

Dear NIH Colleagues,

At the request of NIH leadership, and with the approval of the SDs, we have made some significant changes to the NIH Summer Internship Program (SIP) for summer 2019. The changes are outlined in the attached “2019 High School Summer Internship Program (HS-SIP) Policy”, but I wanted to take a moment to explain the most important changes. They affect program eligibility, the intern selection process, and the nature of the program itself for participating **high school students**. Changes affecting our older interns are minimal.

Beginning in 2019, summer interns must be **seventeen** by June 15th of the internship year. Individuals who are in high school must meet two additional criteria: they must be either juniors or seniors, and, if they will not be 18 by June 15th of the internship year, they must reside within 40 miles of the NIH campus on which they hope to intern at the time of application.

High school summer interns will be selected by an IC selection committee, rather than by individual PIs. Each IC will appoint a High School Summer Coordinator and devise a process for making summer intern selections.

Finally, to ensure that all high school summer interns are ready to benefit from the internship experience, they will begin as a cohort on one of three summer start dates and will attend a required orientation prior to joining their research groups. My office has developed and piloted a full-day orientation for high school summer interns which was very well received in 2018. Your IC may choose to send high school interns to this program or may opt to develop a similar orientation program on their own. In addition, OITE will provide a summer curriculum focused on the development of scientific and professional skills and on college readiness. Alternatively, an IC may choose to develop their own curriculum. Regardless, the expectation is that each research group will support their high school interns by providing time for them to participate in these important workshops. I am currently talking with high school summer coordinators and IC Training Offices about these educational programs and how we will assure that high school interns on other campuses have access to these (or similar) resources.

New requirements for internship appointments have also been established:

- **All** individuals (paid and unpaid) who intern in the intramural research program during the summer are part of the SIP and **must** have submitted applications through the online application system maintained by OITE.
- Working with the AOs, Summer Coordinators must determine, prior to appointment, that all summer interns meet eligibility requirements.
- Summer interns will **not** be appointed in ICs where their parents/guardians are employed. [OITE will work with ICs or campuses for which this would represent an undue burden (e.g., NIEHS, RML) to develop a system for granting waivers.]

I realize that these are significant changes and that they will require all of us to rethink the summer experience of our high school interns. I also appreciate that this will be a

confusing year for high school applicants and their teachers. If you receive inquiries from high school interns, please respond with a short email letting them know that the eligibility, application and selection process for summer interns has changed, and refer them to the new HS-SIP webpage (<https://www.training.nih.gov/programs/hs-sip>) for further information.

I have received quite a bit of feedback about these changes – some positive and some very critical. I appreciate that this is a substantial change and not everyone will agree with the decisions that were made. Our goal is to provide additional support for early learners. I hope you will work with me to ensure that SIP remains a highlight in the careers of future scientists.