

**2008 HHMI Investigator Competition**  
**Questions and Answers**

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## **A. Eligibility**

### ***A1. What are the eligibility requirements?***

To be eligible for this competition you must:

- Have an Ph.D, M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. degree or the equivalent;
- Hold a tenured or tenure-track (or equivalent) position at one of the listed institutions;
- Be the principal investigator on one or more active, national, peer-reviewed research grants that provide at least three years of support, such as an NIH R01 award. Mentored awards or training grants do not qualify.
- Have between four and 10 years of experience since first appointed as an Assistant Professor or equivalent position; to meet this requirement the applicant's first faculty position as Assistant Professor must have begun no earlier than April 12, 1997 and no later than June 13, 2003. Circumstances such as those that qualify for tenure clock extensions at academic institutions may justify an extension of the April 12, 1997 limit; applicants who wish to request an extension should provide information in an email to [comp2008@hhmi.org](mailto:comp2008@hhmi.org).

### ***A2. I'm an adjunct professor at one of the listed institutions and a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at another institution that is not on the list. Am I eligible?***

No.

### ***A3. My primary appointment and research space are at a Veterans Administration facility, although I am on the faculty at an eligible institution. Am I eligible?***

No. If your primary appointment and/or principal research location is at a federal institution such as a VA Hospital or National Laboratory, you are not eligible.

### ***A4. I'm not sure if I am eligible, since my primary institution does not have a tenure track. What should I do?***

If your primary institution offers a tenure track, then tenure or tenure-track is a requirement. For institutions that have no tenure track, we require that applicants have a position that is the most similar to tenure-track available at that institution (i.e., equivalent in terms of institutional commitment to the employee, etc.). If you are uncertain about whether or not the terms of your appointment meet this eligibility requirement, you should email the inquiry desk at [comp2008@hhmi.org](mailto:comp2008@hhmi.org) and provide information about the terms of your position prior to submitting an application. We will then consider your situation and respond as soon as possible.

### ***A5. I am a PI on a RO1 now, but I've been told my grant will not be renewed. I do not have another grant. Am I still eligible?***

Yes. The grant must be in active, funded status on the submission deadline, June 13, 2007.

***A6. My only funding is as a co-investigator rather than a PI. Am I eligible?***

No, to be eligible, you must be the PI on at least one active, national, peer-reviewed research grant that provides, at a minimum, three years of support.

***A7. I am just a few months short of having four years of experience as a faculty member . Am I eligible?***

Eligibility is to be determined by the date when you first assumed a position as Assistant Professor; to meet this requirement we expect that you would have first assumed an independent faculty position no later than June 13, 2003.

***A8. I have been a faculty member for more than 10 years but my career was interrupted for several years. If you take the interruption into account, I would be within the 10-year limit. Could I be eligible?***

In general, circumstances such as those that qualify for tenure clock extensions at academic institutions may justify an extension of the April 12, 1997 limit; applicants who wish to request an extension should provide information in an email to [comp2008@hhmi.org](mailto:comp2008@hhmi.org).

***A9. What is HHMI policy with regard to eligibility of faculty members with administrative responsibilities?***

Duties at the time of appointment must be compatible with HHMI's requirement that investigators devote at least 75% of their total professional effort to the direct conduct of research. HHMI has permitted some of its investigators to serve as department chair, director of a departmental division, head of a research center, head of a graduate program or the like, when it could be determined that those duties would not, in fact, interfere with this requirement. The permitted 25% of non-research activity includes all administrative duties, teaching, committee service, grant and journal reviewing, participation in the activities of scholarly societies, and consulting (subject to HHMI's rules on consulting). HHMI investigators may not hold the positions of dean, provost, vice president, or president of an institution as we do not believe it is possible for individuals in these positions to meet the 75% requirement. Also note our salary policy, Question E5.

## **B. Components of Application**

### ***B1. What must my application include?***

Your application must include the following documents, all submitted electronically to the HHMI website at [www.hhmi.org/research/application/comp2008](http://www.hhmi.org/research/application/comp2008)

- Your curriculum vitae, complete bibliography (in reverse chronological order), and a list of your current research support. For these three items you should use the NIH PHS 398 biographical sketch format; but, you can exceed the NIH's 3-page limit)
- A 250-word summary of your major achievements since becoming a faculty member
- A summary of your ongoing and planned research program. The text of this is limited to 3,000 words, and you may also include up to one page of figures. Figures and references are not counted towards the 3,000-word limit
- Five selected publications that document your most important scientific contributions and a paragraph of 300 words maximum for each publication summarizing its importance.

