Contractors		145,617	8		11,649
Software - RTO Contract		~	~	~	528,846
Software - RTP Contract		~	~	~	181,988
Travel					0.00
Other Cost					0.00
Total					760,722

*The Salary in table above is cited from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salarieswages/salary-tables/pdf/2023/DCB.pdf>.

A15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

The OITE currently uses OMB Number 0925-0299 to cover the collection of information for the various training programs and special events of the NIH Intramural Research Program. Over the last three years, program changes have resulted in a modification of the estimated burden hours, detailed below.

Modifications increasing respondent burden:

- universal application template yields higher time estimates for registrations vs. applications
- over-estimates on the number of submissions
- increased services for NIH and non-NIH trainees, students, and personnel
- new surveys to assess the NIH trainee population composition
- new survey to assess an NIH trainee's research climate
- include registrations for previously OMB Fast Track registrations

Modifications decreasing respondent burden:

- import personal profile to specific program applications
- suspension of a few training programs
- estimate application counts based on the number of submitted forms rather than started forms
- modification of data collection for alumni database
- exclude registrations for NIH-only events

These additions have results in a net decrease of 1034 hours.

Table A15-1. Change in Burden Hours

OMB Clearance Year	Burden Hours
Current Submission	12,824
Previous Submission (Expiration Date May 2024)	13,858
Difference (Current – Previous)	-1,034

A16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

The information collected in the forms will be used for annual program assessments and more comprehensive program reviews that assess services provided by the OITE. On occasion, OITE may publish the aggregated data for program transparency.

Federal regulations for the protection of human subjects do not apply to this activity.

Table A16-1. Project Time Schedule: Application Opening and Closing Dates

Form	Type of Respondent	Dates
1, 2, 3	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Application	Jan-May
4	Graduate Partnerships Program - Interview Experience	Apr-May
5	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Interview Experience	May-Jun
1, 2	NIH Academy	May-Aug
1, 2	Postbaccalaureate Enrichment Program Application	May-Aug
1, 2, 3	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Renewal Application	Jun-Aug
8	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Deferment Form	Jun-Sep
6	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Scholar Contract	Jul-Aug
1, 2	Graduate Partnerships Program - Application	Aug-Dec
1, 2	Summer Internship Program - Main Programs	Nov-Mar
1, 2	Summer Internship Program - Specialty Programs	Nov-Mar
1	Postbaccalaureate Program - Application	All Year
1	Academic Internship Program - Application	All Year
1	Graduate Partnerships Program - Registration	All Year
7	Undergraduate Scholarship Program - Evaluation of Scholar Payback Period	All Year
9	Graduate Partnerships Program - Awards Certificate	All Year
10	Trainee - Climate Survey	All Year
11	Trainee - Onboarding Survey	All Year
12	Trainee - Exit Survey	All Year
13	MyOITE - User Accounts	All Year
14	Event Registrations	All Year

A17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date Is Inappropriate

The OITE will display the OMB Clearance Number, Expiration Date, and Burden Disclosure Statements on the collection forms.

A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

There are no exceptions to the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.