

**2009 HHMI Early Career Scientist Competition**

**Questions and Answers**

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## **A. Eligibility**

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

To be eligible for this competition you must:

- Hold a tenure-track (or equivalent) position at one of the approximately 200 eligible institutions.
- Have between two and six years of experience since your first appointment as a tenure-track assistant professor or an equivalent position. In order to meet this requirement, an applicant's first faculty position as assistant professor must have begun no earlier than June 1, 2002, and no later than September 1, 2006. An applicant who has been granted a tenure clock extension or a leave of absence by his or her institution for reasons such as family care needs, illness, or military service may request a comparable extension of the career-stage range. Such applicants should provide information about the tenure clock extension or leave of absence received from their institution in an email to [compsupport@hhmi.org](mailto:compsupport@hhmi.org).

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

No. Only applicants who hold a tenure-track position at an eligible institution will be considered in this competition.

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

No. Federal employees are not eligible for this competition. Therefore, you would not be eligible if your **primary** appointment and/or principal research location is at a federal institution such as a Veterans Administration hospital or a national laboratory.

### ***A4. My primary institution does not have a tenure track. Am I eligible?***

For institutions that do not have a tenure track, eligible candidates must hold an appointment that reflects a tangible and significant institutional commitment. If you are uncertain about whether the terms of your appointment satisfy this requirement, please provide us with information about the terms of your appointment prior to submitting an application. You may send that information by email to [compsupport@hhmi.org](mailto:compsupport@hhmi.org), and we will respond as soon as possible.

### ***A5. I do not have any research grants. Am I still eligible?***

Yes. Applicants are not required to have any research grants to be eligible.

***A6. I already have early career awards from two foundations. Am I still eligible?***

You are eligible. But if your application is successful, one of the awards would have to be terminated or relinquished prior to your appointment to HHMI. Early career scientists may hold only one early career award from a federal agency—for example, the NIH Director’s New Innovator Award and the NSF CAREER Award—or from a foundation.

***A7. Can I defer my HHMI early career scientist appointment while I wait for one or more of my early career awards to terminate?***

HHMI wishes to direct its support where it will have the greatest impact and therefore appointment as an early career scientist cannot be delayed for more than six months for this reason.

***A8. I am just a few months short of having two years of experience as a faculty member. Am I eligible?***

Eligibility is determined by the date when you first became an assistant professor or assumed an equivalent position. For purposes of this competition, we expect that you would have first assumed such a position no later than September 1, 2006.

***A9. I have been a faculty member for more than six years but my career was interrupted for several years. If you take the interruption into account, I would be within the six-year limit. Could I be eligible?***

In general, a tenure clock extension or a leave of absence from your institution for reasons such as family care needs, illness, or military service will justify an extension of the career-stage range. Applicants who received a tenure clock extension or a leave of absence for this type of reason may request a comparable extension. Applicants should provide information about the tenure clock extension or leave of absence received from the host institution to [compsupport@hhmi.org](mailto:compsupport@hhmi.org).

***A10. What is HHMI policy with regard to eligibility of faculty members with administrative responsibilities?***

HHMI expects early career scientists to devote 75 percent of their time to the direct conduct of research. Up to 25 percent of an early career scientist’s time may be spent on teaching, patient care, committee responsibilities, and other nonresearch activities that include grant and journal reviewing, consulting (subject to HHMI’s rules on consulting), and participation in the activities of a scholarly society.

**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 <http://www.hhmi.org/research/application/ec2009>:

- 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 may exceed the three-page limit set by the NIH.
- A 250-word summary of your major scientific achievements.
- A 250-word summary of the main research directions that this appointment would enable.
- A summary of your ongoing and planned research program (not more than 3,000 words; an additional single page of figures plus necessary references are not counted toward the 3,000-word limit).
- Five selected publications that document your most important scientific contributions and a paragraph (no more than 300 words) summarizing the importance of each publication.

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

Reference letters are not required at this stage. Semifinalists will be asked to solicit two letters of reference, and their institution will be contacted to verify eligibility.

***B3. In the summary of the main research directions this appointment would allow me to pursue, can I include work that is already supported by my grant?***

We are interested in the full range of the work you are doing and planning to do, but your summary should give an idea of how HHMI support might influence your research plans. Bear in mind that HHMI emphasizes support for people over support for projects.

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

You may, but bear in mind that HHMI hopes and expects that early career scientists will use HHMI's support as an opportunity to move in new directions, 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 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 scientific achievements.

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

You must apply directly to HHMI, and prior institutional approval or endorsement is not required.

***B7. Do my publications need to be from the period in which I have served as an independent faculty member?***

No. You may include publications from your training period, including graduate study and any postdoctoral period.

## **C. Review Process**

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

HHMI will use a two-stage initial review process, leading to selection of semifinalists by late fall 2008. A third review will result in the final selection by the spring of 2009.

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

HHMI draws on the expertise of current and past members of its Medical Advisory Board and Scientific Review Boards, HHMI investigators, and its own scientific staff, along with other distinguished scientists.

### ***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 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 HHMI investigators.

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

***D1. I understand that as an early career scientist 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 early career scientist'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 early career scientist?***

No. However, if you have a second laboratory at the other institution, we would need to discuss that situation with you before your appointment. 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 as an early career scientist, are there aspects of my current duties that could delay or even block my appointment as an early career scientist?***

Yes. HHMI expects early career scientists to devote 75 percent of their time to the direct conduct of research. Up to 25 percent of an early career scientist's time may be spent on teaching, patient care, committee responsibilities, and other nonresearch activities that include grant and journal reviewing, consulting (subject to HHMI's rules on consulting), and participation in the activities of a scholarly society. We will review nonresearch activities prior to appointing early career scientists. If those activities exceed 25 percent or are incompatible with HHMI policies, they would have to be modified prior to appointment.

