



# **WHO Fellowships**

*Information booklet*

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## About WHO and its Fellowships Programme

The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its objective, under the Constitution, is the “attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health”.

Under its Constitution, WHO is required, *inter alia*:

- to assist governments in the strengthening of health services;
- to promote cooperation among scientific and professional groups which contribute to the advancement of health;
- to promote improved standards of teaching and training in the health, medical and related professions;

and thereby to help national administration to raise the level of health.

One of the ways in which WHO endeavours to achieve these aims is through its Fellowship Programme, which provides opportunities through group or individual training for:

- training and study in health matters which may not be available in the candidate's own country (such training will be provided abroad or through a distance learning);
- the international exchange of scientific knowledge and transfer of technology;
- specialist training in the candidate's own country where suitable facilities exist.

The Fellowship Programme has always been accorded the highest importance by the Member States of WHO. It is recognized as one of the most effective means whereby Member States can prepare staff for leading positions in their health services.

The application for the award of a fellowship constitutes a joint undertaking by WHO, the host country, the fellow and the government, thus

- WHO, in agreement with the government and the fellow, establishes appropriate plans for study, makes the necessary arrangements with countries and training institutions, and provides financial assistance;
- the host country (in cases of study abroad), agrees to provide the course of study prescribed for the fellow;
- services of the fellow are placed at the disposal of the national health administration on return to the home country; and
- the government, as specified on the application form, gives its assurance that it will make full use of the knowledge and experience gained by the fellow, and that the status, seniority, salary, pension and similar rights of the fellow will not be adversely affected by the fellow's absence from duty in the home country.

All parties involved are concerned in evaluating the results of the fellowship programme. For a fellowship to succeed, all of the above operations must be well executed and well integrated.

To benefit from the fellowship and to leave the best impression on the host institute and country, is the desire of all fellows and of their countries. In doing this, fellows also help to maintain the goodwill of governments and of teaching and other institutions towards the World Health Organization's Fellowship Programme.

*For more information on WHO, its goals, policies and achievements please refer to: <http://www.who.int/en/>*

## **Fellow's obligations**

You have been awarded a WHO fellowship. When signing the Fellowship Application Form you undertook the obligation to continue in, or place your services at the disposal of, a national health administration immediately after the end of your fellowship for specified minimum periods in relation to the duration of the fellowship granted as follow:

- one year of service for fellowships of less than six months;
- two years of service for fellowships of six months to two years;
- three years of service for fellowships of more than two years.

## **Fellowships award**

Fellows are asked to read this booklet carefully: it summarizes principles and practices that have been tested by experience. It will also give you all information concerning your entitlements and obligations.

Together with this booklet you have received several documents and we shall explain herein their purpose.

### **1. Letter of Award**

The Letter of Award is the only certificate relating to the fellowship studies issued by WHO. The following details are included in the Letter of Award (LOA):

- a) Award sequence number and allotment number (when contacting WHO, fellows should always indicate the sequence number which will facilitate their identification);
- b) Exact subject of study or full title of the course;
- c) Duration of the award and exact starting date;
- d) Reporting address(es);
- e) Itinerary and instruction about whom to contact in order to obtain the ticket;

- f) Stipend rate(s) applicable, advance amount to be paid before departure and the address of the payment office.

Fellows are requested to check the data carefully and in case of any doubt, they should contact the WHO Office that issued the Letter of Award immediately for clarification or correction.

## **2. Preparing for study abroad**

### **2.1 Data on customs, climate, clothing ...**

Fellows are urged to learn as much as possible about the country of study (e.g. customs, climate, etc.) through reading. Many countries have short publications written especially for prospective visitors, and sometimes specifically for foreign students. Internet websites also provide valuable information on lodging, weather, culture, etc. Fellows are warned that failure to buy suitable clothing before leaving the country of origin may create difficulties later, as the stipend paid in the country of study is not planned to cover such extra expenses.

### **2.2 Reading on the subject beforehand**

Fellows admitted to a specific course will find it worthwhile to prepare themselves before departing from home by supplementing gaps in their knowledge and experience, and by preliminary reading on important subjects of the curriculum. In addition, those taking a postgraduate public health course should also gather material (including statistics, graphs, photographs) about health conditions in their own country for contribution to seminars or for a thesis.

