National Institute on Drug Abuse

NIDA International Program

NIDA International Program
INVEST Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowships 052025

Contents

INVEST Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowships

Purpose

The purpose of the NIDA International Program INVEST Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowship is to provide unique opportunities for non-U.S., early career scientists who intend to pursue a career in drug use and addiction research to obtain postdoctoral training in the United States with a NIDA-funded researcher.

The postdoctoral fellowship offers two training tracks:

INVEST. The fellowship offers training in any aspect of the biomedical or behavioral science of drug use and addiction, including conduct in basic biological and behavioral research, epidemiology, prevention, and treatment research.

INVEST/CTN. The fellowship offers training focused on any aspect of the NIDA Clinical Trials Network (CTN) research agenda, such as intervention research, clinical trials methodology, or drug use treatment as HIV/AIDS prevention.

During the fellowship, fellows receive training in drug use and addiction research methods, develop and conduct research projects with their U.S. mentor, and participate in professional development activities. Fellows also learn about the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant application process from U.S. mentors who have successfully sought NIDA support.

Award Information

The INVEST postdoctoral fellowship is supported through training funds administered by the NIDA International Program. An awarded fellowship includes:

- A stipend to cover living expenses
- An allowance to cover the cost of health insurance and professional development activities
- Financial support for air travel, for the fellow only, for both travel to the U.S. to begin the fellowship and travel back to your home country upon completion of the fellowship.

Eligibility

Applicant

Requirements for ***applicants*** include:

- An earned doctoral degree in medicine; public health; or biomedical, behavioral, or social science
- Postdoctoral research experience, including a demonstrated ability to engage in independent research (recommended two years of experience)
- Written assurance from an institution in the home country that there is a position to which the applicant can return after completing the fellowship
- Proficiency in written and spoken English
- Citizenship or permanent residency of a country other than the U.S.
- Living and working outside the U.S. at the time the application is submitted
- Eligibility for a J-1 visa to enter the U.S.

Mentor and Mentor's Institution

Requirements for ***mentors*** and the **mentor's institution** include:

- A NIDA-funded researcher whose grant will be active throughout the proposed fellowship period:
    - For the INVEST/CTN training track, the NIDA-funded researcher also must be affiliated with the CTN network organization.
- The mentor's institution is a U.S. Department of State-designated sponsor authorized to issue Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status.
- The mentor and the mentor's institution must be willing to accept a training fellowship that does not allow for indirect costs to be charged against or deducted from the fellowship.

Understanding U.S. Federal Regulations on NIH Supported Research

The applicant should become familiar with U.S. federal regulations on the conduct of research supported by NIH.

For a complete discussion of NIH regulations, consult the:

- [NIH Grants Policy Statement](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf) at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf, or

- [Part III, Section 2 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service Grant Application, PHS 398 Instructions](), at http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html.

Any research conducted because of an INVEST postdoctoral fellowship award must comply with all NIH policies as discussed in the:

- [NIH Grants Policy Statement, Part II, section 4, Public Policy Requirements, Objectives, and Other Appropriation Mandates]() at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/HTML5/section_4/4_public_policy_req uirements__objectives_and_other_appropriation_mandates.htm.

Application Deadline

Applicants for the INVEST postdoctoral fellowship must submit a complete application by the given deadline, using the application materials available for download from the [NIDA International Program's INVEST postdoctoral fellowship webpages]() at https://nida.nih.gov/international/fellowships/invest-fellowships-postdoctoral-training.

Application Deadline: Annually on October 1

Notification of Award: Annually on December 1

Securing a Fellowship Mentor

Identifying a U.S. NIDA-funded researcher to serve as a mentor is an essential step to the beginning of the application process. Before contacting a potential mentor, an applicant should have a clear understanding of the goals for their fellowship. You should outline your proposed research question, the scientific methods to use to answer that question, and the data needed to complete the investigation. List the skills, techniques, or methods you wish to learn or improve during your fellowship. This writing exercise will help to identify terms to use in a search for potential mentors.