### ***B2. What about reference letters?***

You should not include reference letters in your application. If you are a semi-finalist, you will be notified in fall 2007 and asked to solicit three reference letters.

### ***B3. In the summary of my ongoing and planned research program, can I include work that is already supported by my grants?***

Yes. HHMI supports people, not projects, so we are interested in the full range of the work you are doing and planning to do, regardless of current sources of funding. Your summary should give some idea of how HHMI support might influence your research plans.

### ***B4. Should I include specific program aims in the summary of my ongoing and planned research program?***

You may. Please keep in mind that because we support people, not projects, we do not believe an investigator should necessarily be tied to specific goals. We hope and expect that investigators will use HHMI's support as an opportunity to take on new projects including some with a high degree of scientific risk that would be unlikely to be funded by other organizations.

### ***B5. How much background should I provide?***

Some description of background information is appropriate to set the stage for the description of your research program. Please note that HHMI's reviewers will also receive your selected publications and the 250-word summary of your major achievements since becoming a faculty member.

***B6. Do I need endorsement or approval from my institution in order to apply for this competition?***

No. Institutional prior approval or endorsement of your application is not part of the application process. Because you are applying to be an employee of HHMI and are not applying for a fellowship or research grant, your application does not need to be registered with or approved by your department or any administrative unit in your institution.

## **C. Review Process**

### ***C1. How does HHMI's review process work?***

HHMI will use a two-stage initial review process, leading to selection of semi-finalists by late fall 2007. A third review will result in the final selection by the spring of 2008.

### ***C2. Who are the reviewers?***

Reviewers include current and past members of HHMI's Medical Advisory Board and Scientific Review Boards, HHMI investigators, and HHMI's scientific staff. If necessary, based on volume and breadth of applications, HHMI may select additional distinguished scientists to serve as reviewers.

### ***C3. Can I get a list of potential reviewers who might be assigned to my application?***

No. HHMI does not make public the roster of reviewers for its competitions.

### ***C4. Does HHMI give a preference to applicants who are already at institutions where there are other HHMI investigators?***

No. HHMI's goal is to identify and appoint the best candidates, regardless of whether they are located at institutions where there are currently investigators. Only 68 of the nearly 200 eligible institutions already have one or more HHMI investigator.

#### **D. Employment; Time Commitment to Research**

***D1. I understand that as an investigator I would become an HHMI employee. Would this affect my faculty status at my institution?***

Maintaining faculty status at the host institution is a condition of an investigator's HHMI appointment.

***D2. I am a tenured faculty member at my institution and I also have a faculty appointment at another institution. Will I have to give up that other faculty appointment if I become an investigator?***

No. However, if you have a second laboratory at the other institution, we would need to discuss that situation with you before your appointment, and we might need to put in place an agreement between HHMI, your host institution, and the institution at which your second laboratory is located. Please note that HHMI is unlikely to pay for space, equipment, or personnel for a laboratory at a second institution.

***D3. If I am selected to be an investigator, are there aspects of my current duties that could delay or even block my appointment as an investigator?***

Yes. Investigators are required to devote at least 75% of their total professional effort to the direct conduct of research. This includes all research, regardless of how funded. Investigators may spend up to 25% of their effort on other activities, such as teaching, administrative duties, service as a journal editor or reviewer, and consulting for companies. If you are selected to be an investigator, your appointment cannot occur until your pre-existing non-research duties have been reviewed. If those duties collectively exceed the allowed 25% of total effort or are incompatible with other HHMI policies, they would have to be modified before you could be appointed as an investigator.

***D4. If I am selected to be an investigator, how long would my HHMI appointment continue?***

Investigator appointments are for an initial term of five years, and may be renewed for additional five-year terms, each contingent on a successful scientific review. If an HHMI scientific review is unsuccessful, the investigator is provided with phase-out support for an appropriate period, typically two additional years.

***D5. My institution allows me to consult or engage in other outside activities for up to one day per week. Does HHMI have a limit on outside activities?***

Yes. As noted in D3, above, the sum of all non-research activities, including consulting activities, cannot exceed 25% of total professional effort. As described in H4, below, consulting for companies is limited to 36 days per year and that requirement may be more stringent than guidelines at your current institution.

