Supporting the Mental Health and Wellness of our Trainees

- OITE/NIH focus to improve the mental health and wellness of our trainees.
- Mental Health and Well-being of Biomedical Researchers Seminar Series
- Becoming a Resilient Scientist Series
- Drop-in groups, skills groups, meditation, Thriving Thursday
- Wellness advising
  - Worried about a trainee/want a wellness referral:
    - Email us at oite-wellness@mail.nih.gov
Mandatory Rights & Responsibilities
Training for Trainees

- Required for IRTAs/CRTAs/VFs and trainees appointed using other mechanisms
  - Compliance tracked by EOs
  - Must attend only once
- Offerings every other month *next one May 12
- Covers:
  - Being successful at NIH
  - NIH resources
  - Expectation of respect and safety
  - Anti-harassment and personal relationship policies/reporting
  - Other NIH policies (social media/outside work/etc)
Where are the Policies for Trainees?

- NIH Sourcebook
  - [https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/](https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/)
- Manual Chapters
  - IRTA: [https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-320-7](https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-320-7)
  - Visiting Fellow: [https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-320-3](https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-320-3)
Visiting Fellow Equity

- IRTA manual chapter is fully updated. The Visiting Fellow chapter is currently in revision to match.

- You should assume that these policies are extended to Visiting Fellows.
Updated NIH Policy Manual, Chapter 2300-320-7

- Represents all of the different level of IRTA trainees
- Updated eligibility of Student-IRTAs (Summer and Academic categories)
- Moved policies that have been in the sourcebook into the manual chapters (application/selection procedures, renewals, parental leave)
- Updated the leave policy in section C.24
- Updated tort claims
- Updated and streamlined the Samples of Notification of Traineeship & IRTA Traineeship Agreement in appendix 5
- NOTE: early-termination policies are in Sourcebook
C.5. Eligibility

- Postdoc/Pre-doc—no changes
- Postbac- removed the Technical IRTA
- Student- updated age/geography requirements and the distinction between Student (Summer) and Student (Academic)
Academic Internship Program (AIP)

- Goal is to formalize the training program for students in the IRP during the academic year
  - collect information on ALL NIH trainees so we can: (1) communicate regarding safety, policies, & resources, (2) build a sense of community, (3) collect demographic info
  - enhance trainee diversity and inclusion
  - reduce favoritism/nepotism
  - ensure eligibility criteria are met
  - respond quickly to changing workforce needs at the MS level
Eligibility Criteria for Academic Interns

- US citizens or legal permanent residents
- Enrolled and in good standing in high school, college, or master’s degree program
- >= 17 on the start date
- AND, for high school students
  - be juniors or seniors
  - attend school within 40 miles of the internship site
Academic Interns Process

- Applicants apply online (using the OITE system in place -- in final stages of launch)
- PIs search the database and make their own selections (unless an IC wants to coordinate central selection)
- High school students must
  - begin at the start of a semester and
  - attend a mandatory orientation
- Coming to or remaining at NIH during summer requires a SIP (or HS-SIP) application
- ICs appoint Student Intern Coordinators
- Appointments made as IRTA/CRTAs or Special Volunteers
C.15. Application Procedures and C.17 Selection Procedures

- Added content for the application procedures for all IRTA levels
  - No policy change, just updated manual chapter to reflect current methods, including nepotism guidance

- For admin staff- added List of Identity and IRTA Eligibility in section C.16 and UPDATED Samples of Notification of Traineeship & IRTA Traineeship Agreement in Appx. 5
C.7. Renewals

- Added in renewal policies for all trainee levels
- For Pre-docs & Postbacs- updated exceptional extension policy
  - Note policy has not changed, just moved from sourcebook to manual chapter
COVID Extensions for Postbac and Pre-docs

- Extensions for Postbac IRTA/CRTAs
  - No approval required for a terminal three-month extension
  - Postbacs seeking a 3rd exceptional extension—[OIR Sourcebook Renewals](https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/intramural-covid-19-guidance-resources)
  - Postbacs in their third-year who require an extension into a fourth-year given these unique circumstances should email Dr. Sharon Milgram

- For Predoc IRTA/CRTAs and Visiting Fellows
  - Guidance is provided at the OIR Sourcebook in the Renewals sections for [Predoc-IRTA/CRTAs](https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/intramural-covid-19-guidance-resources) and [Predoc Visiting Fellows](https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/intramural-covid-19-guidance-resources)

COVID Extensions for Postdocs

- Flexibility for extensions
- The "no remain or return to NIH for 2 years" condition remains. (exceptions possible if an FTE is possible)
- Extension requests must be in a memo from the responsible IRP PI, approved by the SD, and sent to Dr. Arlyn Garcia-Perez, who will review, decide and document the decision.
- For Postdoc Visiting Fellows check with DIS early/often
  - Need to make sure they are eligible for the G7 J1 visa
  - If a visa change is needed, the processing time has ballooned PREPARE EARLY!!!