Search Tools

NIH RePORTER

The Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT) Expenditures and Results (RePORTER) is a public database of research projects supported by NIH. RePORTER provides access to funded grant project information, including the names of principal investigators and NIH institute project officers. [The RePORTER database]() is available at https://reporter.nih.gov.

NIH RePORTER Matchmaker

Part of NIH RePORTER, the Matchmaker function allows a user to enter scientific abstracts and text to find similar projects and to identify program officials. The RePORTER Matchmaker is available at https://reporter.nih.gov/matchmaker.

NIH PUBMED

An additional resource to help identify a potential mentor is the NIH PubMed database, which includes millions of citations for biomedical literature and can include full text, peer-reviewed publications. PubMed is available at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

Before contacting a potential mentor:

- Confirm your eligibility for the fellowship by emailing the NIDA International Program at ip@nida.nih.gov.
- Review your resume or curriculum vitae (CV) to ensure your information is current.
- Learn more about the potential mentor—including the person's scientific discipline and specific research interests—by reviewing the potential mentor's publications, research background, and/or professional website.

When emailing a potential mentor:

- Provide information about your eligibility, educational and professional background (including your resume or CV and list of publications), and the goals of your fellowship and research project.
- Discuss what interests you about the mentor's research and what you would hope to learn under their mentorship.
- Avoid contacting more than two or three potential mentors at the same time.

Application Components

A complete INVEST postdoctoral fellowship application requires contributions from the applicant, the applicant's current employer, the applicant's references, the mentor, and the mentor's institution.

The application and all supporting documentation must be written in English only. See the section, [Completing Data Fields Within the Application and Reference Report Forms](#), for additional tips.
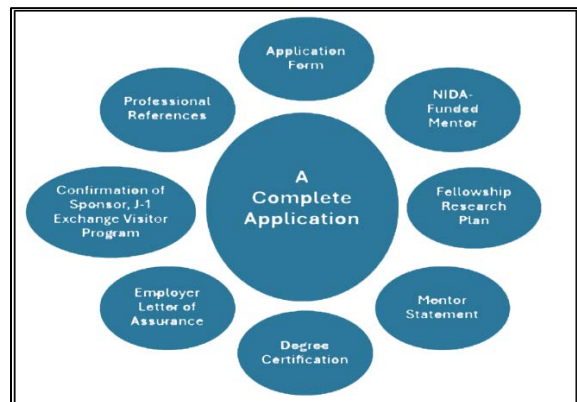
Application

As the applicant, you must provide information about your personal history, including your education; training; employment; peer-reviewed publications; and significant accomplishments, honors, and awards. You will also provide information about your chosen mentor and about your fellowship goals, key factors for selecting your mentor, an abstract of your research proposal, and a research plan.

Fellowship Research Plan

The Research Plan should be well formulated and presented in sufficient detail so that reviewers can evaluate its scientific merit. The applicant should actively seek the advice and cooperation of the selected mentor while preparing the Research Plan. The mentor's collaboration is important, but you must write the Research Plan.

The plan should be specific and informative, and it should avoid redundancy. Brevity and clarity in the description of the Research Plan are considered indicative of an applicant's approach to the research objective and ability to conduct a superior project.

The Research Plan should be three typed pages or less, not including literature citations. You should use the following format:

(1) Specific Aims. State the specific purposes of the research and the hypotheses to be tested.

(2) Background and Significance. Briefly describe the background of the Research Plan. This is an important consideration in the initial review of your application. Concisely state the importance of the Research Plan by relating specific aims to broad, long-term objectives.

(3) Research Design and Methods. Discuss the following points in detail:

- The research design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims.
- Sampling design, if conducting primary data collection.
- The analytic plan detailing the statistical approach to addressing the hypotheses.
- Any precautions necessary for procedures, hazardous materials, human subjects, and vertebrate animal protections, as applicable.
- Potential pitfalls, limitations, and alternative approaches of the proposed project.
- The timeline for completion of each aim of the proposed investigation.
- The contributions that this project will make to the field of drug use and addiction research.
- List specific new research skills that will be obtained by accomplishing the proposed research.
- Include a discussion on the future directions of the project. Describe plans to continue research or collaboration upon return to home country.