## **3. Travel arrangements and cancellations**

- a) The **Letter of Award** indicates how the fellow is to obtain tickets for authorized travel. *Fellows must not buy their own tickets* unless they are asked to do so;
- b) Travel to the places mentioned in the **Letter of Award** is automatically authorized. Additional travel in the country of study may be authorized by the WHO fellowship officer in the region of study;

- c) Return or round-trip tickets for all international travel are purchased at the beginning of the fellowship if valid for its duration;
- d) The mode of travel to which fellows are entitled is normally by air by the most direct, fastest and most economical route; the maximum standard of airline accommodation for the cost of which the Organization accepts responsibility is economy class normal fare. However, if an economy excursion or an equivalent lower-cost airfare is available and the conditions for its use are compatible with the duration of the fellowship award and also with the schedule and itinerary of the authorized travel, this airfare basis must be used.
- e) When the scheduled itinerary is not covered by air services, alternative travel by sea, rail or road may be approved, as follows:
  - sea: tourist class or equivalent accommodation;
  - rail: second or tourist class, with sleeping accommodation appropriate to that class for night travel;
  - road: public road transport.
- f) In view of the difficulties and risks to fellows, travel by *private car* is not authorized unless the arranged programme permits it and the journey is not a long one. In these circumstances the regional director of the region of study may authorize payment to fellows of the fare cost to their destination by the most direct route and by the most economical means of public transport. Authority to travel by private car must be obtained before departure, or payment will not be made. If tickets were already bought by the Organization, they cannot be cancelled for part of the round-trip travel if this entails a loss to the Organization. If tickets can be cancelled without loss, payment will not be made to the fellow until the Organization has been reimbursed by the travel agency.

When fellows are granted permission to use their private car, it must be made clear to them that they are operating the vehicle at their own risk and expense and are responsible for taking out insurance against the risk of damage to the car, persons or



property. A disclaimer should be signed by the fellow and returned to the regional office of study:

*"Permission to travel by private car or other motor vehicle is given on the understanding that:*

- the traveller is personally responsible for any claims for injuries, damage or loss involving the persons or property of third parties as well as of any passengers and has obtained the maximum personal liability insurance covering such claims;*
- the Organization declines all responsibility for any damage to or loss of the vehicle."*

- g) When a government does not provide for any international travel, the Regional Office for the region of origin makes the arrangements and pays for the ticket;
- h) WHO does not accept any liability for expenses incurred through late cancellation of travel reservations. Fellows should therefore be aware of the regulations regarding cancellations;
- i) WHO will not be responsible for any loss or additional charge resulting from the expiration of validity of return air tickets. Fellows on one-year fellowships should ensure that they *depart for their return home before the date on which the validity of their ticket expires*. If WHO approves an extension of the studies beyond the validity of the ticket, fellows should ask the regional office of their country of study for revalidation of the ticket at least two months in advance of its expiry.

#### **4. Time-table, notifications, hotel reservations**

- a) Fellows are required to conform to the dates given on the **Letter of Award**. If at any time a date cannot be met, it is essential that fellows notify directly, by the fastest means of communication, the person, institution or office expecting them, as indicated by the **Letter of Award**, and also the regional office for the region in which the delay has occurred;
- b) Immediately upon arrival in the country of study, fellows are required to send notification of arrival with a contact address to

the person indicated as "Person to contact" on the **Letter of Award** through mail, fax or E-mail;

- c) Fellows are required to make their own arrangements for hotel accommodations. They are responsible for paying their own hotel bills, including advance deposits, if required, and cancellation fees, whether or not the cancellation is due to circumstances beyond their control. Some host institutes are, however, in a position to provide practical help or advice on suitable lodging possibilities;
- d) Fellows should preferably not bring their family along to the country of study. However, if for any reason they have to do so, they should inform WHO/host of their intention with the understanding that the family will in no way interfere with the programme or accommodation arrangements if they were made by the host. It is also understood that all costs related to the family's stay, including health insurance, are the personal responsibility of the fellow.

