§ 3402.6 Overview of the special international study and/or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance.

(a) For each USDA Graduate Fellow who desires to be considered for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance, the Project Director must apply to HEP for a supplemental grant in accordance with instructions published in the solicitation. Postdoctoral Fellows are not eligible to receive the special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance. Each application must include a "Proposal Cover Page" (Form CSREES–2002), “Project Summary” (Form CSREES–2003), “Budget” (Form CSREES–2004) and National Environmental Policy Act Exclusions Form (Form CSREES—2006).

(1) To provide HEP with sufficient information upon which to evaluate the merits of the requests for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance, each application for a supplemental grant must contain a narrative which provides the following:

(i) The specific destination(s) and duration of the travel;

(ii) The specific study or thesis/dissertation research activities in which the Fellow will be engaged;

(iii) How the international experience will contribute to the Fellow's program of study;

(2) The allowable stipend amount for each respective degree level supported, the cost-of-education institutional allowance for each respective degree level supported, and the maximum funds available for each special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance for each respective degree level supported;

(3) The activities for which the cost-of-education allowance may be used for awards made in that year; and

(4) The maximum total funds that may be awarded to an institution under the program in a given fiscal year.

(c) HEP will also determine:

(1) The maximum number of national needs areas for which funding may be requested in a single application;

(2) The degree levels for which funding may be requested in a single application;

(3) The minimum and maximum number of fellowships for which an institution may apply in a single application; and

(4) The limits on the total number of applications that can be submitted by an institution, college, school, or other administrative unit.

(d) These determinations will be published as a part of the solicitation, which will be available at http://www.grants.gov.
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(iv) A budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the travel;
(v) Summary credentials of the faculty or other professionals with whom the Fellow will be working during the international experience (summary credentials must not exceed three pages per person);
(vi) A letter from the dean of the Fellow's college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the Fellow's travel request and certifying that the travel experience will not jeopardize the Fellow's satisfactory progress toward degree completion; and
(vii) A letter from the fellowship grant Project Director certifying the Fellow's eligibility, the accuracy of the Fellow's travel request, and the relevance of the travel to the Fellow's advanced degree objectives.

(2) The narrative portion of the application must not exceed the page limitation included in the program solicitation.

(b) All complete requests will be evaluated by professional staff from USDA or other Federal agencies, as appropriate. Evaluation criteria will be published in the solicitation. HEP will award grants in accordance with evaluation criteria and to the extent possible based on availability of funds.

(c) Any current Fellow with sufficient time to complete the international experience before the termination date of the grant under which he/she is supported is eligible for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance. Before the international study or thesis/dissertation research travel may commence, a Fellow must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by the institution, or immediately after passing of candidacy/qualifying examinations, whichever is later;

(3) Graduate Fellows:
(i) Must be appointed before completing two semesters or equivalent hours of full-time study, as defined by the institution, or immediately after passing of candidacy/qualifying examinations, whichever is later;
(ii) Must be citizens or nationals of the United States as determined in accordance with Federal law; and
(iii) Must have strong interest, as judged by the institution, in pursuing a degree in a targeted national need area and in preparing for a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional.

(4) Postdoctoral Fellows:
(i) Must have been USDA Graduate Fellows who successfully completed their doctoral degrees in areas of the food and agricultural sciences designated by CSREES as national need areas;
(ii) Must not have obtained their doctoral degrees more than five years prior to beginning their postdoctoral Fellowships;
(iii) Must have strong interest, as judged by the institution, in preparing for a career in agricultural research, teaching or extension.

(5)(i) A doctoral level Graduate Fellow who maintains satisfactory progress in his or her course of study is eligible for support for a maximum of 36 months within a 42-month period. A master's level Fellow who maintains satisfactory progress in his or her course of study is eligible for support for a maximum of 24 months during a 30-month period. A postdoctoral Fellow who achieves his or her training objectives is eligible for support for a maximum of 36 months during a 60-month