

# Frequently Asked Questions

## T15 Training Program

### Application Process

1. Q: Can the T15 applications be submitted via ASSIST, instead of Grants.gov?  
A: Yes. ASSIST, Grants.gov, and system-to-system (S2S) solutions may be used.
2. Q: We have multiple campuses, each with its own DUNS number. How many applications can my organization submit?  
A: One application per institution (normally identified by having a unique DUNS number or NIH IPF number) is allowed. If you have multiple campuses with unique DUNS or IPF numbers, it is encouraged that they coordinate and only one application be submitted.
3. Q: Will requesting a small number of slots make our application less competitive?  
A: Reviewers will assess your ability to find qualified applicants and develop a rigorous training program, not the number of slots.
4. Q: For slots funded by NIAID, will the review process be the same or will there be separate review considerations?  
A: NLM will conduct the review of all applications, and within the context of those being considered for funding, NIAID will decide which slots to support.
5. Q: What is the line limit for the Project Summary/Abstract?  
A: Applicants should follow the application guide instructions and restrict to the 30-line limit.

# Trainees

1. Q: If a trainee's mentor is no longer at the university, can we list them and their publications?

A: Yes, provide an explanatory note.

2. Q: The tuition reimbursement levels differ for degree and non-degree seeking post-docs. Do institutions have to differentiate between degree and non-degree seeking post-docs?

A: Yes, your budget justification should specify how many degree-seeking and how many non-degree-seeking postdocs you are requesting. Tuition levels will be locked in your Notice of Award for 5 years, so it's best to evaluate your program as closely as possible and determine what tuition expenditures you are likely to need.

3. Q: What if a trainee had two mentors during training?

A: You may list both mentors, perhaps annotating the difference, and adding an explanatory note.

4. Q: If a postdoc has changed mentors, where do we list their publications?

A: You may list with both new and old mentors, with an explanatory note.

5. Q: Is there a maximum length of time that a trainee may be supported on NLM T15 grants?

A: A total of 5 years of NLM trainee support is permitted per trainee. Support can be divided between predoc and postdoc. Predocs may be supported for up to 5 years. If a predoc is supported for 5 years, no additional years of NLM training support can be provided for that person, whether predoc or postdoc. Postdocs may be supported for up to 3 years. Combinations of predoc and postdoc support, such as 3 pre + 2 post, are acceptable. For NLM trainees who have received previous training support from another NIH (non-NLM) training grant, the NIH ceiling on training support applies – maximum of 5 years predoc plus maximum of 3 years postdoc

6. Q: What are the expectations of research time commitment for post-docs vs training time expectations?

A: NLM trainees are expected to be full time. If the trainee is a post-doc, their research is the training. As a reminder, unlike NSRA post-docs, NLM post-docs do not have a payback requirement.

7. Q: Do STTPs (Short Term Training Positions) make the application more competitive?

A: A STTP is optional and does not advantage or disadvantage an applicant.

8. Q: Is it preferable to fund the same pre-doc trainee for 3, 4, or 5 years?  
A: NLM feels that it is a better training model to support trainees through both their coursework and their PhD research. Many NIH institutional training grants support only the coursework portion and then move trainees onto research grants for the remainder of their training. NLM's training model doesn't preclude this, but it would be expected that an NLM predoctoral trainee who was moved to a research grant would be moved to an informatics research grant that permitted her/him to undertake novel informatics research.
9. Q: If we are requesting 2 additional HIV trainee slots, are the HIV trainees included when calculating if our program meets the expectation to be no more than three-fifths predoctoral?  
A: No, HIV trainee slots are not included in this calculation. The requested NLM slots (up to 15) should be no more than three-fifths predoctoral, exclusive of any additional HIV slots requested.

## Budget

1. Q: When submitting the budget, should we put in the full tuition or just 60% of it?  
A: Please provide your estimate of the full/actual institutional tuition & fees amount, per trainee, in your budget justification. NLM will need to explicitly see the full tuition amount and any calculations applied. NLM will then apply the NIH formula for reimbursement at the time of award.
2. Q: How do we budget the stipends for TBN Postdocs?  
A: Use the postdoc level 3 amount from NRSA table.
3. Q: Regarding post-doc tuition, can we ask for tuition for relevant courses for an informatics PhD-holding post-doc, who is not enrolled in a degree granting program?  
A: Yes, you may request tuition for post-docs who are not in a degree-seeking program. Please request the full/actual amount of tuition & fees. NLM will then apply the formula for reimbursement at the time of award (for non-degree-seeking postdocs, 60% of actual amount, up to \$4,500).
4. Q: For state universities, who have different tuitions for in-state and out-of-state students, how should those universities plan their budget?

A: NLM expect universities to look nationally for candidates, so it would be wise to prepare a budget that reflects what you need. Once the grant is awarded, tuition increases will not be provided in future years of the award, so it's best to evaluate your program as closely as possible and determine what tuition expenditures you are likely to need based on the candidates you expect to recruit.

5. Q: Can funding be included for program management personnel?

A: Funds awarded in the Training Related Expenses category may be used to defray such costs as staff salaries when they are directly related to the training program. However, programs may not request separate funds specifically for personnel in addition to the standard TRE amount. Please see [NIH GPS 11.3.8.4](#).

6. Q: Can tuition be used for online/certificates, such as offered by Coursera or other data science workshops?

A: While NLM is not opposed, this is a decision made by the institution, which determines which courses provide credit toward the PhD.

## Degrees

1. Q: What if our PhD program is not yet approved?

A: Explain what PhD degrees will be awarded to the trainees in the interim, and when you expect the new PhD to be approved.

2. Q: Do institutions have to specify between degree and non-degree seeking post-docs?

A: In short, it depends. This specification will be locked in your Notice of Award for 5 years, so it's best to evaluate your program as closely as possible and determine what to specify in the application.

3. Q: Are Master Degree students eligible for this program?

A: The NLM Training program does not support individuals seeking terminal Master Degrees, i.e. persons who are not seeking a PhD. For Pre-Docs, if the trainee has been admitted to a PhD program, the trainee is eligible. For Post-Docs, if outside the field of informatics and information sciences, they should be obtaining a Master's or PhD degree.

# Curriculum

1. Q: If a program was to offer several different degree alternatives, what does “core curriculum” mean in that context? Does it mean across the different degree alternatives, there must be a common set of courses OR should the program use the core curriculum that each degree program separately offers, where they may have some, but not all, courses in common?

A: Yes, NLM expects a biomedical informatics/data science common core curriculum across the degree programs. Many training programs do this by having one or two required courses in biomedical informatics/data science that all of their trainees take, and then additional required courses, with electives that are tailored to each track. Programs that support training in more than one of the four areas sometimes have one large required course for everyone, for example. Reviewers should be able to see the cohesion that makes your program a single training program in biomedical informatics/data science and not several different programs.

For further questions, email:

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Subject line: T-15 question

