

Comparison of the Old (Pre-FY 2008) and New Graduate Fellowship Programs

Old Graduate Fellowship Program	New Graduate Fellowship Program	Rationale for Program Changes
<p>The Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) administers the NRC Graduate Fellowship Program (GFP) under an interagency agreement with the Office of Human Resources (HR).</p>	<p>The program is no longer open to external candidates and is focused internally to address the agency's critical skill needs. Opportunities will be posted as fellowship positions in the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.</p>	<p>The new Scholarships and Fellowships for Service Program authorized by the Environmental Policy Act of 2005 provides more robust recruitment—NRC may offer more than 40 scholarships and fellowships in FY 2007.</p>
<p>ORISE announces the Graduate Fellowship Program nationally open to both internal and external candidates</p>	<p>NRC administers the GFP internally. Fellows submit Form SF 182 (replacing NRC Form 368) to HR and NRC directly pays the university for expenses such as tuition and fees from HR's budgeted funds.</p>	<p>By administering the GFP internally, NRC is able to forego the overhead costs associated with having the program administered by a Department of Energy laboratory or other outside entity.</p>
<p>ORISE makes direct payments to the university for direct educational expenses including tuition and fees.</p>	<p>Fellows submit Form SF 182 (replaces NRC Form 368) and NRC directly pays the university for direct educational expenses including tuition and fees.</p>	<p>Retaining employees in full-time pay status eliminates the need to either contract for a third-party program administrator or to establish a new NRC system to administer the stipends.</p>
<p>ORISE acts as an intermediary with the universities to monitor the fellows' academic progress.</p>	<p>HR requires fellows to provide grade reports as evidence of satisfactory academic progress prior to receiving funding for subsequent academic semesters or quarters.</p>	<p>By administering the GFP internally, NRC is able to forego most of the costs associated with having the program administered by a Department of Energy laboratory or other outside entity.</p>

Enclosure

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Fellows must complete at least 1 year of work experience at NRC prior to beginning their fellowship studies.	Fellows must complete at least 2 years of work experience at NRC or 1 year of work experience and be at the full performance level prior to beginning their fellowship studies.	Selecting employees with proven track records allows NRC to have a clearer understanding of the individual's professional goals, competencies, interest in an NRC career.
Fellows must sign a continued service agreement before beginning graduate studies. The agreement commits fellows to 2 months of NRC employment for each month of subsidized education.	Fellows must sign a continued service agreement before beginning graduate studies. The agreement commits full-time fellows 3 months of NRC employment for each month of subsidized education.	The change enhances fellows' commitment to continued service with the NRC.
Fellows are placed in a leave-without-pay (LWOP) status and receive a stipend equal to 90 percent of their salary including locality pay for their duty station when selected.	Fellows remain in full-employment and full-time pay status during their fellowship and receive their salary including locality pay where they attend graduate study.	Retaining employees in full-time pay status eliminates the need to either contract for a third-party program administrator or to establish a new NRC system to administer the stipends.
Fellows are not required to complete biweekly time and labor reports while in a leave-without-pay status.	Full-time fellows report time spent in classroom, laboratory, research, and study sessions as regular hours in training up to 80 hours per pay period. Fellows are not allowed to earn premium time for any time spent in a training status.	Fellows must comply with the agency's time and labor reporting requirements in order to be paid at their full salary. Regulations only permit employees to earn premium time while in a training status under special circumstances.

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<p>Fellows do not need to work during brief school breaks of less than 30 days. For periods of 30 days or more away from full-time enrollment in academic programs, the stipend is discontinued. The fellow may return to work at the NRC to receive a salary or may stay in LWOP status.</p>	<p>Full-time fellows engage in training activities such as research or study for the entire calendar year. They may use accumulated leave during brief school breaks.</p>	<p>Fellows must comply with the agency's time and labor reporting requirements.</p>
<p>Fellows continue to earn leave credit only during the first 80 hours of their leave-without-pay status.</p>	<p>Fellows accrue leave credits during the entire term of their fellowship.</p>	<p>This is a conforming change resulting from fellows continuing in a full-time pay status.</p>
<p>Fellows do not receive automatic career-ladder promotions or within-grade increases during their fellowship.</p>	<p>Fellows who continue to make satisfactory academic progress are eligible for automatic career-ladder promotions or within-grade increases during their fellowship.</p>	<p>This is consistent with the approach that academic study is the fellows' work assignment.</p>
<p>Fellows do not pay into the retirement system while on LWOP. However, they do receive credit toward length of service for LWOP up to a maximum of 6 months in 1 calendar year.</p>	<p>Fellows pay into the retirement system as regular employees and receive credit toward length of service during their entire fellowship.</p>	<p>This is a conforming change resulting from fellows continuing in a full-time pay status.</p>

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<p>Fellows' health insurance enrollment terminates when the total time on LWOP reaches the 365-day limit, unless fellows return to work for at least 4 consecutive months. If fellows elect health insurance coverage through the university the cost is included with programmatic expenses paid by NRC.</p>	<p>Fellows' health insurance benefits continue during the term of their fellowship.</p>	<p>This is a conforming change resulting from fellows continuing in a full-time pay status.</p>
<p>Federal Employees Group Life Insurance basic and optional insurance continues without cost to fellows for up to 12 months. If fellows receive some pay in each pay period for at least 4 consecutive months after a period of non-pay status, they are entitled to begin new 12-month periods of continuation of enrollment.</p>	<p>Fellows' group life insurance benefits continue during the term of their fellowship.</p>	<p>This is a conforming change resulting from fellows continuing in a full-time pay status.</p>
<p>The current GFP does not offer opportunities for part-time study.</p>	<p>In addition to full-time fellows, NRC will allow a limited number of competitively selected part-time fellows to earn degrees through part-time (evening) graduate study.</p>	<p>This is a new provision. Many top-performers could acquire critical skills and knowledge through graduate study but cannot or will not put their careers on hold for 2 to 3 years.</p>