INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Q: Does the NIGMS T32 nominated student need to be a part of the T32 training grant?**
   A: No, the student does not need to be supported by the T32 grant, however the nominated student must be training grant eligible- as defined by the NIH training grant support guidelines.

2. **Q: I am a 4th year PhD student, am I eligible to be nominated or to apply?**
   A: No, you must be in the 2nd or 3rd year of your PhD program to be nominated or to submit an application. The fellowship is designed to support PhD students in years three, four, and five of their doctoral program.

3. **Q: I am in my 4th year of the PhD program but switched labs, so this is only my 3rd year in my current lab, am I eligible?**
   A: No, eligibility is based on the year you started your PhD program, not how long you have been in a particular lab. Please consult with your administrative personnel to determine your year in your PhD program- in most cases; we will follow the institutional designation.

4. **Q: If my year in my PhD program is not clear, am I able to request that HHMI review my specific situation?**
   A: All requests must be sent to HHMI via email to gilliam@hhmi.org by the T32 program director or nominator of the EXROP student. Neither individual graduate students nor individual thesis advisors may submit requests to HHMI, unless the student has already been nominated.

5. **Q: I am in an MSTP (MD/PhD) program- Am I eligible to be funded during the PhD portion of my degree?**
   A: Unfortunately, at this time, this fellowship only supports students who are pursuing non-combined PhD degrees.

6. **Q: If my area of research does not fall under the biomedical or related sciences, am I still eligible to be nominated or apply?**
   A: You may only apply to the program if your thesis project is in the basic life sciences and disciplines related to life sciences, including disciplines supported by the NIGMS T32 training grants.

7. **Q: What qualifies as a "disadvantaged" background or other "underrepresented groups in the sciences?"**
   A: We use the NIH/NSF guidelines for groups that are underrepresented in science. This constitutes racial and ethnic groups (American Indians or Alaska Natives, Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders) that have been shown to be underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national level. This also includes individuals with disabilities- defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. For "disadvantaged" backgrounds, it is up to the nominator to provide the case for the student and why they fall into that particular category and should be considered.

8. **Q: How can I be nominated by a T32 program director?**
A: Each program has its own nomination process. Please contact your department chair or the T32 program director at your institution for additional information.

9. **How can I find the T32 training grants at my institution?**
A: Please visit this page: http://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/pages/InstGrantLists.aspx. On that page, you will find links to "Predoctoral Research Training Programs." You can click on the links for each program to determine the location(s) of each program.

10. **Q: I read the eligibility on the website and I am eligible to apply, how can I get an application?**
A: You must be nominated by a T32 program director at your institution or you must have participated in the HHMI EXROP program. HHMI EXROP alumni must also complete the nomination process and identify the head/dean of their graduate school/program to submit nomination materials on their behalf.

11. **Q: How will I receive information about the application process once I am nominated?**
A: Once you have been nominated, you will receive an invitation to apply with a link to the web-based application. If you want to start to prepare for the application process this fall, you can find a list of the application requirements in the Program Information Brochure.

12. **Q: Where do I send my reference letters?**
A: Letters of reference and all other application materials are submitted electronically via the HHMI Competition System. Once you have been nominated, you will receive an invitation with a link to the web-based application. Please do not mail any materials to HHMI.

13. **Q: Can I submit my application before my references have completed their letters?**
A: Yes. Although both the application and the reference letters have the same deadline, the submission processes are separate. Your references can continue to submit their letters (up to the deadline), after you have submitted your application.

14. **Q: Where can I find the formatting guidelines for the research plan?**
A: Information on margins, font size/type, and character/line spacing can be found on the "Research Plan" page of the HHMI Competition System application. There is a link that says: Click here for formatting requirements. Formatting instructions for all other parts of the application (such as text limits) are found at the beginning of each section.

15. **Q: What should be included in the personal statement?**
A: Students should describe their career goals, keeping in mind how their current thesis work informs those goals and how the HHMI fellowship will affect the attainment of those goals.

16. **Q: Can students apply more than once to the fellowship?**
A: Yes, provided that you are nominated for a second time by a T32 program director (if not an EXROP alumni), are still in your second/third year of PhD study, and satisfy the other annual eligibility requirements. EXROP alumni may also apply more than once as long as they fit the other eligibility criteria.

17. **Q: Are any indirect costs covered under the fellowship?**
A: No, HHMI does not allow indirect costs, overhead charges, or facilities and administrative rates to be charged to the fellowship.

18. **Q: Are students allowed to simultaneously hold any other fellowships/scholarships while under the HHMI Fellowship?**
A: Fellows are not allowed to be employed, engage in consulting activities for pay, or receive funds from another external fellowship, scholarship or similar award. However, HHMI may make an exception in the case of a one-time award or an award made by the fellowship institution that does not constitute a significant increase over the amount provided to comparable graduate students.

The Program Information Brochure will address most questions.
If you still have questions after reading the brochure, please send an email to Gilliam@hhmi.org.