## **5. Travel expenses**

### **5.1 To carry out the programme outlined in the fellowship award, WHO pays for:**

- a) *International travel* (i.e. from your own home country to other countries and return) to the extent that the government or other organizations do not undertake to pay for it;
- b) *Termination allowance* upon receipt of the Termination of Studies report by either the WHO regional office of the country of study or of your country of origin. The payment is granted as a lump sum according to the duration of the fellowship;
- c) *Visas* required for the approved itinerary which are *not obtainable* in the country of origin and *alien head tax*;
- d) *Airport taxes*.

### **5.2 Reimbursement of travel expenses**

- a) Fellows are reimbursed for tickets they have been authorized to purchase themselves (*see paragraph 3.a*). No reimbursement is made for amounts spent on local travel, commuting or

occasional short trips. However, fellows in resident status required by their programme to make repeated short trips during a given month may, at the discretion of the regional office of study receive a transportation allowance, subject to authorization by the regional office of origin;

- b) Claims for tickets which fellows have been authorized to buy themselves, for visas not obtainable in their country of origin, for alien head tax and for any other travelling expenses which they have been authorized in writing by WHO to incur (*see paragraphs 5.1. a, c, d*) should be made on a fellow's travel claim (*form WHO 51*). The purpose of, and authority for, any expenditure should be stated clearly on the travel claim, and, on completion, the form should be sent to the regional office for the region where the fellow is at the time. Reimbursement is normally made to the fellow in the country of study within a month of receipt of the claim. When there is insufficient time before the departure of the fellow to settle claims made in the last month of the fellowship, payment is made in the country of origin.

### **5.3 The Organization is not responsible for:**

- a) Expenses for travel in the country of origin, except when the fellow's home town is more than 50 km from an international airport;
- b) Cost of passport, photographs and fees for visas obtainable in the country of origin;
- c) Expenses incurred because of avoidable delays in travel, or travel by routes other than those authorized;
- d) Taxi or airport bus fares or tips;
- e) Packing, baggage insurance, portorage of luggage, or custom duties (and does not accept responsibility for loss of, or damage to, a fellow's baggage);
- f) Personal accident insurance;
- g) Travel expenses in the place of residence for study or within commuting distance.

## 6. Stipend

- a) A stipend is not a salary or an honorarium; it is an allowance for room, board and incidental expenses incurred by a fellow during the period of the fellowship award. The amount varies from place to place because of differences in the cost of living, but does not vary from fellow to fellow in the same place (subject to exceptions covered by *paragraph 6.e*). In order that the stipends of all fellows in a given location should be paid uniformly and equitably, whatever the United Nations agency or source of funds, stipend rates are established by inter-agency agreement. The stipend is not supposed to cover fellows' routine expenses at home for themselves or their family and should therefore not be considered as a substitute for any salary paid to a fellow at home. It is also not intended to cover clothing or other similar expenses.
- b) Stipend is paid at travel rate for the first thirty days at the place or each place of study and at resident rate (lower monthly rate) or a pre-established ad hoc rate approved by the Regional Director of the country of study thereafter. This is based on the premise that fellows will have found long-term accommodation within the first 30 days. Rates are expressed and normally paid in the currency of the country of study. For fellowships of the duration up to two months the payment of full stipend is normally authorized by the regional office of the origin of the fellow and paid fully before departure.
- c) If the fellowship is awarded for a period exceeding two months and unless not instructed otherwise *fellows must open a bank account in the country of study in local currency* and notify the regional office of the region of study of the exact bank address, its sort code and swift code and fellow's bank account number for transfer of payment of stipend and possible other entitlements. Fellows studying in certain regions will receive their stipend and other entitlement checks by mail.
- d) If the programme calls for a series of study or observation periods at different places, the fellow is considered as being in

travel status and is paid at the travel rate except that for any period of stay in one place in excess of thirty days in which case the resident rate is paid. If the home country of the fellow is among the places where a period of study has to be spent, the stipend is reduced by 50% during that period.

