

NIH Office of Intramural Research (OIR)

Clarification on the Use of NIH Intramural Appointment Authorities and Stipend Levels for Graduate Partnerships Program Students on F-1 Visas

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We became aware recently of an inequity on the stipend levels assigned for Predoctoral Visiting Fellows on F-1 visas participating in the NIH Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP). F-1 visa holders are foreign national students in the United States, enrolled at domestic academic institutions as full-time students for the entirety of their respective programs. Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs can train in the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP) through the GPP. In many cases, these students are enrolled at local universities within commuting distance of NIH campuses. In general, F-1 visa holders cannot be at NIH full-time due to a requirement which states they may only work up to 20 hours a week while classes are in session and full-time otherwise. Students must always adhere to their work authorization stipulated on the F-1 visa and refer to their university Designated School Official (DSO) to ensure compliance. While they are only physically present at NIH for part-time while classes are in session, NIH considers them full-time students in the GPP and they must receive a full Predoctoral-Visiting Fellow stipend in accordance with Office of Intramural Research (OIR) policies on stipend parity

(https://oir.nih.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/sourcebook/documents/personnel/clarification-irp_appt_mechs_predoctoral_students_sd_mtg.pdf).

If outside/non-NIH extramural funding exists that partially contributes to their stipend, there must be a Supplemental Visiting Fellow appointment to reach full stipend parity. The goal of the GPP is to contribute to the graduate education of our students, and often their presence at their home university/academic institution is a fundamental part of their training. Therefore, this time counts towards their NIH training experience and must be reflected in a full-time stipend level. Note that this policy does not apply to F-1 visa holders that completed their graduate studies and are on post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) status.