(4) Professional Development. Discuss the following points in detail:

- Describe how the research skills gained during the INVEST fellowship will be utilized.
- Describe upcoming grant applications (including the Notices of Funding Opportunity, mechanism type, receipt date, and brief description of aims).
- List any past or pending peer-reviewed publications (including the title, author line, journal, and status).
- Include any planned conferences, professional development courses, and courses to audit.

(5) NIH Regulations on the Conduct of Research. Research conducted as part of a fellowship is subject to the same U.S. federal regulations, policies, guidelines, and review considerations applied to all NIH research project grant applications. Within the Research Plan, applicants must demonstrate that they understand and plan to comply with those rules, particularly if the research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals.

(6) Literature Citations. Provide literature citations at the end of the Research Plan. Each citation must include the authors' names, book or journal titles, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.

Mentor Section

The mentor will provide information about their own personal history, including their education, trainee supervision experience, significant publications and accomplishments, and a mentor statement.

Mentor's Statement

The mentor will provide a statement of support for the individual's postdoctoral fellowship application. The mentor's statement should:

1) Describe the Research Plan for the applicant, including such details as:

- Seminars and opportunities for interaction with other groups and scientists

- Research environment and available research facilities and equipment

- Skills and techniques that the applicant will learn and how these align with the applicant's career goals

- Relationship of the proposed research to the applicant's career

2) Describe the applicant's qualifications and potential for a research career.

3) Assess the feasibility of the Research Plan with respect to current NIH regulations on the conduct of research.

4) Describe the applicant's understanding of the U.S. federal guidelines regarding the conduct of research, and how the mentor will ensure that the applicant complies with all NIH and institutional requirements.

Detailed information about the application form is included in the *Appendix*.

Applicant's Certification of Doctoral Degree(s)

The applicant must provide certification of their completed doctoral degree(s). The certification must be in English or be a certified English translation. The doctoral degree documentation must be submitted to the NIDA International Program via email at ip@nida.nih.gov on or before the deadline for the application period.

Letter of Assurance—Applicant's Current Employer

The applicant must obtain from their current employer a letter providing assurance that the applicant has a future position with the employer. The letter must be on the employer's official letterhead.

The letter of assurance must be submitted to the NIDA International Program via email at ip@nida.nih.gov on or before the deadline for the application period.

Letter of Confirmation—Sponsor of U.S. Department of State's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

The mentor must obtain a letter from an institution representative confirming the institution as a sponsor of the U.S. Department of State's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. The letter must confirm the institution's eligibility to prepare and issue the requisite Form DS-2019 for the applicant if awarded the INVEST postdoctoral fellowship. The letter must be submitted to the NIDA International Program via email at ip@nida.nih.gov on or before the deadline for the application period.

Applicant's Professional References

The applicant must provide two professional references to support the INVEST postdoctoral fellowship. It is preferrable that one reference is provided by the home country supervisor and the second reference by a research colleague.

The applicant should complete Part I of the form. You should provide a copy of the Reference Report Form to your two professional references. Each person serving as a reference should complete Part II of the Reference Report Form, including the rating scale. The form and letter of reference must be written in English only.

Each reference must also attach a letter of reference, on institution/organization letterhead, explaining their association with the applicant. The letter should comment on the applicant's training and experience, including other areas as appropriate, and identify strengths and weaknesses that should be considered in evaluating the applicant's potential for a research career.

The two professional references with letters of recommendation must be submitted directly to the NIDA International Program via email at ip@nida.nih.gov on or before the deadline for the application period.

The Reference Report Form can be downloaded from the website at https://nida.nih.gov/international/fellowships/invest-fellowships-postdoctoral-training.

