

U.S. Department Of Energy
Oak Ridge Fellowship Program



Oak Ridge Operations Office

Oak Ridge Fellowship Program

Purpose

The Department of Energy's (DOE) mission presents technical, professional, management, scientific and engineering challenges which have significant impact on the environment and health and safety of the public and the Department's employees. Such high potential risks require that the Department's staff maintain a high level of competence in their disciplines. However, the unique nature of the operations and hazards at the Department's sites and facilities requires leadership in addition to expertise. Coupling these challenges with stringent environmental, health, and safety standards necessitates establishing a continuing education program that addresses the changing needs of the Department as well as the individual.

The continuous improvement of the Department's technical, professional, and management capabilities provides the basis for implementation of the Department's Fellowship Program. This Program reinforces and enhances technical, professional and managerial competencies of Departmental staff by employing a variety of educational, training, developmental, experiential, and qualification activities. The Department's Fellowship Program provides competitively selected Departmental employees an opportunity to obtain an advanced degree in order to meet and overcome the technical, professional and leadership challenges associated with the Department's operations.

Program Description

The ORO Fellowship Program consists of a work-related graduate or post-graduate study at an accredited college or university. Participants are allowed 5 hours/week/course for educational-related activities and will be expected to meet critical work assignments. As an example, one course would allow 5 hours/week, three courses (15 hours/week) for educational-related activities. The proposed area of study shall be chosen by mutual agreement of the applicant, their supervisor, and mentor as applicable (Appendix A contains a list of recommended academic disciplines). Fellowships will be competitively awarded based on established criteria provided as part of this guidance document. Eligible applicants will be evaluated and selected by a Fellowship Program Selection Committee. The ORO Manager will concur on final selections. ORO Fellowship funding is non-program specific.

Eligibility

All applicants must be ORO Department of Energy employees holding a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Applicants must be GS-12 or higher with a minimum of 3 years of Federal government civilian service (including at least 1 year of service as an employee in the office under which the application is being submitted).

Service requirements shall be met by August 1 of the year the annual fellowship is advertised. Applicants must be accepted into the school(s) and program of study proposed at the time application is made to participate in the ORO Fellowship Program. The proposed area of study

must be in a subject area of value to the participating office with required thesis or dissertation work focusing on an appropriate functional or program area. (Organizations subject to review by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board must consider board recommendations when identifying subject areas for Fellowships.) Annual announcements will be sent from the Training Development Group, HRD. The original and three copies of the application package should be returned to HRD.

Procedures consistent with the Merit Promotion policy (ORO O 320) will apply. For that reason government time, equipment, or resources may not be used for the completion of the application package. You may however, use your office copy machine to duplicate your application package and to provide the three requested copies.

On an annual basis, consistent with funding availability, ORO will provide:

Fellowship opportunities (continued salary and employee benefits)

Full reimbursement for tuition books, laboratory fees, and other costs directly related to classroom work.

Application

Each applicant must submit the required documentation (as defined in the Educational Opportunity Announcement, Appendix B) to the Training Development Group, HRD by the advertised deadline. Late application material will not be accepted and incomplete application packages will be scored lower. Applications shall be reviewed for completeness and eligibility by the HRD. As a minimum, application packages shall be arranged in the order listed below and will include only those materials specifically requested in the announcement. Applicants shall submit the following:

Completed ORO Fellowship Program application cover sheet (Appendix C)

Completed Employee Agreement to Continue in Service Form (Appendix F)

Table of contents (with subsequent pages numbered to match)

SF-171 or OF-612 Application for Federal Employment alternate form (Available from HRD)

College transcript(s)

Narrative on Academic Goals (not more than five pages excluding an Individual Development Plan). The narrative shall include:

- A description of the candidate's academic goals and their level of commitment to this academic field of study.

- Reasons for selecting the particular academic institution and program of study.
- Description of proposed program of study (including list of proposed course work and its relevance), its scope, and its relationship to:

- a) ORO
- b) The Department of Energy as a whole
- c) The candidate's career plans

Evidence of acceptance into the program of study proposed for the fellowship.

Letter of recommendation (not to exceed 3 pages) from candidate's immediate supervisor endorsed by next higher level of supervision/management stating:

- How the proposed field of study will benefit ORO
- How the proposed field of study will benefit DOE
- Post-fellowship role of the candidate in the ORO office
- Demonstrated characteristics and/or performance that exemplify ORO's confidence in the candidate's ability to complete the Fellowship program successfully
- The candidate meets the eligibility requirements as stated in the Educational Opportunity Announcement

The candidate's two most recent performance appraisals

Three letters of reference (in addition to the immediate supervisor's recommendation)

Selection

A Fellowship Program Selection Committee, made up of ORO senior managers appointed by the Manager, will evaluate the applications of eligible candidates.