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

Early career scientist appointments are for a term of six years and are not renewable. However, these appointees would be eligible to apply for HHMI investigator competitions while employed by HHMI as an early career scientist. If an applicant is successful in such a competition, his or her early career scientist appointment would then be terminated.

***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 above, the sum of all nonresearch activities—including consulting—cannot exceed 25 percent of your time because we expect HHMI early career scientists to devote 75 percent of their time to the direct conduct of research. HHMI also limits consulting for companies by its scientists 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 in 2008. If selected by HHMI in this competition, could I be appointed at the new institution?***

It depends on when the move occurs. Your application must be submitted from the same institution that will be the site of your appointment. We do not permit transfers. Any early career scientist who changes institutions during his or her six-year term must resign from HHMI.

## **E. Compensation and Benefits**

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

HHMI will set initial salaries for early career scientists based on comparative data. HHMI reviews compensation annually, and merit increases are typically established at that time.

***E2. Is it possible that HHMI might offer me an initial salary that is lower than my current compensation?***

Yes. For example, HHMI would not set the salary for an early career scientist to reflect practice plan earnings or administrative duties (past, present, or future).

***E3. Can I receive salary supplementation from my host institution for administrative, patient-care, or other duties?***

No. HHMI early career scientists cannot receive salary supplements from their host institution or other sources.

***E4. 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 faculty in similar situations. If you are successful in this competition, we would want to review this issue with you prior to your appointment.

***E5. 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.

***E6. I receive neither subsidized housing nor 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 Research Grant Funding**

***F1. I understand that I do not need to have a research grant to be eligible for this competition. Would I be required to get grant funding from other sources if I become an HHMI early career scientist?***

There is no requirement to seek other grant funding, but we hope that the outstanding scientists selected through this competition will ultimately be successful in obtaining funding from government agencies and/or nonprofit organizations to continue their research programs after their HHMI appointment ends. Please note that all grant funding would be through the host institution (not HHMI) and that the 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 early career scientist?***

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 percent effort on my government grants. Would that be an issue for HHMI?***

Yes. HHMI does not use effort reporting, but we do not believe it would be consistent with a researcher's role as an HHMI early career scientist to spend almost 100 percent of his or her time on projects that are already funded through pre-existing grants. Accordingly, if you were selected as an HHMI early career scientist, we would ask you and your institution to reexamine your effort commitments.

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

### ***G1. What budget could an early career scientist expect from HHMI?***

In addition to salary and benefits, HHMI will provide a research budget for support of personnel and supplies, services, and small equipment items. The laboratory budget will be \$150,000 in the first year of appointment and increase in increments of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$300,000 in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years. Separately, HHMI will provide periodic opportunities to purchase major equipment.

### ***G2. Does HHMI pay indirect costs?***

HHMI does not pay indirect costs. HHMI does make payments to the host institution for occupancy of the research and administrative space occupied by an early career scientist, as well as for certain other expenses. HHMI negotiates these directly with the host institution, and they are not a part of early career scientist budgets.

### ***G3. If I am appointed as an early career scientist, can my postdoctoral associate or my technician become HHMI employees? Would they get health insurance from HHMI? Who sets their salaries?***

Yes. Members of your research staff may 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.

### ***G4. What about a graduate student?***

If you have a graduate student, he or she cannot become an HHMI employee. Graduate students in HHMI laboratories are typically supported from institutional or grant funds.

### ***G5. 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?***

That is not a requirement. The only person whose employment status must change is that of the early career scientist.

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

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

HHMI early career scientists can 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 early career scientist may not consult for and collaborate with a company at the same time.**

***H2. Can I be appointed as an HHMI early career scientist 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 early career scientist.

***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 early career scientist?***

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

***H4. As an HHMI early career scientist, can I consult for a company?***

Yes, provided that

- You meet the requirement that 75 percent of your time is devoted to the direct conduct of 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 percent 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 only permitted in limited circumstances, and service as an officer of a company is never permitted.

***H5. What about consulting for a nonprofit organization?***

Consulting arrangements with nonprofit entities do not need to be reviewed by HHMI if

- The arrangements are not in writing or
- 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 nonprofit 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 will need 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 percent of your time permitted by HHMI policies for nonresearch activities.

## **I. Clinical Research**

### ***11. Can I perform clinical trials or studies as an HHMI early career scientist?***

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

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

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

### ***13. Does HHMI have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that will review my human subject protocols?***

No, HHMI does not have an IRB. As an early career scientist, you would continue to submit your human subject protocols to your host institution's IRB.

### ***14. Does HHMI provide professional liability (medical malpractice) insurance for the early career scientist who has patient-care responsibilities?***

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

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

HHMI has a number of requirements relating to company-sponsored trials. These include the following:

- The company funding may be used only for patient care costs, not to support research in the laboratory of the early career scientist;
- There can be no salary support for the early career scientist 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 early career scientist's ability to pursue his or her own research program effectively.

***16. I am already a PI on a company-funded clinical trial that is expected to run for the next couple of years. If I become an early career scientist, 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 am 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 early career scientist 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 early career scientist 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 early career scientist'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 am 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 early career scientist 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 early career scientist 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 early career scientist'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 early career scientist 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 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 early career scientist, 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.