

HHMI Investigator Program Information
2018 HHMI Investigator Competition
Frequently Asked Questions

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For more detailed information about HHMI's research policies, please refer to the [Policies](#) page on www.hhmi.org

A. Eligibility

A1. What are the eligibility requirements?

- Ph.D. and/or M.D. (or the equivalent).
- As of June 27, 2017, tenured or tenure-track position as assistant professor or higher academic rank at one of the eligible U.S. institutions, or, if at an eligible institution that has no tenure track, an appointment that reflects a significant institutional commitment. Federal government employees are not eligible.
- More than 3, but no more than 12, years of experience since beginning your first post-training, professional position. To meet this requirement, the applicant's first post-training, professional position must have begun no earlier than June 1, 2005, and no later than September 1, 2014.
- As of August 1, 2017, principal investigator on one (or more) active, national peer-reviewed research grants with a duration of at least three years, such as an NIH R01 grant. Mentored awards, career development and training grants do not qualify. Multi-investigator grants may qualify.

A2. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

Eligibility must be established by registering at the [online competition site](http://www.hhmi.org/research/application/comp2018) (www.hhmi.org/research/application/comp2018).

A3. Am I eligible if I started my first post-training, professional position before June 1, 2005 but have less than 12 years of experience due to one or more periods of leave?

Circumstances such as military service, family medical leave, or approved tenure-clock extensions may justify an exception when such leave or tenure-clock extension has been approved by your institution, and is consistent with and authorized by a policy at your institution. Request an exception by sending the signed and dated approval authorizing your leave of absence or tenure-track extension and a copy of the relevant policy to sciencecomp@hhmi.org.

A4. Am I eligible if I started my first post-training, professional position days after September 1, 2014?

No, you are not eligible. For this competition, no exceptions are being made to the requirement that applicants must have started their first post-training, professional position no later than September 1, 2014.

A5. What fields of research are supported by the HHMI Investigator Program?

HHMI's community of basic researchers and physician scientists bring innovative approaches to the study of biological problems in biomedical disciplines, plant biology, evolutionary biology, biophysics, chemical biology, biomedical engineering, and computational biology. See [HHMI investigator profiles](#) for an overview of the research conducted by current investigators. Note that research on health education, health care delivery, or health services are not eligible fields.

A6. How are post-training positions defined for determining years of post-training, professional experience?

The following positions qualify as post-training for calculating years of experience:

- Tenure-track Assistant Professor or higher rank positions.

- Positions at institutions without tenure track positions that are most similar to a tenure-track appointment (i.e. in terms of institutional commitment to the employee, etc.).
- Research (non-tenure) track faculty positions if the scientist:
 - had institutionally-assigned space independent of a mentor's space, and
 - received a start-up package as a Principal Investigator.
- Industry positions not identified as postdoctoral training positions.
- Full-time clinical positions without a training component.

In contrast, time in the following types of positions is not included when determining years of experience:

- Postdoctoral positions, regardless of position title.
- Medical internships, residencies, and fellowships.
- Fellow positions made through programs providing financial support for early career scientists to run independent groups.
- Research (non-tenure) track faculty positions that do not meet the criteria listed above or other positions in which the scientist works within a mentor's laboratory even if leading projects, guiding students, or being a P.I. on a research award.

A7. I'm an adjunct professor at one of the eligible institutions and a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at another institution that is not an eligible institution. Am I eligible?

No.

A8. I have my principal research space and/or am employed at a U.S. federal government laboratory, although I am on the faculty at an eligible institution. Am I eligible?

No. Federal employees are not eligible for appointment as HHMI investigators. If your principal research location is at a federal facility, such as a USDA facility, a DOE laboratory, or VA Hospital, you are not eligible for this competition.

A9. What makes a position equivalent to tenure track at an institution without a tenure track?