Committee members will review and evaluate all eligible candidates using the ORO Fellowship Program Scoring Plan (Appendix D) and assign a numerical score on the ORO Fellowship Candidate Evaluation Form (Appendix E). The Committee will meet to discuss each applicant's ratings and to develop their recommendations.

Evaluation of applications will be based on:

An assessment of the candidate's success in chosen academic area based on a review of the application materials

An assessment of the candidate's success in chosen career path based on a review of the application materials

Potential benefit to DOE/ORO of candidate's advanced education

Interview of top candidates by selection committee

The Selection Committee will provide the committee's recommendations and a list of the candidates, ranked according to overall numerical scores, to the Manager. Selection(s) will be made based on the Committee's recommendations and will be concurred on by the Manager.

Selection will be made without regard to age, race, sex, color religion, national origin, lawful political affiliation, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Detailed information on the evaluation process and scoring is available in Appendix D, Fellowship Program Scoring Plan and Appendix E, Candidate Evaluation Form.

Committee members, who have close personal/working relationships with a particular candidate, may elect to forego rating that particular candidate. This should be noted on the Candidate Evaluation Form and the candidates rating be determined by the combined ratings of the other Committee members.

Program Financial Data

The Oak Ridge Operations Office will continue to pay full salary and benefits to fellowship participants during their graduate study. The office is also responsible for reimbursement of the candidate's tuition, books, laboratory fees, or other expenses directly related to classroom work. Application, travel, parking, and testing fees are the responsibility of the candidate.

Persons receiving funding under this program are expected to maintain non-probational scholastic status. Repeated course work or prerequisites required for the selected graduate study will not be funded. Recipients who withdraw from the academic program prior to completion of the fellowship must reimburse the Department for all expenses incurred, except salary.

Compliance

The Fellowship Program will be administered in full compliance with Department of Energy Orders and appropriate sections of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Follow-up

Each fellowship recipient must keep their supervisor and HRD informed of academic progress and problems. Status reports shall be sent to the fellowship recipient's supervisor and HRD when grades are received (no later than 2 weeks after the end of each semester). During the ensuing

school year members of the Selection Committee will be available to advise the Fellowship program participants.

General administrative processing guidelines for the Fellowship Program are included as Appendix F. These guidelines provide guidance on associate and supervisor responsibilities, completion of Individual Development Plan for fellowship participant, and completion of appropriate training forms.

APPENDICES

A - Recommended Academic Disciplines

B - Educational Opportunity Announcement

C - Application Cover Sheet

D - Scoring Plan

E - Candidate Evaluation Form

F – Employee Agreement to Continue in Service

G - Administrative Processing Guidelines

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

The following is a list of recommended academic disciplines of study under the ORO Fellowship Program. ORO Fellowship applicants may want to consider graduate study in one of these areas but are not expressly limited to the disciplines listed. Evaluation criteria and selection will be weighted towards non-administrative disciplines. Special emphasis is given to the departmental related needs specific to the deployment, development, and retention of personnel with the demonstrated technical capability to safely accomplish the Department of Energy (DOE) missions and responsibilities.

Specialty Engineering (e.g. Fire Protection, Nuclear Criticality)

Environmental Science

Physical Science Health Physics

Industrial Hygiene

Industrial Safety

APPENDIX B

OAK RIDGE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (Sample Announcement)

Date: October 1, 2000

Program Title: ORO Fellowship Program

Eligible to Participate:

All applicants must be Department of Energy employees holding a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Applicants must be GS/GM-12 or higher with a minimum of 3 years of Federal government civilian service (including at least 1 year of service as an employee in the office under which the application is being submitted).

Service requirements shall be met by August 1 of the year the annual fellowship is advertised. Applicants must be accepted into the school(s) and program of study proposed at the time application is made to participate in the ORO Fellowship Program. The proposed area of study must be in a subject area of value to the participating office with required thesis or dissertation work focusing on an appropriate functional or program area. Organizations subject to review by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DFNSB) must consider board recommendations when identifying subject areas for Fellowships.

Course Number: FSH101

Date: Sixteen months from start of classes

Program Description:

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Tuition:

HRD will reimburse the costs of tuition and books. All travel expenses, application, parking and testing fees will be the responsibility of the participant.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

To apply:

Send the hard-copy original plus three copies of the application to TDG in HRD by 4 PM, of the date as specified in the Program announcement memorandum. Any applications received after this time will not be considered. All materials must be complete and signed as appropriate.

Applications must include the following materials:

1. ORO SF 182, entitled "Request, Authorization, Agreement, Certification of Training." This form is generated through the Training Request Form process.
2. SF-171 "Application for Federal Employment" or OF 612, entitled "Optional Application for Federal Employment."
3. The ORO Fellowship Program Application Packet (Application Cover sheet, Employee Agreement to Continue in Service, Academic Goals, Evidence of Acceptance to College, College transcripts, Letter of Recommendation from Supervisor, Awards and Honors, Performance Appraisals and a three letters of reference.