- e) If accommodation and/or board are available to fellows at no cost or at rates considerably below the average on which the stipend has been based, the Regional Director of the region of study will establish stipend amounts at an appropriate ad hoc rate. The stipend is similarly reduced by the Regional Director if fellows receive a subsidy in cash or kind from another source (organization, institution, government, etc.) while holding a WHO fellowship, or if they receive free hospitalisation, which includes subsistence. Regional Directors may also establish a reduced stipend for undergraduates, after consultation with the appropriate teaching institution.
- f) Should a husband and wife, both recipients of a WHO fellowship, be studying in the same locality, each of their stipends is paid at 75% of the normal rate.
- g) If a fellow takes a holiday during his fellowship, his stipend is stopped for a period equivalent to the duration of the holiday. This does not apply to normal breaks of a few days in organized courses during public holidays, nor to scheduled breaks in academic programmes or between academic sessions.
- h) Fellows following a course of studies lasting for three years or more are authorized to spend one annual vacation in their home country every two years. Such leave is normally granted:
  - after two years from the start of their fellowship;
  - provided that the programme of the candidate has been successfully carried out up to that time;
  - provided that one further year of study abroad remains to be completed before the end of the course.
- i) During this vacation, which should last a minimum of one month, fellows should be encouraged to undertake observation visits or practical training relevant to their course of study in a hospital, dispensary or other institution in their home country.

The cost of the journey to and from the home country, which should be made by air at excursion flight rates whenever such fares are available, is borne by WHO and payment of the fellow's stipend continues throughout the vacation. If the fellow is to be in his hometown, the stipend granted amounts to 50% of the resident rate applicable in the home country during that period. If the fellow is obliged to continue paying rent and utilities while on home leave, consideration may be given to payment of these charges or to their reimbursement on presentation of receipts and the lease agreement.

- j) When WHO and other participating organizations organize a special training programme, a suitable special rate for all fellows who are to attend will be established.
- k) Fellows for whom programmes are arranged in more than one country during the period of a month will be paid according to the prevailing stipend rate for the number of days spent in these countries.

## **7. Tuition fees and thesis expenses**

- a) WHO pays *tuition fees* for courses included in study programmes. Such fees, while accruing in local currency, should normally not be paid by the fellow, but invoice should be sent to the regional office of the region of study. These fees are approved by the regional office of the country of origin before the start of the study programme.
- b) WHO may pay where the presentation of a thesis is a prerequisite for graduation, the cost of final typing and binding and related work, if required. An estimate of these costs should be sent to the regional office of the region of study who may then authorize the fellow to have the thesis typed and/or bound. When printing is expressly required, only the least expensive process acceptable is authorized. Payment may be made to the fellow on receipt of an account certified by the faculty adviser or similar responsible person up to an established maximum. In exceptional cases, the Regional Director may authorize the payment of costs higher than this and a less formal statement of

such expenses may be acceptable, if justified by the circumstances. No other typing or reproduction costs, for instance of drafts, are payable by WHO.

- c) When it is compulsory for all students to pay fees for such items as *health, medical or liability insurance or laboratory or breakage insurance*, they are regarded as part of the tuition fees and are paid by WHO.

## **8. Book grant and educational support material**

- a) For all fellowships, a *book grant* may be paid with the amount varying according to the duration of the fellowship. In order that fellows may purchase the books most suitable and relevant to their course of study, they should seek guidance from either their supervisor or other appropriate authority at the institution of study. Each regional office of study is responsible for determining the means and frequency of payment of the book grant.
- b) Under exceptional circumstances, usually for long-term fellowships only and with the support of the adviser and at the discretion of the regional office of study, fellows may be provided a small allowance towards the purchase or lease of a computer and/or related software in order to pursue a research project or academic studies. This is subject to the approval of the regional office of origin.

## **9. Payment arrangements and currency**

- a) The first payment of stipend for a fellowship is normally made by the regional office for the region of origin in convertible currency. This payment usually covers the first month's stipend but for fellowships with a duration up to two months, the full payment is made before the fellow's departure (*see paragraph 6.b*). Subsequent stipends are paid monthly in advance by the regional office for the region of study in local currency into fellows' bank account unless other payment arrangements have been made. The book grant is paid at the same time and by the same office as the stipend for the second month (*see*

*paragraph 8*); it may however be paid in several instalments and in convertible currency, if justified.

- b) If, during a stipend period, the authorized programme requires a fellow to leave a country of study whose currency may not be convertible, the stipend for the period in question may be paid in convertible currency or in travellers' cheques.