Review Criteria

Applications are peer-reviewed through a competitive process and assessed according to scientific merit, the proposal's relevance to drug use and addiction and NIDA's research mission, adequacy of the applicant's education and experience to conduct the proposed research, likelihood that the proposed research can be completed within 1 year, and compatibility of the applicant's and mentor's objectives.

Several factors, outlined below, may enhance the rating of an application:

Applicant

- Demonstrates previous experience and education appropriate with the proposed study
- Demonstrates enough research experience to successfully complete the proposed study, though the applicant is not yet considered to be a senior scientist
- Provides letters of reference that support the applicant's scientific record
- Has authored a peer-reviewed scientific article in the proposed research area

Research Plan

- Describes how the proposed study is unique, how it will expand or advance the field of drug use and addiction research, and how it is consistent with the applicant's career goals
- Clearly and concisely states proposed aims, goals, and objectives appropriate to the stated hypotheses, conveying scientific sophistication and strong analytical skills
- Thoroughly discusses the relevant literature
- Acknowledges any potential regulatory issues or methodological limitations
- Clearly states the applicant's role in the proposed research and the collaborative plan between the applicant and the mentor
- Describes which skills and experiences will be gained in the process of working with the mentor, why that proposed training would be otherwise unavailable to

the applicant, and how those skills will be used when the applicant completes the fellowship and returns home

- Includes a realistic timeline for completing the proposed study within the 1-year fellowship
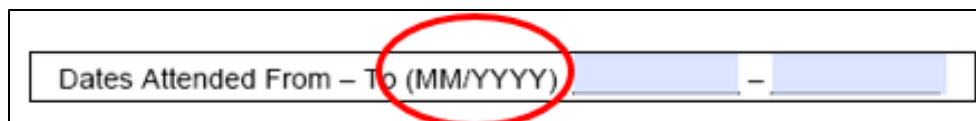
Mentor

- Demonstrates significant expertise in the research area
- Holds a NIDA grant that will remain active throughout the fellowship period
- Has experience training fellows or other graduate-level students
- Has affiliation with an institution that can provide the resources necessary for the successful completion of the fellowship
- Carries out research that complements the applicant's proposed study
- Demonstrates how the mentor will ensure that the applicant is knowledgeable about, and able to comply with, NIH regulations regarding the conduct of research

Completing Data Fields Within the Application and Reference Report Forms
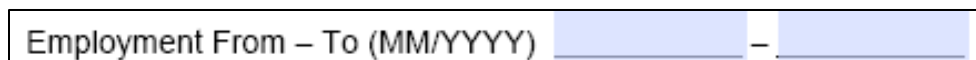
The application form and the reference report form include several types of data fields including date, text, digital signature, and check boxes. Included are tips for creating content that agrees with the requirements for the different data field types.

Date Data Fields. Throughout the application, date fields are to be completed as depicted in the parentheses included in the label of each date field.

Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

and

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Notice that when you click into a date field, a grey down arrow button appears. When you click on the button, a calendar will appear, and you can use it to complete the date field. You can also click into the date field and type in the date instead of using the calendar feature.

It is important to complete the date fields as indicated in the parentheses of the date field label.

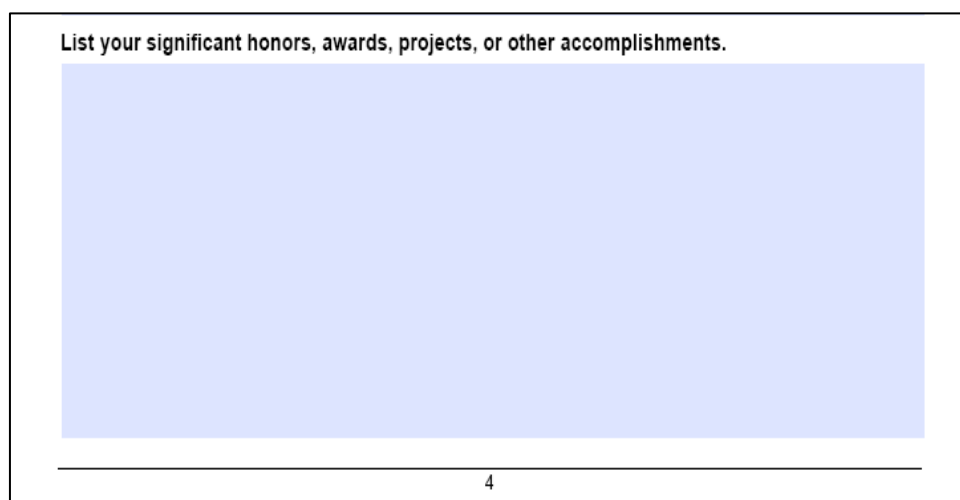If the correct format is not used, a warning message will appear that includes a reminder of how to accurately complete the date fields.