Applicants at institutions without tenure track positions are required to have a position that is the most similar to a tenure-track appointment at that institution (i.e. equivalent in terms of institutional commitment to the employee, etc.). If you are uncertain about whether your appointment meets this eligibility requirement, provide information about the terms of your position to sciencecomp@hhmi.org prior to submitting an application.

A10. I have a faculty-in-residence appointment which is non-tenure track at an institution which also has a tenure track. Am I eligible?

No.

A11. I am a PI on a R01 now, but I've been told my grant will not be renewed. I do not have another grant. Am I still eligible?

Yes, provided that the grant is in active status on August 1, 2017. Grants in an official no cost extension period will qualify.

A12. My only funding is as a co-investigator rather than a principal investigator. Am I

eligible?

No, to be eligible, you must be a principal investigator on one or more active, national peer-reviewed research grants with a duration of at least three years.

A13. I am a co-principal investigator on an NIH R01 grant or a project leader on a multi-investigator award. Am I eligible?

Co-principal investigators are eligible. Also, subcomponent directors of a multi-investigator grant, such as an NIH P01, would likely qualify, but your role in the project would need to be discussed with HHMI staff through an inquiry to sciencecomp@hhmi.org.

A14. What is your policy with regard to eligibility of faculty members with administrative responsibilities?

Individuals with administrative responsibilities are eligible to apply, but those appointed to be HHMI investigators must devote at least 75% of their total professional effort to the direct conduct of research. Note:

- The permitted 25% of non-research activities include administrative duties, teaching, faculty service, and consulting (subject to HHMI's rules on consulting).
- HHMI investigators may serve in leadership positions (e.g., department chair, director of a departmental division, head of a research center or a graduate program, etc.) if HHMI determines that the duties are compatible with devoting at least 75% of their total professional effort to the direct conduct of research.
- 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, refer to question E4 concerning salary support for administrative responsibilities.

B. Components of Application

B1. What must my application include?

Your application must include the following documents, all submitted electronically at the [HHMI competition website](#). Formatting guidelines, required templates for the CV and Bibliography, and instructions will be provided on the website to eligible candidates. Documents uploaded into the application must be PDFs.

CURRICULUM VITAE: Your curriculum vitae, including a list of your current research support and a table with your current lab census. You must use the HHMI CV template provided on the competition website. Professional positions should be listed in reverse chronological order. While *significant* teaching and seminar activities may be listed, please do not include a comprehensive list of classroom teaching activities or invited seminars under the heading Significant Professional Activities. There is a three page limit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: A bibliography with peer-reviewed publications and preprint publications listed in reverse chronological order. There is an eight page limit on this subsection of the bibliography. A separate list of reviews, perspectives, other articles, book chapters and patents is permitted. There is a two page limit on this subsection. You must use the HHMI Bibliography template provided on the competition website.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS: A 250-word overview of your most significant research achievements.

ABSTRACT: A 300-word overview of the biological questions, goals and approaches of the research program. The content should be easily understood by scientists not expert in your scientific discipline. It is not necessary to duplicate text in the Research Program; the abstract and Research Program will be presented to reviewers as a package.

RESEARCH PROGRAM: A summary (not to exceed 3,000 words) of your ongoing and planned research program, with up to one page of figures and a list of essential references. Your figures and accompanying legends may be interleaved within the body of the text of your summary. Figures, legends and essential references are not included in the 3,000-word limit.

FIVE PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE: Provide five selected peer-reviewed papers that report your most important scientific contributions with a focus on the most recent five years. For each publication, provide a statement that begins with the complete journal citation and then summarizes, in 300 words or less, the significance of the selected publication. Only papers that are published, accepted or deposited in a preprint server as of June 27, 2017, may be included.

B2. May the five significant publications required in the application include one or more deposited in a preprint server but not yet published or accepted for publication in a scientific journal?

Yes. All of the following are acceptable for inclusion among the five significant publications submitted in the application:

- peer-reviewed published papers;
- peer-reviewed manuscripts accepted for publication by a journal;
- articles deposited in a publically available preprint server, such as BioRxiv.