C.22. Early Termination of Traineeship

- Linked to clearer termination policies in the sourcebook.
- Postbacs
- Pre-docs
- Postdocs
New Policy Elements

- **Postdocs and Grad Students**
  - 6-months notice in writing (preference is for a year)
  - Must include an improvement plan and a referral to OITE for career and wellness services
  - For individual agreement GPP students, the GPP will help the student coordinate with their university as needed. For institutional partnership students, this will be handled by the appropriate program director in consultation with the GPP/OITE

- **Postbacs**
  - Initial one-year commitment must be honored
  - PI may ask that the postbac be reassigned within the IC or beyond
  - Postbacs should be notified of non-renewal in writing as early as possible with a referral to OITE for wellness and career advising
Why Update Early Terminations/Non-Renewals?

- PIs are asking trainees to leave their group immediately without support or guidance
  - serious violation of our visa program for VFs
  - impact on mental health and wellness of trainees
- Increased number of postbacs (usually) dismissed after only a few weeks or months with little to no warning or time to find a new position
- The one-year notice requirement (for postdocs) can be difficult for PIs – especially tenure-tracks and other early career scientists
Early Termination/Non-renewal Policies

- Policy applies to incompatibility, not research misconduct or other inappropriate behavior
  - trainee status following a finding of research misconduct, harassment or visa violations will be handled in consultation with the appropriate office and OITE

- Best practices to avoid issues
  - require RCR training shortly after arrival
  - require OITE [and IC] orientation for all trainees
  - Promote OITE wellness resources from the outset
  - Reach out to/refer to OITE as problems emerge, not when relationships are substantially damaged
C.20. Training and Tuition

- Updated section on rotations in science-related offices of 3-months or less
  - Commonly called a “detail”, usually done in a policy or extramural office at NIH
    - Visiting Fellows are eligible as well (DIS must clear the rotation)
  
- Some ICs have MOUs in place, check with your Training Director
C.24. Excused Absence with Stipend

- Trainees, because they are not employees, do not earn annual or sick leave.
- Should be excused for Federal holidays and any other time the government is closed.
- Trainees should be given 20 days per year for illness, personal emergencies, and vacations when awards are for more than 90 days. (leave for interviewing does not count towards this 20 days)
- Military leave
Family Leave and Other Extenuating Circumstances

- Twelve weeks of excused absence will be granted for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child or other family health care

- Flexible policy for trainee illness and serious illness/death of family members
  - LWOP is very stressful and leaves our trainees in a very vulnerable position
C.31. Outside Activities

- Linked to the Sourcebook for forms for outside activities

- Of interest:
  - Some outside work is permitted (teaching, outside-speaking, writing)
  - Also references travel awards, scientific meeting awards
  - VF should seek guidance of DIS first
  - Everyone needs PI permission, and maybe SD/ethics
One FAQ

- Post pandemic- when everyone returns to work, can a IRTA be full time telework if their duties allow?
  - No. They must be physically present at an NIH facility
Helping Trainees Succeed

Science
Do they have the skills to be successful at their level?

Interpersonal
Am I helping them fit in? Wellness and resilience

Career
Will they be ready for their next step?
OITE Resources

- Community
  - Trainee Groups & Listservs (see two slides at end)

- Wellness
  - Referrals oite-wellness@mail.nih.gov
  - Workshop Series
  - Skills Groups (Drop-ins (Thriving Thursday, Themed sessions))

- Career
  - Career Counselors/Pre-med Advisors
  - Career Planning workshops (weekly)
  - Career Symposium (May)/Grad and Prof School Fair (July)

- Advice (for you)
  - Want to help a trainee succeed, Have a conflict with a trainee, Worried about a trainee, or Have a policy question???
Integrating New Trainees = Success

- Attend orientation (Postdocs/Grad -- First Tuesday of the Month, Postbacs - Second Tuesday of the month)
  - Some ICs have orientation too
  - Research/Clinical Fellows have FTE orientations
- RCR/other mandatory trainings
- Make connections for community
- Career plan
Wondering about Successful Training?

- Check out our recorded talk on Training and Mentoring Postdocs and Grad students.