## **10. Medical expenses, illness and accident insurance**

- a) Where in the country of study there is illness and accident insurance in which fellows are obliged by governmental or institutional regulations to participate, the Organization reimburses to the fellow the cost of coverage (insurance premium) for the period of the fellowship award. Even if participation is not compulsory, fellows are encouraged to take out private illness and accident insurance, when it is available, against reimbursement by WHO of the costs of insurance premiums. Both the insurance plan and premium costs must be presented beforehand to WHO for consideration of reimbursement. WHO's involvement is limited to reimbursing the cost of insurance premiums when claimed by the fellow. Submission and settlement of insurance claims as such must be handled directly between the fellow and the insurance company.
- b) In some regions/countries of study *fellows are automatically covered by illness and accident insurance negotiated by WHO*. In such case fellows are informed of this arrangement and of the procedures to follow when claiming the reimbursement of the medical expenses. The relevant information is sent to the fellows together with the **Letter of Award**.
- c) Apart from reimbursing insurance premiums and assuring the coverage as described in paragraphs 10.a) and 10.b), WHO does not provide illness or accident insurance coverage for, nor does it undertake to pay those of a fellow's expenses resulting from illness or accident (including dental and optical expenses). However, the regional office responsible may authorize the payment by the Organization of that part of such expenses (including those for providing an escort to accompany ill or



disabled fellows back to their own country) incurred during the period for which the fellowship was awarded as cannot be paid from the stipend. The following factors should be taken into consideration in such circumstances:

- whether the fellow is covered by an illness or accident insurance policy or benefit scheme;
  - whether in the country of study the fellow has been provided with medical or hospital care (of a kind which WHO would consider appropriate for a person of professional status) either free or at a cost which could have been paid entirely from his stipend;
  - whether the Organization was consulted before the expenses were incurred, other than in an emergency;
  - whether the disability or illness has arisen from a pre-existing condition which should have been treated before the fellow left the home country to take up the fellowship award.
- d) In case of death, the Organization bears the cost of preparing and transporting the deceased fellows to their place of origin, taking into account family wishes.
- e) WHO does not pay compensation for the death or disability of a fellow resulting from illness, accident or any other cause, nor does it provide related insurance coverage. However, in certain concentrated risk situations the Organization may, at its discretion, arrange appropriate insurance for national or international groups of fellows or participants on extended study tours, travelling seminars or other group activities, including for example, excursions by such groups to field and other projects as part of their course of study. These arrangements are initiated direct with the appropriate insurance company by the regional or other office making the awards.

## **11. Extension of fellowship**

- a) Extensions to a fellowship with financial support from WHO can be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Extensions of more than 30 days can be considered only if recommended in writing by a senior staff member of the institution in which the

fellow is studying and approved in writing by the fellow's national health administration. Such extension may be authorized by the regional director for the region of origin.

- b) Decisions to grant extensions not exceeding 30 days may be made exceptionally by the regional director for the region of study, provided justified reasons exist and sufficient funds are available.
- c) Fellows who obtain alternative funding may continue their studies as long as the original training objectives remain the same and provided that their government approves the requested extension duly endorsed by the regional offices for the region of study and the region of origin. Extensions of Stay (EOS) may be granted if the aforementioned requirements have been met and the applicant can demonstrate proof of personal or alternate institutional funds to support the extension period. No funds are provided by WHO for the EOS.

## 12. Cancellation or termination of the award

- a) *WHO may at any time cancel or terminate fellowships* if, for no valid reason, recipients do not begin on the date indicated in the **Letter of Award**, or if for any reason it is inadvisable for them to continue to hold a fellowship. Such reasons include ill-health, changes in the subject for which the fellowship was awarded, unsatisfactory academic performance, personality problems, etc. Any conviction for a violation of the common law, whatever the nature of the offence, should also be reason for cancelling the fellowship. If fellows carrying out studies lasting for more than one year fail twice in their end-of-year examinations, or are obliged to repeat a year because of unsatisfactory performance or because of failure to present themselves for examinations, they may lose their fellowship award unless exceptional reasons for justifying its continuance are shown to exist. If an award is cancelled or terminated, the continuation of the fellow's studies would be a matter for the government and for the fellow. No funding by WHO through any other means should be given.