***D6. I am considering moving to a new institution after January 2008. If selected by HHMI in this competition, could I be appointed at the new institution?***

No. The application must be submitted from the same institution that will be the site of your appointment. Also, an HHMI investigator who changes institutions prior to completion of his or her first five-year term of appointment must resign from HHMI. After successful scientific review, an investigator may transfer to another HHMI host

institution as detailed in HHMI's transfer policy. Only one transfer is permitted over the course of an HHMI investigatorship.

## **E. Compensation and Benefits**

***E1. I understand that as an investigator I would receive my full salary from HHMI. How will my initial HHMI salary be determined?***

Investigator salaries are set by HHMI by comparison to the salaries of colleagues at the same institution who are at the same career stage and have similar scientific stature.

***E2. How is salary determined subsequently?***

HHMI reviews compensation annually; merit increases are typically established for each year. When an investigator is promoted to a new academic rank within his or her institution (e.g., Associate to full Professor), the Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer discusses an appropriate salary adjustment with the host institution. If an investigator assumes any administrative responsibilities, the Institute does not provide a salary supplement and does not permit a salary supplement from any other source.

***E3. Is it possible that HHMI might offer me an initial salary that is lower than my current compensation?***

Yes. For example, institute policies do not allow salaries of investigators to contain increments that reflect past, present or proposed administrative duties or practice plan earnings.

***E4. Can I receive salary supplementation from my institution for administrative or patient-care duties?***

No. HHMI investigators cannot receive salary compensation from their institution.

***E5. I receive subsidized housing from my host institution. Would that be a problem for HHMI?***

Not as long as the housing subsidy is comparable to what your host institution would provide to other similarly-situated faculty. If you are successful in this competition, we would want to review this issue with you prior to your appointment.

***E6. I expect to receive tuition remission for my children from my host institution. Would that be a problem for HHMI?***

No, this is not a concern for HHMI, but eligibility for such a benefit is determined by host institution policies.

***E7. I don't receive either subsidized housing or tuition remission from my host institution. Would HHMI provide these benefits?***

No, HHMI does not provide these benefits. HHMI does offer many other benefits to its employees, including health, dental, and vision coverage, life insurance, and retirement benefits.

## **F. NIH and Other Grant Funding**

***F1. Can I continue to get grant funding from other sources if I become an HHMI investigator?***

As an investigator you could continue to get grant funding from government agencies and non-profit organizations. All such funding would be through your host institution, not HHMI, and your host institution would retain all indirect costs associated with the grants. Although no-strings-attached gifts from companies may also be accepted, company-sponsored research is not permitted in HHMI laboratories.

***F2. Right now I get my salary from my NIH grant funds. Do I have to turn those funds back if I am appointed as an investigator?***

You must either turn those funds back or ask for those funds to be reallocated to other categories supported by the grant. Your institution could not continue to accept funds for your salary after your HHMI appointment is effective.

***F3. I am currently reporting very close to 100% effort on my government grants. Would that be an issue for HHMI?***

Yes. Although HHMI does not use effort reporting, we do not believe it is consistent with a researcher's role as an HHMI investigator to spend almost 100% of his or her time on grant-funded projects. Accordingly, if you are successful in this HHMI competition, we would ask you and your institution to reexamine your effort commitments.

## **G. Budgets, Indirect Costs and Laboratory Staff**

### ***G1. What does an investigator's HHMI budget include?***

Investigator budgets include a component for personnel (laboratory staff) and a component for operations (e.g., supplies, services and minor equipment). Requests for major equipment are not part of an investigator's budget; instead, HHMI considers requests for such equipment items three times a year.

### ***G2. How does HHMI set an investigator's budget?***

Investigator budgets are determined by HHMI's Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer and are subject to the approval of HHMI's President and Trustees. Initial budgets for a cohort of investigators tend to be similar. Over time, budgets become more individualized.

### ***G3. Does HHMI pay indirect costs?***

HHMI does not pay indirect costs. HHMI does make payments to the host institution for occupancy of an investigator's research and office space and for certain other expenses. HHMI negotiates these directly with the host institution and they are not a part of investigator budgets.