Selection Process:

The Fellowship Program Selection committee will consist of senior managers. Committee members will independently review all eligible applications and assign numerical scores based on standardized criteria. The committee will then meet to discuss the scoring process, to verify applicants' scores, and to compile recommendations based on candidate ranking. Individuals selected will be notified no later than 45 days after the closing date for this announcement. Selection will be made without regard to age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, lawful political affiliation, mental or physical handicap, or marital status.

Award Criteria:

1. Candidate's potential for success in chosen academic area
2. Candidate's potential for success in chosen career path
3. Potential benefit to office of candidate's advanced education
4. Potential benefit to DOE of candidate's advanced education

APPENDIX C

Fellowship Program Application Cover Sheet

Name _____ Office _____

Title _____ Grade _____

1. Two most recent performance appraisals:

Year _____

Circle one:

Unacceptable or Meets Expectations

Year _____

Circle one:

Unacceptable or Meet Expectations

2. Degrees held:

Degree _____ Field _____ Granting Institution _____

Date Completed _____ Overall GPA _____ on a scale of _____

GPA (w/in major) _____ on a scale of _____

Degree _____ Field _____ Granting Institution _____

Date Completed _____ Overall GPA _____ on a scale of _____

GPA (w/in major) _____ on a scale of _____

Degree _____ Field _____ Granting Institution _____

Date Completed _____ Overall GPA _____ on a scale of _____

GPA (w/in major) _____ on a scale of _____

APPENDIX C (cont.)

3. Degree sought:

Degree _____ Field _____ Length of program _____

Name and location of institution _____

Anticipated start date _____ Anticipated completion date _____

4. Financing:

a. Direct costs of program (**up to 16 months**): **Total** _____

Tuition _____ Books _____ Laboratory fees _____ Other fees _____

b. Outside contributions (scholarships, etc.): **Total** _____

Tuition _____ Books _____ Laboratory fees _____ Other fees _____

Total Costs (4a.) _____ **minus Total contribution (4b.)** _____

Total Requested _____

APPENDIX D

ORO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SCORING PLAN

To assure ORO Fellowship Program candidates are evaluated consistently by all selection committee members, the following guidelines will be used when scoring application materials.

Candidate's success in chosen academic area (30 points)

Points are awarded based on the committee's assessment of the candidate's academic record earning their degree; including major area of study, grade point average, grade point average within major, academic references, etc. consider any other previous academic pursuits and/or achievements. A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 15 points.

Additionally, consider the field and program proposed for graduate study. Does the candidate's academic background lead you to believe the applicant will be successful in this academic area? Is pursuit of this discipline too ambitious? Finally, evaluate the academic program of graduate study proposed. Did the applicant propose a program study which supports their academic and career goals? A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 15 points.

Candidate's potential for success in chosen career path (30 points)

Points are awarded based on the committee's assessment of the candidate's professional experience, including government service, leadership positions, training in related field, and professional affiliations. Has the candidate achieved success or does the candidate have potential for success in their career? A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 15 points.

Consider candidate's written statement, the supervisor's letter of endorsement, letters of reference, and the two most recent performance appraisal ratings, consider the behavior exhibited by the candidate in the areas of teaming, problem solving, perseverance, dedication, and professional ethics. Does the evidence or lack of evidence of these characteristics suggest the candidate will be successful in their chosen career path? Evidence of these characteristics may include prior academic/professional success, community involvement, awards or special recognition's received, special assignments, dedicated working teams within the job, etc. A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 15 points.

APPENDIX D (cont.)

Potential benefit to organization of candidate's advanced education (40 points)

Points are awarded based on the committee's assessment of the potential benefit to the organization of awarding a fellowship to this applicant. Consider the long-term benefit above and beyond those of the candidate's particular organization such as those identified in the ORO Strategic Plan. Consider their academic and professional records. Are they consistent with organizational needs? Will the attainment of advanced knowledge in the proposed area of study benefit the organization? Will the candidate likely make a substantial contribution to the organization in the area of their expertise? A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 40 points.

Personal Interview by selection committee (30 points) (Top candidates only)

Points are awarded based on the committee's assessment of how the candidate verbally expresses how obtaining an advanced degree will benefit ORO. In which direction do they see the organization headed in the next 3 - 5 years. How would they use the new knowledge to accomplish this new direction. A perfect score based on an evaluation of this data would earn 30 points.

APPENDIX E

FELLOWSHIP CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM

(to be used with Scoring Plan)

Candidate Name _____ Evaluator Name _____

Candidate's potential in chosen academic area Scoring

Based on the candidate's academic record, reference, and proposed program of study, evaluate the candidate's potential ____/30 points for success in their chosen graduate discipline.

