

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the DOE Traineeship in HEP Instrumentation FOA Solicitation

General Advice

- Please read the FOA carefully as the requirements are complex.
- DOE Traineeship programs are expected to leverage existing university and laboratory resources and grant-funded R&D activities to provide a complete education and training experience for the students. Take care to **clearly differentiate how Traineeship funds are used** to support the Traineeship students' activities.
- The FOA is very specific about the technical areas of critical need in Instrumentation. These derive from HEPAP subcommittee and Basic Research Need studies of workforce and technical needs. Traineeship funds will only support students engaged with topics in these three specific technical areas. See Section I of the FOA for details.
- Program Evaluation Plans should include, as one element, an external evaluation process that is substantially independent from the Traineeship program being evaluated.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plans and plans to include professional development coursework (e.g. project management, science communications, etc.) need to be clear, and clearly described in the application.
- Please contact the Technical/Scientific Program Contact listed in Section I of the FOA if you have questions.

Are four new students per year a mandatory minimum? Would one student per year be enough?

Four new enrolled Traineeship students per year is a mandatory minimum. The intent is to have a “critical mass” of students within each cohort both so they can study together and share experiences, and so that university minimum class-size requirements will be met. In both cases, one student per year would be inadequate.

Why are only U.S. citizens eligible for Traineeship program participation?

This restriction is DOE-wide policy for all Traineeship programs, which originated under former Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz. Note that non-U.S. students may co-enroll in classes, share advisors, and collaborate on R&D activities with Traineeship enrollees, but Traineeship program funding cannot be used to support non-U.S. students.

Is course development covered under the Traineeship funding?

Yes, subject to the limitations listed in Section I, part A.

Can organizations other than a DOE National Laboratory qualify as a provider of a DOE-focused element of Trainee’s experience?

Yes. Private sector organizations sponsored by DOE and other non-DOE organizations capable of addressing a specific DOE workforce training need are also eligible partners. See Section I, part B, items (2) and (3).

Can NNSA labs participate as partners to provide the DOE-focused element of a Traineeship program?

Yes.

Is a letter from a partner DOE Lab required even if they are not a paid subcontractor of the Traineeship?

Yes. The lab will bear costs of, e.g., hiring students as interns or providing a workshop, so a letter of support is required.

Does the \$55,000/student limit include overhead costs?

The \$55,000/student limitation is all-inclusive. See Section I, part C.

Can we co-mingle Traineeship, Research Assistantships, and Teaching Assistantships within the two-year period that a student is in the Traineeship Program?

Yes. Take care that the funding use is distinct in each Trainee’s case by, for example, not co-mingling funding sources within a single academic quarter. The proposal must make very clear how the distinct funding sources fund distinctly different aspects of the student’s training.

Are letters of endorsement from collaborators helpful?

Yes, this may be helpful.

What is the typical award size?

The award size depends on the number of Traineeship students enrolled per year and the total cost of each Trainee’s tuition, stipend, and other program costs. Assuming a 5-year award, the minimum enrollment (4 new students per year, 8 students total in the Traineeship program in years 2-5), and the maximum cost reimbursement per student (\$55k), the maximum award size is \$1,980,000.

What is the typical award duration?

The typical award duration is 5 years. DOE reserves the right to conduct an external progress review in year three of the award to inform the decision to fund the remainder of the 5-year award.

What does the language in section II(B) “Estimated Funding” mean?

Budget numbers listed in section II(B) refer to the specific fiscal year. For example “It is anticipated that approximately \$X,XXX,XXX will be available in FY 20YY” means that the sum of all FY 20YY year obligations incurred as a result of new awards under this solicitation will not exceed \$X,XXX,XXX. This amount does not include prior-year or subsequent-year obligations, and is subject to appropriated funds being available.

“Total value of grants” refers to value of all grants awarded under this year’s FOA over the full duration of the grants. This number is subject to the availability of appropriated funding in this and future years. Note that

“total value of grants” does not include the value of the DOE National Laboratory awards made under the companion Program Announcement.

What is the “Full Forward Funding” requirement?

Since 2014, DOE has been required by statute to fully forward fund awards of \$1,000,000 or less in the year in which the award begins. This means, for example, that an award of \$100,000 per year over 3 years must have the total value of \$300,000 set aside in the year the award is made. The PI will receive \$100,000 in the first year, and the balance will be held at headquarters for release in subsequent years. This means the subsequent years of the award are paid for up front, and that the entire value of the proposal then must be obligated from the “Estimated Funding” number listed in section II(B).