### ***G4. If I am appointed as an investigator, can some of my laboratory staff become HHMI employees? Would they get health insurance from HHMI? Who sets their salaries?***

Yes. Any of your postdoctoral associates, technicians, and other research staff could become HHMI employees (subject to the limitations of your budget). All full-time HHMI employees, and all part-time HHMI employees scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week, are eligible for benefits that include retirement, health, dental, and vision coverage. You would set their salaries, within HHMI salary guidelines.

***G5. What about graduate students?*** Your graduate students cannot become HHMI employees. Investigators typically support graduate students from institutional or grant funds.

***G6. What if someone on my staff wants to remain an employee of my host institution? Do I have to make that person an HHMI employee?*** You are expected to have some HHMI employees in your lab other than yourself, but we do not require anyone other than investigators to change employment status.

## **H. Research Collaborations and Consultancies**

***H1. I understand that HHMI policy does not allow company-sponsored research in HHMI laboratories. As an HHMI investigator, could I still work with a company on a research project?***

HHMI investigators can and do collaborate with companies on an unfunded basis. We strongly encourage such collaborations as long as they are driven by scientific considerations and the company is making a direct and substantial scientific contribution to the joint project. Collaborations with companies must be documented by an agreement that has been reviewed by HHMI's Office of the General Counsel and approved by the Science Department.

Please note that an investigator may not consult for and collaborate with a company at the same time. Involvement with a clinical study or trial sponsored by a company is considered to be a special form of collaboration; see the section on Clinical Research, below.

***H2. Can I be appointed as an HHMI investigator if I have company-sponsored research in my laboratory?***

No. Your company-sponsored research would have to be terminated before you could be appointed as an investigator.

***H3. What about collaborations with my academic colleagues? Do I have to make any changes in these in order to be appointed as an HHMI investigator?***

It is very likely no changes would need to be made unless you have a significant scientific collaboration with an academic colleague who is funded for that research by a company. If you are successful in this competition, we would need to discuss any such situation with you.

***H4. As an HHMI investigator, can I consult for a company?***

Yes, provided that:

- You meet the requirement that 75% of your total professional effort be spent on research.
- You do not consult for companies for more than a total of 36 days per year.
- Your compensation for the consulting is not based on incentives such as the company's meeting specified sales or revenue targets.
- Your consulting is covered by an agreement that has been reviewed by HHMI's Office of the General Counsel and formally approved by HHMI's Science Department.
- You provide advice only and do not conduct or oversee research.
- You do not own a significant equity interest in the company. An interest of more than 5% is always considered significant.
- You do not collaborate with the company.

Please also note that service as a member of a company's board of directors is permitted only in limited circumstances, and service as an officer of a company is never permitted.

***H5. What about consulting for a non-profit organization?***

Consulting arrangements with non-profit entities do not need to be reviewed by HHMI headquarters if (1) they are not in writing or (2) they are in writing but cover only basic terms such as the scope of duties, time commitment, and amount of compensation, if any. If a non-profit organization asks you to sign an agreement that asserts rights or imposes limitations that may affect your laboratory operations, research results, or ability to publish, HHMI headquarters needs to review and approve the agreement before you sign. This consulting does not count against the 36-day limit, but would have to be taken into account as part of the 25% of time permitted by HHMI policies for non-research activities.

## **I. Clinical Research**

### ***11. Can I perform clinical trials or studies as an HHMI investigator?***

Yes, HHMI investigators can and do serve as principal investigators and co-investigators on trials and studies. HHMI's policies relating to clinical studies or trials apply equally whether the investigator is involved as a PI or as a co-investigator.

### ***12. Will HHMI pay for the costs of a clinical study or trial on which an investigator is a PI or co-investigator?***

HHMI does not in general sponsor interventional clinical trials or pay for patient care costs. Investigators may, however, allocate part of their budget to research activities that are a part of clinical trials and studies.

### ***13. Does HHMI have an IRB that will review my human subject protocols?***

No, HHMI does not have an IRB. As an investigator, you would continue to submit your human subjects protocols to your host institution's IRB.

### ***14. Does HHMI provide professional liability (medical malpractice) insurance for the investigator?***

No. We require that the host institution provide the investigator with professional liability (medical malpractice) coverage.