Candidate's potential in chosen career path

Based on the applicant's work record including professional experience, government service, leadership positions, ____/30 points professional affiliation, team skills, problem solving abilities, and professional ethics, evaluate the candidate's potential for success in their chosen career path.

Potential Benefit to DOE/ORO of candidate's advanced education

Based on the candidate's academic and professional records as well as DOE's needs, and the office's needs, evaluate the potential benefit to DOE/ORO. ____/40 points

Sub Total _____

Personal Interview by selection committee

Based on the candidate's ability to communicate their reasons for being considered as an ORO Fellowship recipient. In which direction do they see the organization headed in the next three to five years. How would they use the new knowledge to accomplish this new direction. ____/30 points

Total _____ points scored

Comments: _____

APPENDIX F

EMPLOYEE'S AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE IN SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ORO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

1. I AGREE that, upon completion of the Government-sponsored training described below, if I receive salary covering the training period, I will serve in the Department of Energy three times the length of the training period. If I receive no salary during the training period, I agree to serve the Department of Energy for a period equal to the length of training, but in no case less than one month. (The length of full-time training is eight hours for each day of training, up to a maximum of 40 hours a week.)

Program/Course title: _____

Program/Course code: _____

Training period: _____

Total number of duty hours: _____

Period of obligated service: _____ months

2. If I voluntarily leave the Department of Energy before completing the period of service agreed to in item 1 above, I AGREE to reimburse the Department of Energy for the tuition and related fees, and other special expenses (EXCLUDING SALARY) paid in connection with my training. The percentage of the expenses to be repaid may not exceed the proportion of the agreement not completed. These amounts are reflected below:

Item Amount

Tuition _____

Books or materials _____

Other (specify) _____

TOTAL _____

3. I understand that any amounts which may be due the Department of Energy as a result of any failure on my part to meet the terms of this agreement may be withheld from any monies owed me by the Government, or may be recovered by such other methods as are approved by law.

APPENDIX F (cont.)

4. I FURTHER AGREE to obtain approval from the ORO Fellowship Program Selection Committee of any proposed change in my approved training program involving course and schedule changes, withdrawals or uncompleted courses, and increased costs.

5. I acknowledge that this agreement does not in any way commit the Department of Energy to continue my employment. I understand that, if there is transfer of my service obligation to another Federal agency or other organization in any branch of the Government, the agreements in items 1, 2, and 3 or this agreement will remain in effect until I have completed my obligated service with that agency or organization.

Employee's Signature

Date

NOTE: This agreement must be signed by the nominee for all training that exceeds \$2,500 in cost to the Department (excluding salary) or 160 duty hours and for which the Government approves payment of training costs prior to the commencement of such training. Nothing contained above shall be construed as limiting the authority of The Department of Energy to waive, in whole or in part, and obligation of an employee to pay expenses incurred by the Government in connection with the training.

This agreement will be initially executed based on the proposed plans by the Fellowship awardee and will be updated and re-executed to reflect actual hours and expenditures at the conclusion of the program.

APPENDIX G

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSING GUIDELINES

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

General

Headquarters and Operations Office supervisors and Program Manager maintain the usual supervisor/employee functions and relationships for Fellowship participants as for any associate.

Employee/Supervisor Responsibilities

Employee/supervisor responsibilities are unchanged for Fellowship participants. All Fellows remain assigned to the office and position of record at the time of selection for the program. The employee and supervisor are jointly responsible for maintaining contact and keeping each other aware of pertinent information.

The employee is responsible for requesting annual and sick leave, notifying the supervisor of scheduled school breaks, mutually agreeing as to availability to work, and scheduling absences from work (due to studying, research activities, etc.). The supervisor is accountable for scheduling leave, reporting time and attendance, and preparing performance appraisals.

Performance Appraisal Record

The Fellowship awardee remains in their position of record for appraisal purposes. DOE Order 3430.3A applies to this situation as it would to persons returning from long-term training assignments. Therefore, an employee is not rated until 90 days after return to duty. Instructions concerning this type of Performance Appraisal are contained in DOE Order 3430.3A, paragraph 6b. Training offices should assure that supervisors of Fellowship participants are aware of this.

One-Year-In-Ten Years of Service Limitation Waiver

Federal employees are no longer subject to a one-year-in-ten years of service limitation on training in non-Federal institutions as described in Federal Personnel Manual Chapter 410.

Individual Development Plans (IDP's)

Each Fellowship participant shall have an approved IDP before entering the program. The course of study proposed for the Fellowship shall be reflected in the IDP.

Academic Progress and Problems

Each Fellow must keep their supervisor, as well as the HRD, informed about academic progress and problems each semester. Status reports should be sent to their supervisor and HRD, Division Director when final grades are received (no later than 2 weeks from the end of each semester).