- b) If a fellow for any reason discontinues his/her study earlier than indicated in the Letter of Award, the fellowship is considered terminated on the last day of study plus necessary travel time for return to the home country; the fellow will be required to reimburse the stipend paid for the period beyond that day.
- c) Breach of conditions of award  
In case of a serious breach of the conditions of the fellowship (including non-return to the home country after completion of study, unless authorized as per paragraph 3.c), or not fulfilling service agreement to the national health administration), the fellow will be liable to reimburse to WHO all funds paid, including travel costs and expenses.

### **13. Reports and publications**

Reports are made by fellows during and at the end of the fellowship, by training institutions during the fellowship, and by the fellow and the government on the subsequent use made of the fellow's services.

#### **13.1 Reports during the fellowship**

- a) Fellows receive special instructions on reporting which vary according to the country of study. Fellows pursuing studies lasting more than six months are required to submit reports after each academic term, or at six-monthly intervals, on form WHO 54. The reports should be sent through the regional office for the country of study to the regional office for the country of origin and home country. Reports serve to maintain contact between fellows and WHO, help to initiate a remedial action if needed, provide the fellows with a record of their activities which will be useful when they prepare their Termination of Studies Report (*see paragraph 13.2*) and provide WHO with material for evaluation purposes.
- b) Training institutions are requested to submit an interim report on fellows' performance for those pursuing academic studies lasting more than six months.

### **13.2 Reports at the end of the fellowship**

Within one month of the end of their fellowship, fellows are required to submit a *Termination of Studies Report*, typed or in dark copying ink suitable for photocopying, on form WHO 635 or complete and return this form electronically. This report should be sent to the regional office for the country of origin, which will send copies to the regional office(s) for the country(ies) of study; the latter may in turn forward a copy to the training institution. Exceptionally, and time permitting, the report may be submitted to the regional office for the country of study, which will arrange payment of the termination allowance before departure.

### **13.3 Reports on the subsequent use of fellows' services**

For all fellowships lasting three months or more, a report on the *Utilization of Fellows' Services* (form WHO 55) must be completed by the fellow and the national health administration twelve months after the end of the fellowship. For fellowships lasting six months or more an *additional utilization report* is due after 24 months or 36 months if the length of studies was less than two years, respectively more than two years, in line with the fellow's undertaking to complete minimum service periods as described in the first paragraph of this booklet. At the appropriate time, the national health administration sends form WHO 55 to the fellow who completes page 2 and returns it to the government. The government adds its comments on page 1, retains one copy and sends the other to the regional office for the country of origin.

### **13.4 Publication of fellows reports**

WHO may publish extracts from any report or, after obtaining the permission of the fellow (and, where appropriate, of the government concerned), the report in extenso.

### **13.5 Publications by fellows**

Fellows are required to submit to WHO, for possible publication in one of the Organization's periodicals, any papers on the work they have performed during the fellowship period. Papers which are not

retained for publication will be returned to the fellow. Such papers, if published elsewhere, must state that the work was done during a WHO fellowship, and must indicate that the statements made and the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of WHO; authors must not claim the authority of, or any direct connection with, the Organization, nor claim to speak for their country unless so authorized.

#### **13.6 WHO publications**

Fellows may receive information products catalogues distributed by WHO free of charge. They may be requested by using the form in the back of the booklet or last page of the electronic version of the booklet. The information products contained in these catalogues may be obtained at a 50% discount for books and 25% for subscriptions.

### **14. Security clearance requirement**

Security clearance procedure must be applied to WHO fellows who are either non-resident but studying in the security phased country or nationals of a country in security phase on leave or field trip in that country. Each fellow concerned will be notified by the regional office of a country of origin before departure for his/her WHO fellowship or by the regional office of a country of study before his/her departure on home leave or field trip to such country. In this case fellows will receive a *Security Clearance Requirement Instruction* and a *Request for Security Clearance Form for WHO Fellows* for completion.

If in doubt please check with any WHO regional office or the Director of Security in WHO Headquarters (SEC/HQ), Tel: (+ 41 22) 791 2770, Facsimile (fax): (+ 41 22) 791 1381.

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