### ***15. I've been asked to be a PI on a clinical trial that would be funded by a company. Is this a problem for HHMI?***

A number of investigators have been PIs on company-sponsored trials, which we consider to be a type of research collaboration with a company. HHMI has a number of requirements relating to company-sponsored trials. These include the following:

- As to the investigator and his or her laboratory, the company funding may be used only for patient care costs, not to support research in the laboratory;
- There can be no salary support for the investigator or any staff in the laboratory, whether or not employed by HHMI;
- Publication must be allowed on terms HHMI considers acceptable; and
- The agreement with the corporate sponsor cannot interfere with the investigator's ability to pursue his or her own research program effectively.

### ***16. I'm already a PI on a company-funded clinical trial that is expected to run for the next couple of years. If I become an investigator, will HHMI still apply its requirements to this trial or could it just go on until it is completed as scheduled?***

If the arrangements for the trial are not consistent with our requirements, the arrangements would need to be modified or your involvement with it would need to end before we could proceed with your appointment.

### ***17. Can I own stock in a company that I'm collaborating with?***

This depends upon the nature of the collaboration. Consistent with HHMI's approach to conflict of interest issues, we do not permit an investigator to collaborate with a company

on a clinical trial or study of a pharmaceutical product or medical device that is proposed or under development by the company, if the investigator or a member of his or her immediate family owns stock or other equity in a company. A similar approach applies to those under the investigator's supervision: if they or members of their immediate family own stock or other equity in a company, they should not be involved in this type of collaboration with the company.

If you are collaborating or propose to collaborate with a company on a project other than one described above, we will ask you whether you or your immediate family have an equity interest in the company, and will consider whether it is appropriate for you to proceed with the collaboration while holding the equity.

***18. Can I receive royalties from a company with which I'm collaborating?***

This depends on the nature of the collaboration and the royalty interest. Consistent with HHMI's approach to conflict of interest issues, we do not permit an investigator to collaborate with a company on a clinical trial or study of a pharmaceutical product or medical device proposed or under development by the company, if the investigator or a member of his or her immediate family is entitled to receive royalties from the company with respect to any technology relating to the trial or study. Receipt of royalties in cash form from the company under a prior license of technology that does not relate to the trial or study would not be precluded. A similar approach applies to those under the investigator's supervision: if they or members of their immediate family are entitled to receive royalties from a company with respect to technology relating to a company-sponsored trial or study, they should not be involved in work on the trial or study.

So, for example, as an HHMI investigator you could not be a PI on a company-sponsored clinical study or trial of a compound or device that you developed and that is licensed to the sponsoring company, if you receive or will receive a share of royalties under the license (whether in the form of equity or cash). You could receive royalties, in cash form only, under a prior license to the company of technology that is unrelated to the compound or device.

If you are collaborating or propose to collaborate with a company on a project other than one described above, we will ask you if any technology you developed has been licensed to the company, and discuss with you any issues that this may present.

***19. I do a lot of very short-term consulting for pharmaceutical companies; for example I might meet with company representatives for just part of a day. Could I still do this if I am a PI on a trial that the company is sponsoring?***

You could still meet with the company, and you could accept reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses, but you could not accept an honorarium or other fee. Any agreement covering your meeting with the company must be reviewed and approved by HHMI in advance.

## **J. Intellectual Property – Patenting and Licensing**

### ***J1. How does HHMI handle intellectual property?***

As the employer, HHMI owns any intellectual property developed by its investigators and other employees. HHMI assigns intellectual property rights back to the host institution, and shares with the host institution in patenting and licensing expenses and in any royalty income. Distributions of royalty income to inventors are generally not affected by HHMI's involvement, since HHMI defers to the relevant host institution's policy on the amount and timing of such distributions, and it is the host institution that makes any such distributions.

### ***J2. Some technology I developed in the past has been licensed to companies. Does HHMI care about those arrangements?***

Yes, if they affect your ongoing research. If you are successful in this competition, we will ask your host institution for copies of all licenses to for-profit companies of technology developed in your laboratory. If any such licenses cover future improvements that might result from your research as an HHMI investigator, we are likely to ask that modifications in those licenses be made before your appointment can proceed.

### ***J3. If I get royalties from a company that licensed technology I developed in the past, could I still collaborate with or consult for that company?***

Yes, assuming that the license and collaboration or consulting arrangements are consistent with HHMI policies. Also, although our policies would not allow you to have any financial interest in a company with which you are collaborating on a clinical study or trial, we do make an exception for cash royalties from a past license of unrelated technology. For example, if you are a PI on a clinical study that is sponsored by a company, our policies would allow you to receive cash royalties under a prior license of technology unrelated to the current study.