Text Data Fields. The application includes several text fields, including the sections to list publications, accomplishments, the fellowship research plan, and the mentor's statement. In general, text data fields only allow plain text formatting.

List your significant honors, awards, projects, or other accomplishments.

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When preparing your application content, consider the following:

- Cutting and pasting text from Word or another text editor into a text field is generally supported in the application form.

- Original formatting (i.e., bolding, italics, bullets, subscript, superscript) may be lost when you cut and paste text into the application form. After pasting the text, you may be able to reformat it by selecting or highlighting text and then right-clicking on the selection to see a brief, short-cut formatting menu. Please note: Being able to format content may also depend on the version of Adobe Acrobat you are using.

- To create different paragraphs, use a blank line between each paragraph.

- To create a list of items, begin each listed item using a special character, such as a hyphen (-), caret (^), asterisk (*), and start each listed item on a separate line. Add a blank line between the list and the next paragraph. Similarly, you can create a numbered list of items, beginning each listed item with sequential numbers, such as 1, 2, 3 or 1, 1.a., 1.a.1., 1.b., etc.

Text Field Characters. The application form uses Unicode as the standard for characters. When adding text to the application, be aware that special characters (i.e., scientific symbols, smart quotes) and copyrighted fonts may not appear accurately in the application text fields. When creating content:

- Use the short or en dash. Do not use the long or "em dash."

- Use straight single or double quotes. Do not use smart or curly quotes.

Text Field Character Lengths. Within the application form, some of the sections will include instructions that indicate the allowable character limit. Punctuation and spaces count in the character limit. The form field will not allow for more characters than the stated limit.

NIDA International Program Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowship Application

Applicant's Research Proposal

Fellowship Goals – Please provide a summary of your goals for the fellowship (limit to 2,000 characters).

Digital Signature Data Fields. The application includes two sections for digital signatures, one on page # for the applicant and one on page # for the mentor. The applicant and mentor may use an existing digital identification (ID) or may create a new digital ID to complete the signature requirement.

Applicant Certification and Acceptance

☐ By checking the box, I _____, declare that I have read and understand the U.S. federal regulations on the conduct of research supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I certify that the statements herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I accept the obligation to comply with the terms and conditions if a fellowship is awarded as a result of this application. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

An incomplete certification and acceptance section will disqualify your fellowship application.

Applicant Name Printed _____

Applicant Signature _____

Date of Signature _____

INVEST Application Form Screenshots

NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse   **NIDA** International Program

NIDA International Program Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowship Application

APPLICANT SECTION
(Must be completed in English)

Fellowship Information

Application Type (Select only one):

☐ INVEST | ☐ INVEST/CTN

Applicant Information

First/Given Name of Applicant _____

Last/Family Name of Applicant _____

Advanced Degree(s) _____

Applicant Year of Birth (YYYY) _____

Country of Citizenship (List both if dual citizen) _____

and, if applicable, _____

Phone _____

Primary Email _____

Alternative Email _____

Position Title _____

Name of Applicant's Institution _____

Department, Service, Laboratory, or Equivalent _____

Institution Mailing Address (Including city and country)

_____

Permanent Home Address (Including city and country)

_____

Applicant's References

Colleague/Supervisor 1 Name (Last/Family, First/Given) _____

Email _____

Colleague/Supervisor 2 Name (Last/Family, First/Given) _____

Email _____

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Mentor

Name of Mentor (First/Given, Last/Family)

Name of Mentor's Institution

Institution Mailing Address (Including city and country)

Phone _____ Mentor's Primary Email Address _____

Applicant's Personal History

Education – Please list all postsecondary institutions you have attended, beginning with the most recent.

