Annual KC Donnelly Externship – Promotion of Translational/Transdisciplinary Efforts in Graduate and Post-Doctoral Research (Guidelines for Applicants)

What is the KC Donnelly Externship?

The Superfund Research Program (SRP) announces administrative supplements named in honor of Dr. KC Donnelly, Department Head of Environmental and Occupational Health, Texas A&M University, who passed away on July 1, 2009. Dr. Donnelly's research consisted of studying environmental exposure and genotoxicity of complex chemical mixtures. He was also a dedicated mentor to his students and post-doctoral researchers, instilling in them the importance of applying their knowledge and findings to communities exposed to environmental contaminants.

The SRP recognizes a compelling need to promote transdisciplinary and translational research among early investigators (e.g., graduate students/post-doctoral researchers) which includes the recruitment of talented researchers and improving the quality of the educational and training environment. The purpose of these supplements is to provide current SRP-funded graduate students/post-doctoral researchers with translational/transdisciplinary opportunities and experiences within other SRP-funded centers, government laboratories (EPA, ATSDR, NIEHS), or other agencies (state, local, Tribal). Examples of these types of externship experiences include:

- A graduate student performing laboratory research would like to learn a novel analytical technique at another SRP funded center to enhance his/her research project.
- A post-doctoral researcher conducting epidemiology research would like to understand how their results may apply to risk assessment at a federal agency.
- A graduate student conducting remediation research would like to participate in a community engagement activity at another SRP funded center.

Who is eligible for an Externship?

To be eligible, an applicant must be:

- A graduate student (Master's or PhD) or a post-doctoral researcher (status must be maintained for duration of externship).
- Conducting research/activities in any project or core within a SRP Center.

What does the recipient of the Externship receive?

- Support for up to three (3) months consisting of supplies, travel, and housing costs for the duration of the externship.
- Travel funds to attend the SRP Annual Meeting where the recipient is invited to present their research.

What are the steps in the submission process?

SRP highly encourages the student/post-doctoral researcher to develop and write the application, but the official application must be submitted by the Center Director (for P42s) or the Principal Investigator (for R01s) from the parent institution. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact a program administrator to discuss their application, and they should also consult with their university's business official for guidance on developing budget pages.

All supplement applications must contain the following:

1. PHS 398 Face page that includes:
    a. The title and grant number of the parent grant
    b. The name "KC Donnelly Externship – Promotion of Translational/Transdisciplinary Efforts in Graduate and Post-Doctoral Research".

    c. Signatures of the Center Director (for P42s) or the Principal Investigator (for R01s) and Business Official.
2. A detailed budget (using form page 4 from PHS 398) and budget justification. The justification should contain details of supplies, travel, and housing costs, etc.
3. A copy of an official transcript from the institution where the student is currently enrolled (graduate students) or from the graduating institution (post-docs).
4. A one-page biographical sketch.
5. Project description that includes:
    a. A summary of the proposed project, its objectives, and a clear description of how the translational/transdisciplinary opportunity is within the scope of the parent grant (limited to ½ page).
    b. A plan and timeline for the externship (limited to 2 pages).
    c. The description of how this supplement will enhance their skills and knowledge and their professional goals (limited to 1 page).
6. Letters of Support:
    a. Signed statements from the Principal Investigators from the parent institution and from the hosting institution where the project is to be conducted, establishing the eligibility of the candidate for support by this supplement. These statements should indicate:
        i. The capacity/duration for which applicant has been known by referrer.
        ii. The applicant's ability to perform the proposed externship – in particular, how the externship relates to and will further the student/post-doctoral researcher's academic/professional goals; the quality of his/her current work.
        iii. Likelihood of a productive externship.

Note: (1) These administrative supplements must support the scope of the active SRP parent grant; (2) Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs for the applicant organization will be reimbursed at 8 percent of modified total direct costs, or at the actual F&A cost rate, whichever is less.

How many graduate students/post-doctoral researchers can apply from each institution?
Institutions with Center grants (i.e., P42) are limited to two applications per cycle; R01 investigators are limited to one application.

When is the application deadline?
Applications must be submitted by March 21 of each year.

When will the externship announcement be made?
Review and funding decisions will occur on or about May 20 of that year.

How will the recipient be selected?
SRP will bring together a small ad hoc group of reviewers from within the Institute to critically evaluate the submitted applications. It is important that the applicant present his/her material in a manner readily understood by scientifically literate colleagues; however, applicants should not assume that all reviewers are experts in their area of research.

What are the review criteria?
Applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Evidence that the proposed translational/transdisciplinary opportunity will enhance the graduate student/post-doctoral researcher's current research/activities and will benefit the applicant's professional development.
- Evidence that the proposed experience will enhance the knowledge, and/or skills of the candidate, and that the candidate will play an integral role in the activities of the project.
- Likelihood of success:
  - The qualifications of the graduate student/post-doctoral researcher, including career goals, prior research training, research potential, and any relevant experience.
  - Evidence of interest in environmental science.
  - A plan and timeline for the research and career development experiences proposed by the candidate.
- Evidence that adequate mentorship will be provided to the graduate student/post-doctoral researcher (i.e., letters from the Principal Investigator and any other mentors involved in the proposed externship opportunity).

To whom do I submit my application?

Please e-mail your application to adminsupplements@niehs.nih.gov. In the subject line, please write "SRP KC Donnelly Externship Supplement 2011" and applicant's last name.

Whom do I contact if I have questions about the externship?

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