



## IEEE-USA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### 1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

IEEE-USA's Congressional Fellows program is created to provide a resource of industrial experience and technical knowledge to the Legislative Branch, to broaden the perspectives of both the professional and governmental communities on the value of such interaction, and as an education experience for the participating fellow.

### 2. SPONSORSHIP OF FELLOWSHIPS

Each year, IEEE-USA will seek to sponsor two Congressional fellows to serve a one year fellowship with a Member of Congress or congressional committee staff. IEEE-USA has established the Government Fellows Committee as a standing committee to manage this program. Any IEEE entity may sponsor IEEE members as Congressional fellows in coordination with the IEEE-USA Government Fellows Committee per the Committee's charter and subject to these guidelines.

### 3. BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP

To be considered for an IEEE-USA Congressional Fellowship, applicants must submit an application confirming the following basic eligibility requirements:

- a. Applicants must be an IEEE Member (which includes those in graduate student membership status) in good standing at the time of application.
- b. Applicants must possess a Ph.D., or a Masters Degree and five (5) years of relevant professional experience. The degree must be granted by a recognized program in a subject field that falls with the science, engineering, computer, or allied disciplines eligible for IEEE membership. In exceptional cases, the Masters or Ph.D. requirement may be waived by the Government Fellowship Committee for candidates with compensating experience. Work experience must consist of relevant professional employment and does not include internships or student-related employment.
- c. An applicant must be a U.S. citizen at the time of application or, at the latest, prior to selection.

### 4. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Advance Publicity: The Government Fellows Committee shall publicize a description of the program and the application requirements (and deadline) with sufficient notice to allow reasonable time for response. This shall be done via news releases and advertisements placed in IEEE publications with broad distribution to IEEE U.S. members such as *IEEE Spectrum* and *IEEE-USA Insight*, as well as trade and general press as appropriate.
- 4.2 Applications Process: The Government Fellows Committee provides all application materials, including the application form and additional informational material as may be deemed useful, on the IEEE-USA website. The website clearly indicates the closing date for receipt of applications.

Individuals interested in applying for a Congressional fellowship will be asked to complete an Application Form providing personal history, background, and contact information, to which the following attachments are required:

- a. A Letter of Intent covering applicant's personal objective(s) for the Congressional fellowship, a summary of relevant qualifications and experience, willingness to abide by the terms and conditions indicated in the program policies and procedures, and disclosure of any actual or apparent conflicts of interest (with explanation).
- b. Personal and technical resume; including description of IEEE activities and related group/society affiliations.
- c. Statement from employer authorizing leave-of-absence and agreeing to specified salary and benefit support, or a letter giving reasons for the absence of such authorization and for the expectation that it would be available at a later date, or stating other arrangements.
- d. Three (3) letters of reference. Letters may be written by colleagues and supervisors who need not be IEEE members. The letters should clearly reflect an understanding of the responsibilities of a congressional fellow and speak to applicant's ability to work in a public policy environment. A letter should also reference an applicant's technical qualifications, professional experience, IEEE volunteer activities, prior public policy experience, and overall suitability for the fellowship. Letters of reference may be appended to the application or submitted separately to the IEEE-USA Government Fellows Program.

As part of the application process, IEEE-USA may also request additional evidence of employer support or other financial arrangement, most recent salary or annual professional income, and similar information necessary for informed review.

Applications for Congressional fellowships, together with required supporting materials, shall be submitted electronically (e-mailed) to the designated contact and must be date-marked no later than the published application closing date unless otherwise specified. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that IEEE-USA has electronically received the application by the posted deadline.

In cases where an incomplete application is submitted, the Applicant will be advised of those items required to complete the application. Applications will generally not be considered by the sponsoring entity unless completed prior to dates established for review. In those cases where an element cannot be obtained at the time of application (e.g. employer's commitment to provide leave of absence and financial support), but it is fairly certain that it will be available in the event of selection, the applicant may state his reasons for the absence of the required item at the time of application and the expected likelihood of its future availability. The sponsoring entity may choose to entertain such applications on a case by case basis.