1) Name and Location of Institution _____
Title(s) of Theses/Dissertations _____
Major Field(s) of Study _____
Diploma or Degree _____
Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

2) Name and Location of Institution _____
Title(s) of Theses/Dissertations _____
Major Field(s) of Study _____
Diploma or Degree _____
Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

3) Name and Location of Institution _____
Title(s) of Theses/Dissertations _____
Major Field(s) of Study _____
Diploma or Degree _____
Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

4) Name and Location of Institution _____
Title(s) of Theses/Dissertations _____
Major Field(s) of Study _____
Diploma or Degree _____
Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Additional Training (include NIH-sponsored activities or funding)

1) Activity _____

Field _____

Institution _____

From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

2) Activity _____

Field _____

Institution _____

From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

3) Activity _____

Field _____

Institution _____

From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

4) Activity _____

Field _____

Institution _____

From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Current Employment

Name and Address of Current Employer _____

Job Title _____

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Please describe your current job responsibilities

Previous Employment

1) Previous Employer(s) _____

Job Title(s) _____

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

2) Previous Employer(s) _____

Job Title(s) _____

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

3) Previous Employer(s) _____

Job Title(s) _____

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

4) Previous Employer(s) _____

Job Title(s) _____

Employment From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

List your peer-reviewed publications (most recent 10).

List your significant honors, awards, projects, or other accomplishments.

Applicant's Research Proposal

Fellowship Goals – Please provide a summary of your goals for the fellowship (limit to 2,000 characters).

Research Proposal Abstract – Please limit your abstract to 3,000 characters.

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Explain the research opportunities the institution and mentor offer that are not currently available in your home country. Describe key factors in your selection of your mentor.

Applicant's Full Research Plan

Applicants must submit a complete research plan. The plan may not exceed three pages, not including literature citations. Your plan should include:

1) Specific aims.
2) Background and significance.
3) Research design and methods.
4) A statement of assurance that research presented in this application will be conducted in compliance with National Institutes of Health (NIH) regulations on the conduct of research.
5) Literature citations (each citation must include the authors' names, book or journal title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication).

Applicant's research plan (page 1) – Please limit to three pages.

Applicant's research plan (page 2) – Please limit to three pages.

Applicant's research plan (page 3) – Please limit to three pages.

Applicant Certification and Acceptance

☐ By checking the box, I _____, declare that I have read and understand the U.S. federal regulations on the conduct of research supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I certify that the statements herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I accept the obligation to comply with the terms and conditions if a fellowship is awarded as a result of this application. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

An incomplete certification and acceptance section will disqualify your fellowship application.

Applicant Name Printed

Applicant Signature

Date of Signature

NIDA International Program Drug Use and Addiction Research Fellowship Application

MENTOR SECTION
(Must be completed in English)

Mentor Full Information (To be completed by the mentor)

Mentor First/Given Name _____

Mentor Last/Family Name _____

Name of Mentor's Institution _____

Position and Title _____

Department, Service, Laboratory, or Equivalent _____

Office Phone _____

Office Mailing Address (including city and country)