B3. Will I be asked to provide reference letters?

No. HHMI will not require or accept reference letters for this competition.

B4. Can I send updates to my application?

If you are selected as a semifinalist, you will be permitted to submit a one-page statement updating your application, including any new publications.

B5. Can work supported by active or submitted grants be included in the Research Program summary?

Yes. We are interested in any of your current and planned work, regardless of sources of funding.

B6. Should specific aims be included in the Research Program summary?

Describe future goals, but not at the level of experimental detail that may be expected in a research grant proposal, for example, to a federal agency.

B7. How much background information should I provide?

Background information will likely be necessary to set the stage for the description of your ongoing and planned research program and its significance. Note that reviewers will receive the

full application including the five selected publications and your statements regarding those publications as well as the overview of your most significant research achievements.

B8. What should I include in the Major Achievements section?

In this section, highlight selective research achievements that you consider to be your most significant contributions to date. Do not include scientific mentoring or other educational achievements.

B9. Am I expected to demonstrate all five attributes of an HHMI investigator at the time of my application?

Please consult the Program Announcement for this competition for a description of the attributes of HHMI investigators. Note that only some combination is expected, and that HHMI investigators may excel at only two or three of those listed.

B10. Do I need endorsement or approval from my institution in order to apply for this competition?

No. Institutional approval or endorsement of your application is not part of the application process. Because you are applying to become an employee of HHMI, 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 the HHMI review process work?

The HHMI review process will include evaluation of applications by distinguished scientists, leading to the selection of semifinalists in early January, 2018. Further review will include a symposium attended by HHMI scientific leadership and the final advisory panel at which each semifinalist will make a brief research presentation.

C2. When is the symposium at which semifinalists will make brief presentations to HHMI scientific leadership and the final advisory panel?

The competition symposium will be April 2-4, 2018 at HHMI's Janelia Research Campus in Ashburn, Virginia. All applicants should mark their calendars for these dates. Those selected as semifinalists will be required to attend and should plan to arrive on April 2nd; presentations will be scheduled for April 3rd and semifinalists will depart on April 4th.

C3. Who are the reviewers?

Reviewers include distinguished scientists selected by HHMI. These may include current and past members of HHMI's Medical Advisory Board and Scientific Review Board, and other scientists, including current HHMI investigators, and HHMI's scientific staff.

C4. Can I get a list of potential reviewers who might be assigned to my application?

No. We do not make public the roster of reviewers for an investigator competition. HHMI considers current and past institution affiliations and mentoring and collaboration relationships,

among other factors, when identifying whether reviewers have a conflict of interest with an applicant.

C5. What are the criteria for selecting HHMI Investigators?

In choosing scientists to appoint as HHMI investigators, HHMI will be guided by the principle of “people, not projects.” The [Program Announcement](#) provides information regarding the attributes of HHMI investigators. Please consult www.hhmi.org/about to learn more about HHMI programs, including the Investigator Program.

C6. Does HHMI give a preference to applicants who are already at institutions where there are other HHMI investigators?

No. Our goal is to identify and appoint the best candidates from all eligible institutions.

C7. When will I know the status of my application?

You will be informed in early January, 2018 whether or not your application is proceeding into the final phase of the competition.

C8. Will I receive written comments on my application from the reviewers?

No. Written comments on applications submitted for this competition will not be provided.

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?

No. Appointment as an HHMI investigator does not affect your faculty status at your institution. Moreover, you must retain your faculty status at the host institution as a condition of your investigator appointment and HHMI employment.

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 review that situation with you before your appointment. In addition, we might need to put in place an agreement between HHMI, your host institution, and the institution at which your second laboratory is located.

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.

- HHMI requires investigators to devote at least 75% of their total professional effort to the direct conduct of research, regardless of how funded. Up to 25% of total professional effort may be spent on administrative duties, teaching, faculty service, and consulting (subject to HHMI’s rules on consulting). An HHMI investigator appointment cannot go into effect until your pre-existing non-research duties have been reviewed.