## **5. FELLOW SELECTION PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 Selection Criteria: In evaluating applications, the Government Fellows Committee shall consider the basic eligibility requirements in Section 3 above. In addition, the Committee may take into consideration the applicant's educational background, professional experience, public service, public policy experience, IEEE volunteer activities, communication skills, applicant's goals and objectives for the fellowship and overall suitability for the fellowship (e.g. flexibility, adaptability, open-mindedness, maturity, professionalism, etc.).
- 5.2 Review and Preliminary Selection: The written applications of candidates will be reviewed by the Government Fellows Committee based on an overall assessment of the selection criteria. From these preliminary rankings, the Committee shall meet to select one or more Finalists to be invited for interviews.

- 5.3 Finalist Interviews: Finalists are required to attend a personal interview at a time and place designated by the Government Fellows Committee. Travel and related expenses for participation in the interview will be reimbursed by IEEE-USA. Finalist(s) shall be interviewed personally by a suitable number of Committee members and staff, and such other Institute officials as may be desirable.
- 5.4 Final Selection: Based on the results of the interview(s) and the totality of the application process, the Government Fellows Committee shall recommend the name(s) of the Fellow(s) selected for approval by IEEE-USA Operating Committee.
- 5.5 Notification and Acceptance: Upon selection, the IEEE-USA Managing Director or appropriate staff designee shall arrange for prompt notices to be sent to the selected Fellow(s). The announcement may be made by telephone call or electronic communication. At an applicant's request, the announcement shall be followed by a written formal letter of notification. Applicants shall return the announcement with an acceptance of the Fellowship. Following acceptance, the Fellow(s) will be presented with the proposed Terms of Appointment (i.e. a formal contract between the Institute, the employer if appropriate, and the Fellow) outlining the terms and conditions of the Fellowship. (See Item 6.1 below). IEEE-USA shall also arrange for such public notices as may be desired and shall issue such letters to the Fellow's employer as are deemed necessary to publicize the award and to clarify financial arrangements.
- 5.6 Securing Fellowship Assignment: The Congressional fellow is responsible for securing a Congressional sponsor (i.e. Member of Congress or committee) for the fellowship and negotiating the scope and conditions of work. IEEE-USA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science will provide whatever reasonable advice and assistance are possible.

## **6. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

- 6.1 Generally: Following acceptance, the terms and conditions of appointment shall be specified in a Fellowship Agreement signed by the Congressional fellow, the fellow's employer if required, and by appropriate representatives of the IEEE. The standard terms and conditions are outlined in Sections 6.2-6.7 below.
- 6.2 Terms of Appointment: The standard term of appointment shall be for one year (12 months) normally commencing in September of each year. Other terms may be negotiated for mutual convenience. Extensions may be granted under certain circumstances by affirmative vote of the Government Fellows Committee and with the consent of the IEEE-USA President.
- 6.3 Fellowship Stipend(s) and Allowances: IEEE-USA will provide a fellowship stipend of either \$75K or \$65K and an expense allowance of \$5K, depending upon experience. Only full-time, professional work experience shall count towards the five year period as stated in Section 3 - BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR FELLOWSHIP. Time spent working in an internship shall not be counted. Stipends are normally paid in two equal lump sum payments at the beginning and mid-point of the fellowship. Alternative payment schedules can be negotiated. The supplementary expense allowance is intended to offset the costs of relocation to Washington, DC, but can be used for any fellowship expense or wrapped into the fellowship stipend at the fellow's discretion.

It is expected that the fellow's employer (or the fellow) will pay for the balance of the salary and expenses including all legally required and discretionary benefit costs. The Congress provides no direct financial support to the fellow, but does provide office space and furnishings and necessary supplies.

6.4 Reports: Congressional fellows are required to provide the Government Fellows Committee with three written reports. The first or placement report is due within 30 days after placement in the fellowship and should describe why the fellow choose his or her placement, provide an overview of responsibilities and on-going activities, and provide feedback on the orientation and placement process. The mid-term report is due after the sixth month of the fellowship and should provide an overview of on-going activities and accomplishments. The final report, due no later than one month after completion of the fellowship, should describe the fellow's activities and accomplishments including the scope and impact of legislative activities connected with his or her assignments, and offer any personal perspectives or recommendations for improvements to the program. In addition, fellows are encouraged to provide brief monthly status reports.