- Join us April 13 for Training and Mentoring Postbacs
  - April 13, 2021 3:30–5:00 pm Register 4/13
Other Upcoming Events

- April 19, 2021 1:30–3:45 pm: The Mental Health and Well-being of Your Trainees [Register 4/19]
- May 10, 2021 3:30–5:00 pm: Setting and Communicating Expectations (original date Apr 13) [Register 5/10]
- May 26, 2021 3:30–5:00 pm: Preparing Your Trainees to Leave, (original date May 10) [Register 5/26]
General NIH Resources

- IC Training Office/Training Director
- Division of International Services (DIS)

- Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences at the NIH (FAES) Graduate School

- The NIH Civil Program
- The Office of the Ombudsman, Center for Cooperative Resolution
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
More resources

- Join our Listserv to get info of events open to all
  - [https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/_20/426/](https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/_20/426/)
- Online content for OITE career advice, material and recorded workshops (CVs, resumes, cover letters, interviewing, career planning, etc)
- OITE YouTube Page: [https://www.youtube.com/c/NIHOITE](https://www.youtube.com/c/NIHOITE)
- OITE Careers blog [https://oitecareersblog.od.nih.gov/](https://oitecareersblog.od.nih.gov/)
- Twitter @NIH_OITE
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you are/were a student or fellow here
- Email me at conlanlo@mail.nih.gov
Beyond Science: Trainee Needs

- Career Readiness
- Communication
- Teaching/Mentoring
- Leadership/Management
- Wellness
- Ethics, RCR, Rules
Find a Community at the NIH

- Network of African-American Fellows at the NIH (NAAF)
- NIH - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender-Fellows and Friends (LGBT-FF)
- The NIH-SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science)
- Mom-Dad-Docs
- Fellows of All Abilities (FAAb)
- Veteran and Active-duty Members of the U.S. Military (and a Spouse/Partner Group)
- Parenting List
- Find out more at https://www.training.nih.gov/you_are_not_alone
- https://www.training.nih.gov.listservs
Trainee Groups

- **Postbacs**: Postbac Committee:
  - Club PCR on social media:
    - Club PCR Google Group ([https://groups.google.com/g/club_pcr_google](https://groups.google.com/g/club_pcr_google)) for looking for roommates, housing, furniture, study materials, etc.
    - Club PCR Facebook Page ([https://www.facebook.com/ClubPCR/](https://www.facebook.com/ClubPCR/) for social activities
    - Club PCR Slack, Club PCR Instagram, Club PCR Google Calendar

- **Grad Students**: Google Group: gs-underground (Email Kat Daly ([kat.daly@nih.gov](mailto:kat.daly@nih.gov)) or Katelynn McCann ([katelyn.mccann@nih.gov](mailto:katelyn.mccann@nih.gov)) to join), Facebook: Graduate Student Underground, [GSC Slack Channel](https://join.slack.com) (use your non-NIH email to join)

- **Postdocs**:
  - Join [FELLOW-L@list.nih.gov](mailto:FELLOW-L@list.nih.gov) ([https://www.training.nih.gov/listservs](https://www.training.nih.gov/listservs))
  - Visit Facebook page: Bethesda Postdocs
  - Join their Slack page with channels for game nights, yoga and workout classes, Bethesda Postdoc Running Club, networking, and more: [https://join.slack.com/t/bethesdapostdocs/shared_invite/zt-h67vb550-GM_t9zGrTAQWMSdSBfa0bA](https://join.slack.com/t/bethesdapostdocs/shared_invite/zt-h67vb550-GM_t9zGrTAQWMSdSBfa0bA)
  - Visiting Fellow Committee is also having events--join this list to get more info: [https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A0=visitingfellows](https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A0=visitingfellows)
    - Monthly social functions (virtual)
    - **International Movie Club (IMC)**, monthly
Academic Interns during the Pandemic


- Student IRTA/CRTAs and Special Volunteers who are in high school or college may be appointed to the AIP **ONLY** if they are able to complete all of their work remotely. Appropriate remote activities may include assisting in literature reviews, on-line research, data analysis that can be completed remotely, and coding.

- Student IRTA/CRTAs and Special volunteers who are in graduate or professional school may be considered for on-campus work if there is a clear safety plan in place and if approved by the OITE.

- No high school or college students should be appointed to perform on-campus work in an IRP office or lab using other mechanisms (contractor, FTE) until further notice.

- **NOTE:** for summer 2021- all SIP must be virtual and may not be Special Volunteer (*unless paid by outside $$*)