- Industry-sponsored research funding in HHMI laboratories and consulting for companies are subject to review and may need to be modified before an individual can be appointed as an HHMI investigator (also refer to Section H).

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

Investigator appointments have an initial term of seven years, and may be renewed for additional seven-year terms, each contingent on a successful scientific review. If a scientific review is unsuccessful, the investigator will be provided with approximately two additional years of phase-out support beyond the seven-year term.

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. See also H4, below, regarding consulting for companies.

D6. I am considering moving to a new institution after June 27, 2017 (the deadline for applying for this competition). If selected by HHMI in this competition, could I be appointed at the new institution?

No. The application must be submitted from the institution where you hold your appointment as of June 27, 2017, and this institution will be the site of your HHMI appointment if you are selected.

D7. Can I move an HHMI appointment to another institution?

An investigator may not transfer to another institution during the first five years of their initial seven-year appointment term and retain their HHMI appointment. New investigators may request an early scientific review after five years and, if their appointment is renewed, may transfer to another HHMI host institution, as detailed in [HHMI's transfer policy](#). An HHMI investigator is permitted only one transfer during his or her tenure with HHMI.

E. Compensation and Benefits for HHMI Investigators

E1. What is included in the compensation package of an HHMI Investigator?

HHMI pays the full salary of the investigator and offers a comprehensive benefits package to investigators and other eligible employees.

E2. How will my initial HHMI salary be determined?

Information about your current salary at the time of your appointment will be solicited from your institution. Generally, 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.

E3. 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), HHMI's Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer discusses an appropriate salary adjustment with the host institution.

E4. Can I receive salary supplementation from my institution for administrative or other duties?

Investigators may receive salary supplements from their host institution for administrative service. The administrative effort must accommodate the requirement that 75% of your total professional effort be spent on research. The compensation must be comparable to that received by similarly-positioned faculty and must otherwise comply with [HHMI's Policy on Salary Supplementation](#).

E5. As an HHMI Investigator, could I continue to receive housing, tuition assistance, or other similar benefits offered by my host institution?

HHMI permits certain types of benefits that host institutions make available to an investigator on the same basis as to other similarly-situated faculty members, and that are not offered by HHMI. Most commonly these benefits include faculty housing assistance and tuition remission.

F. Grant and Other Non-profit Funding

F1. Can I continue to receive government grant funding if I become an HHMI investigator?

Yes. As an investigator, your laboratory could continue to receive grant funding from government agencies. See also Section H regarding industry funding.

F2. I receive at least part of my salary from my federal grant funds. Because my entire salary must be provided by HHMI, would I be required to return those funds if appointed as an investigator?

Your institution cannot continue to accept any such funds for your salary after your HHMI appointment is effective. Investigators typically negotiate directly with the granting agency regarding possible reallocation of grant funds.

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

Although HHMI does not use or require effort reporting, if you are successful in this competition, we would ask you and your institution to reexamine your effort commitments.

F4. Can I receive funding from other nonprofit sources for research in my laboratory if I become an HHMI Investigator?

Yes, provided the funding arrangements do not interfere with the application of HHMI policies to your research. Upon appointment as an HHMI Investigator, you become an HHMI employee and HHMI policies apply to the conduct of all research in your laboratory. There may be circumstances where the terms of another funding arrangement with a company or a nonprofit institution will be incompatible with appointment as an HHMI Investigator. HHMI will consider this as part of the review of arrangements affecting your research that are in place at the time of

your appointment. In certain cases, you may be required to choose between an HHMI appointment and maintaining one or more of your other arrangements. See also Section H regarding industry funding.

G. Budgets, Indirect Costs, and Laboratory Staff

G1. What does an investigator's budget include?

The investigator budget includes research funding that may be used for non-investigator personnel (e.g., compensation and benefits for laboratory staff) and for laboratory operations (e.g., supplies, services and minor equipment). In addition, investigators may submit requests to HHMI for funding of major equipment. Please refer to E1 for information on the separate compensation package for HHMI investigators.