6.5 Presentations: If appropriate and consistent with the fellow's schedule, the fellow may be called upon to give verbal presentations to the IEEE-USA Board of Directors or to other Institute members or groups. Reimbursement for related travel must be authorized in advance by the Secretary, Government Fellows Committee and will be an allowable expense directly chargeable to IEEE-USA.

6.6 Orientation: Each selected fellow is required to attend a fellowship orientation program, held in Washington, DC each year during the first two weeks of September. IEEE-USA will pay the required registration fee. IEEE-USA will also reimburse authorized expenses prior to the commencement of the fellowship term.

6.7 Freedom from Influence: The following guidelines are provided to ensure the fellow's freedom from improper influence:

- a. It is clearly understood by all parties that the fellow is not an employee of IEEE or of the Federal government.
- b. The fellow is free to choose his or her assignments consistent with the purposes of the fellowship and is not bound to represent the views or positions of IEEE as a condition of the fellowship, but may call upon the Institute for technical information and any other general support required. IEEE will not attempt to control or regulate the fellow's independence of thought or service.
- c. The fellow may continue to communicate with past employers and is encouraged to seek technical information from all cognizant sources. However, he or she shall not compromise the integrity of the advice and assistance rendered to the Federal Government by permitting undue influence by any organization or individual nor by actions that would suggest such influence.
- d. The fellow may not accept any other employment or additional reimbursements for services rendered during his or her term of office except as specifically disclosed in the original application and agreed to in writing by the Institute. Unusual situations shall be referred to the Managing Director, Professional Activities, for interpretation and rulings.
- e. The fellow shall not engage in partisan political activities during the term of appointment.
- f. As a condition of the fellowship, the fellow may be required by the Federal Government to sign a statement declaring adherence to policies and laws governing codes of ethical conduct.
- g. The fellow should abide by the ethical policies and guidelines promulgated by the AAAS for the multi-society congressional science and technology fellowships.

## 6.8 Modification/Termination of the Fellowship

The standard terms and conditions of the fellowship may be modified or terminated by mutual agreement of the parties or as specified below.

Although it is the intention of the Institute to continue this program throughout each term of appointment, circumstances may dictate cancellation at any time. Should this occur, the Institute will provide to the affected fellow the balance of any agreed-upon reimbursements in one or more amounts and shall notify the affected Congressman and employers of the reason for termination of the program. Similarly, the fellow accepts an obligation to return any per diem expense reimbursements received for periods subsequent to the termination of the fellowship.

Fellowships will be automatically rescinded and the fellowship agreement cancelled if the fellow has not confirmed a fellowship placement within 60 days after the commencement of the fellowship term, unless an extension is granted by the Government Fellows Committee.

The fellow's placement and/or assignments in the Congress are at the pleasure of the cognizant Member of Congress or committee staff director, and are subject to termination at will without explanation. In that instance, the Government Fellows Committee, depending on the circumstances, may work with the fellow to secure a new assignment or terminate the fellowship.

In the event of malfeasance on the part of the fellow as determined by a vote of the IEEE-USA Board of Directors voting-as-whole, the fellowship and associated grant may be immediately suspended.

In the event that illness, disability or urgent personal considerations make it temporarily impossible for the fellow to serve the Congress, the Institute shall continue pro-rata or per diem payments for up to thirty days. Should a leave of longer duration be necessary, the IEEE-USA Government Fellows Committee shall, after consultation with the cognizant Congressional Staff Director and the fellow's employer, decide whether to continue or terminate the fellowship. If terminated, the fellow's employer may institute leave reimbursement in accordance with his policy.

In the event that the fellow voluntarily terminates for reasons other than illness, disability or urgent personal considerations (as determined by the Government Fellows Committee), payments will be immediately terminated and no additional expenses will be paid.

## 7. **DISCLAIMER POLICIES**

The following specific disclaimers are made by IEEE regarding the Congressional fellows program:

7.1 Employment Status: The designation of a fellow and the execution of a fellowship agreement does not constitute an employment contract between the fellow and IEEE, Inc., or any IEEE officials. During the fellowship, no employer-employee relationship shall exist between the fellow and the Institute. However, the fellow may continue to have an employment relationship with his/her employer at the time of selection in accordance with the employer's established leave policies and provisions of the law. The conditions of the fellowship agreement shall be binding on both parties only to the extent that both agree in the written agreements.