_____

Email Address (primary) _____

Email Address (secondary) _____

Mentor Education

1) Name and Location of Institution _____

Degree _____

Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Field(s) of Study _____

2) Name and Location of Institution _____

Degree _____

Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Field(s) of Study _____

3) Name and Location of Institution _____

Degree _____

Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____

Field(s) of Study _____

4) Name and Location of Institution _____

Degree _____

Dates Attended From – To (MM/YYYY) _____ – _____
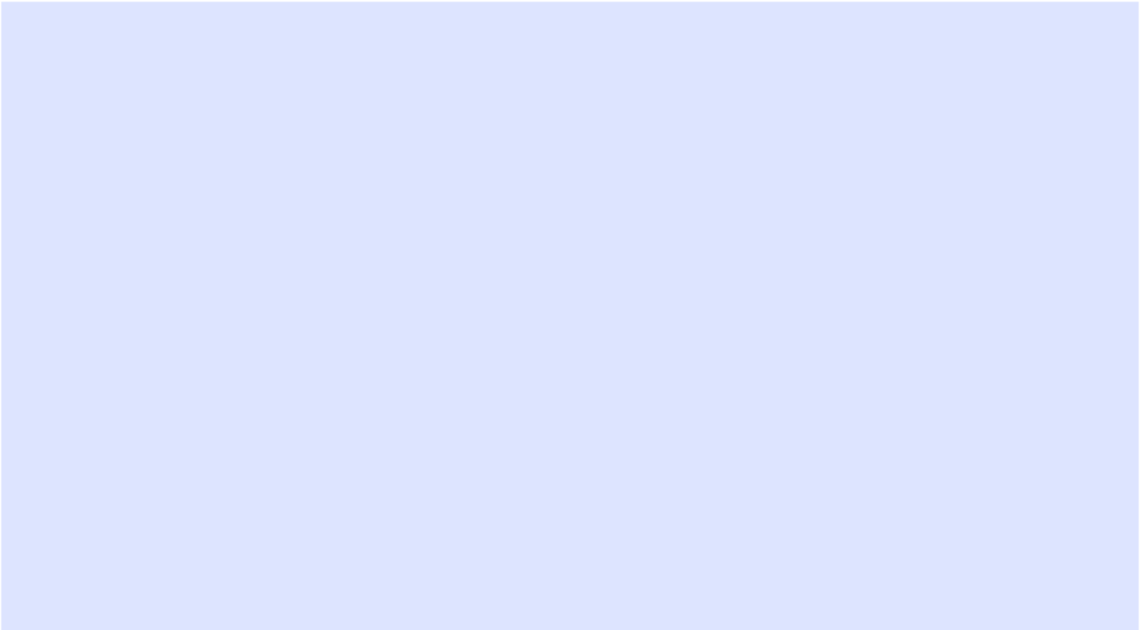
Field(s) of Study _____

List up to 10 of your significant publications, honors, awards, or other accomplishments, including current membership on a federal government public advisory committee.

In addition to the applicant, how many predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows/trainees will you supervise during the fellowship period? _____

How many predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows have you trained? _____

List up to five of the most recent predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows you have trained (e.g., name, current employer, position title).

Mentor's Statement

Mentors must submit a statement not to exceed three pages not including literature citations.
Your statement should:

1) Describe the Research Plan for the applicant. Include such items as seminars and opportunities for interaction with other groups and scientists. Describe the research environment and available research facilities and equipment. Include information that will help reviewers evaluate the applicant and the proposed research project. Indicate the relationship of the proposed research to the applicant's career. Describe the skills and techniques that the applicant will learn and relate these to the applicant's career goals.

2) Describe the applicant's qualifications and potential for a research career.

3) Assess the feasibility of the Research Plan with respect to current NIH regulations on the conduct of research.

4) Describe the applicant's understanding of the U.S. federal guidelines regarding the conduct of research and how you will ensure that the applicant complies with all National Institutes of Health and institutional regulations.

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Mentor's statement (page 1) – Please limit to three pages.

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Mentor's statement (page 2) – Please limit to three pages.

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Mentor's statement (page 3) – Please limit to three pages.

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Mentor Certification and Acceptance

☐ By checking the box, I _____, declare that I have read and understood the U.S. federal regulations on the conduct of research supported by the National Institutes of Health. I certify that the statements herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I accept the obligation to comply with the terms and conditions if a fellowship is awarded as a result of this application.

I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

An incomplete certification and acceptance section will disqualify your fellowship application.

Mentor Name Printed	
Mentor Signature	
Date of Signature	

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH)

NIDA International Program (NIDA)

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