G2. How does HHMI establish an investigator's budget?

HHMI's Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer determines a budget amount for each new HHMI investigator, and these amounts are subject to the approval of HHMI's President and Trustees.

G3. Does HHMI pay indirect costs?

HHMI does not pay indirect costs. HHMI makes occupancy payments to the host institution in connection with an investigator's research and office space, and pays certain other expenses. These payments are negotiated with and paid directly to the host institution, and they are not a part of an investigator's budget.

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

Yes. Any of your postdoctoral associates, technicians, and other research and administrative staff could become HHMI employees (subject to the limitations of your budget, and assuming the individual meets the requirements for an HHMI position). Although graduate students cannot become HHMI employees, funds from investigators budgets can be used in support of students conducting research in the lab. Also, note:

- It is generally expected that you will have some HHMI employees in your laboratory in addition to yourself.
- Full-time and part-time (scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week) HHMI employees are eligible for benefits that include access to a 403(b) retirement plan, as well as health, dental, and vision coverage. Temporary employees, such as summer students, generally are not eligible for most benefits from HHMI.
- You set salaries for HHMI employees in your laboratory, within HHMI salary guidelines.

H. Research Collaborations, Consulting, and Industry Funding

H1. Can I receive industry funding for research in my laboratory?

Yes, provided the arrangements are consistent with HHMI's policy on [Company Funding Arrangements](#). Your host institution negotiates the terms for industry funding to your laboratory

under similar circumstances as other faculty. However, HHMI staff reviews all arrangements to ensure that the terms are consistent with HHMI policies. Any existing company-sponsored research arrangements will be reviewed by HHMI, and may need to be modified before you could be appointed as an investigator.

H2. Can I collaborate with industry?

Yes, provided the arrangements are consistent with HHMI's policies. Research collaborations with company scientists that include company funding are reviewed by HHMI for consistency with HHMI's policy on [Company Funding Arrangements](#). Unfunded research collaboration projects with company scientists are reviewed by HHMI for consistency with HHMI's policy on [Research Collaborations](#). All collaborations with companies, whether funded or unfunded, must be documented by an agreement that has been reviewed by HHMI's Office of the General Counsel.

H3. Are collaborations with my academic colleagues also reviewed?

Your collaborations with academic colleagues require HHMI review only when you have a significant scientific collaboration with an academic colleague who is funded for that research by a company, or when the collaborator or your host institution otherwise require a written agreement. See also F4 regarding funding from nonprofit sources.

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

Yes, provided the arrangements are consistent with HHMI's consulting policies. Consulting activities with companies must be documented by an agreement that has been reviewed by HHMI's Office of the General Counsel. Information about HHMI's consulting policies can be found on [HHMI's Policies page](#).

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. Also, an investigator may not consult for and collaborate with a company or receive funding from the company at the same time.

H5. Can I have equity ownership in a company, including a start-up?

Yes. Equity ownership in start-ups and other companies must be consistent with HHMI policies. Information about HHMI's policies regarding equity ownership is available in [HHMI's Consulting for Companies - General Policy](#) (See H4, above, and also [HHMI's policies with respect to start-up and other private companies](#)).

H6. Can I consult for a non-profit organization?

Yes. Consulting arrangements with non-profit entities that include only basic terms such as the scope of duties, time commitment, and the amount of any honorarium or other compensation do not need to be reviewed by HHMI staff.

I. Intellectual Property – Patenting and Licensing

I1. 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 to the host institution, subject to certain retained rights for research purposes, and shares with the host institution patenting and licensing expenses, and any royalty income, to the extent specified in HHMI's collaborative agreement with the investigator's host institution. The relevant host institution's policy dictates the amount and timing of distributions of royalty income to inventors. Thus, the inventors' shares are usually not affected by HHMI's involvement.

I2. Some technology I developed in the past has been licensed to companies. Will HHMI be concerned 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 active 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.

I3. 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.