7.2 Financial Liability: IEEE's total financial liability for reimbursement to the fellow shall not exceed the agreed upon amount for stipend or per diem expenses specified in this agreement unless approved by the Government Fellows Committee Chairman. No person shall have any claim against the Institute for any other expenses, nor for the actions of the fellow.

## **8. FEDERAL INCOME TAX IMPLICATIONS OF THE IEEE-USA FELLOWSHIP**

8.1 General: The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE), a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), is an organization established for the purposes of scientific, educational and the advancement of the theory and practice of electrical engineering, electronics, radio and the allied branches of engineering and the related arts and sciences. In order to promote understanding of the influence of such technology on the public welfare, IEEE provides Congressional fellowship grants to engineers to choose a congressional assignment consistent with the purposes of the fellowship and is not bound to represent the views or positions of IEEE or his/ her employer to Congress as a condition of the fellowship.

8.2 Definition of Fellowship Grant per Reg. 1.117-3(c) of the IRC: A fellowship grant generally means an amount paid or allowed to, or for the benefit of, an individual to aid him in the pursuit of study or research. The term includes the value of contributed services and accommodations (room, board, laundry services, etc.) and the amount of tuition, matriculation, and other fees which are furnished or remitted to an individual to aid him in the pursuit of study or research.

8.3 Taxability to the grantee of fellowship grants are governed by I.R.C. Reg. 1.117-2(b)(1)&(2): Pursuant to I.R.C. Reg. 1.117-2(b)(1), the following conditions for tax exclusion are required for those individuals who received fellowship grants and are not candidates for a scholastic degree:

(1) In the case of an individual who is not a candidate for a degree at an education institution, the exclusion from gross income of an amount received as a scholarship or a fellowship grant shall apply (to the extent provided in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph) only if the grantor of the scholarship or fellowship grant is from (i) An organization described in section 501(c)(3) which is exempt from tax under section 501(a).

Once the above condition is met, the extent that a fellowship grant is taxable to the individual receiving the grant is governed by I.R.C. Reg. 1.117-2(b)(2) as follows:

(i) In the case of an individual who is not a candidate for a degree, the amount received as a scholarship or a fellowship grant which is excludable from gross income under Section 117(a)(1) shall not exceed an amount equal to \$300 times the number of months for which the recipient received amounts under the scholarship or fellowship grant during the taxable year.

(ii) No exclusion shall be allowed under section 117(a)(1) to an individual who is not a candidate for a degree after the recipient has, as an individual who is not a candidate for a degree, been entitled to an exclusion under that section for a period of 36 months.

8.4 Grantor's reporting of fellowship grants are governed by I.R.C. Reg. 1.6041-3(o): With regard to the grantor (IEEE) reporting fellowship grants to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) via Information return, Reg. 1.6041-3(o) of the IRC states as follows:

Returns of information (Form 1099) are not required with regard to payments to individuals as scholarships or fellowship grants within the meaning of section 117(b)(1), whether or not “qualified scholarships” as described in Section 117(b). This exception does not apply to any amount of a scholarship or fellowship grant that represents payment for services within the meaning of section 117(c). Instead, these amounts are required to be reported as wages on Form W-2.

8.5 Action to be taken by the grantee of a fellowship grant from IEEE (grantor): The above IRS rules on the taxability of fellowship grants to the grantee are provided for discussion purposes only. It is suggested that grantee discuss the taxability of their fellowship grants with their personal tax advisors. IEEE makes no representations regarding application or interpretations of the tax laws and disclaims any responsibility for improper tax filings by the Fellow.

8.6 Action to be taken by the grantor (IEEE) on reporting fellowship grants to the IRS: As noted in the above IRS Regulations, there is no requirement for IEEE to report distributed fellowship grants to the IRS. **Therefore, IEEE will not issue a Form 1099. It is the responsibility of the grantee to determine the taxability of their fellowship grants.**

## 9. AMENDMENT

These Guidelines were developed by the IEEE-USA Government Fellows Committee and may be amended by majority vote of that body subject to the IEEE-USA Bylaws and related policies.