National Science Foundation
**WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN**

NSF 14-087

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) FOR NSF 14-548, NSF RESEARCH TRAINEESHIP (NRT) PROGRAM

1. **How is NRT different from IGERT?**
2. **What is a trainee?**
3. **What is a traineeship?**
4. **Can international students be NRT trainees?**
5. **Is a project required to fund trainees?**
6. **On which specific national research priorities is NRT focused?**
7. **Is there more funding available for the Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE) research theme?**
8. **Can we propose research that addresses both the Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE) research theme and interdisciplinary components, in one proposal? To which track would we send such a proposal?**
9. **If master's and doctoral students are included in one NRT project, how much overlap in their training is expected and/or preferred?**
10. **Does the mention of pedagogy and mentoring training for faculty members mean that the NRT will fund professional development for faculty?**
11. **Can I propose funding for the improvement of a training model that is not entirely new but is certainly not (yet) broadly adopted?**
12. **Does the fact that "Education" is not included in the "NRT" title mean that NRT will fund more proposed hands-on training and less classroom instruction?**
13. **Referring to the "Key features of NRT" (section II.C.), are we being asked to develop evidence-based strategies to broaden participation of students from diverse backgrounds, or are we being asked to apply evidence-based strategies that are already in practice?**
14. **Are there preferred types of formative assessments (section II.C.) that we would include as central to the traineeship, or are these formative assessments open as part of the new model we are proposing?**
15. **Are past and/or current IGERTs eligible for NRT awards? Will preference be given according to whether an institution already has an IGERT?**
16. **Is there a limit on cost of education that can be charged to the grant?**
17. **Will proposals with external evaluators receive more preference than proposals with internal evaluators?**
18. **Can NRT projects include international partners?**

1. **How is NRT different from IGERT?**

   NRT is a new NSF initiative that is distinct from IGERT. Some notable NRT differences include:

   - An emphasis on training for multiple career pathways;
   - Rotating priority research themes;
   - Inclusion of both master's and doctoral students;
   - A broad definition of trainees;
   - Budgetary and programmatic flexibility;
   - Increased emphasis on scalability of the training plan; and
   - Increased focus on developing models and knowledge that promote transformative improvements in graduate education

Prospective PIs are encouraged to read the NRT solicitation carefully when preparing their submissions.

2. **What is a trainee?**

A trainee is a research-based STEM graduate student, irrespective of whether he/she is supported with an NRT stipend, research assistantship, teaching assistantship, or other funding, who is accepted into the institution's NRT program and is expected to complete all the required program elements as described in the proposal.

3. **What is a traineeship?**

A traineeship is focused on students and their technical and broader professional development. In the case of NRT, a traineeship involves a strong institutional commitment to mentoring STEM graduate students and the development of their technical and transferrable professional skills (e.g., teamwork, communications, leadership, and project management) for a variety of STEM careers. NRT includes a focus on the students' overall development as STEM professionals, in addition to their conducting cutting-edge interdisciplinary research.

4. **Can international students be NRT trainees?**

Yes, they can fully participate in any NRT program elements (e.g., courses, workshops, and internships). However, NRT stipends are restricted to U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents.

5. **Is a project required to fund trainees?**

No, NRT projects may fund NRT programmatic elements only. The reverse - funding of NRT trainees only, without funding for programmatic elements - is not consistent with the goals of the NRT program.

6. **On which specific national research priorities is NRT focused?**

By design, the NRT solicitation does not identify national research priorities. The expectation is that the proposers will identify the research priority or priorities, including a clear justification for their selection, and to describe the need for graduate student training in the area(s). That said, this year's NRT solicitation does include a priority research theme entitled "Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE)".

7. **Is there more funding available for the Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE) research theme?**

No, proposals will be selected for funding based on quality alone, independent of proposal theme (DESE or otherwise).

8. **Can we propose research that addresses both the Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE) research theme and interdisciplinary components, in one proposal? To which track would we send such a proposal?**

Proposers must identify a proposal as either a DESE proposal or a proposal on another interdisciplinary theme; a DESE proposal must be identified as such in the title.

9. **If master's and doctoral students are included in one NRT project, how much overlap in their training is expected and/or preferred?**

The training approach is left up to the proposer to develop. Potentially, training specific methodologies could be suitable for both master's and doctoral students together. However, some training might be better suited for master's or doctoral students separately.

10. **Does the mention of pedagogy and mentoring training for faculty members mean that the NRT will fund professional development for faculty?**

An NRT proposal may include funding for faculty training.

11. **Can I propose funding for the improvement of a training model that is not entirely new but is certainly not (yet) broadly adopted?**

    An NRT proposal may include funding to improve a current training model, but the potential added value should be significant and potentially transformative.

12. **Does the fact that "Education" is not included in the "NRT" title mean that NRT will fund more proposed hands-on training and less classroom instruction?**

    No. Training could include classroom instruction.

13. **Referring to the "Key features of NRT" (section II.C.), are we being asked to develop evidence-based strategies to broaden participation of students from diverse backgrounds, or are we being asked to apply evidence-based strategies that are already in practice?**

    Proposals can provide plans to use strategies that are known to work based on evidence, and/or they can propose new strategies that show promise of success based on available information.

14. **Are there preferred types of formative assessments (section II.C.) that we would include as central to the traineeship, or are these formative assessments open as part of the new model we are proposing?**

    It is up to the proposers to identify the types of formative assessments. However, they should be formulated and designed to regularly inform and improve the NRT project.

15. **Are past and/or current IGERTs eligible for NRT awards? Will preference be given according to whether an institution already has an IGERT?**

    The NRT program is a new initiative that is distinct from IGERT. PIs of IGERTs or previous IGERTs are eligible to submit proposals to the NRT program, but those proposals will not be given preference.

16. **Is there a limit on cost of education that can be charged to the grant?**

    No. The institution can budget for customary and reasonable costs of education (tuition and required fees) for NRT trainees while they are receiving NRT stipend support.

17. **Will proposals with external evaluators receive more preference than proposals with internal evaluators?**

    No. However, if an internal evaluator is used, the institution must provide justification and explain how lack of bias is ensured, including provision for external auditing of the evaluation.

18. **Can NRT projects include international partners?**

    Yes, NRT projects may include international partners if they provide significant added value to the traineeship.

↑ Top