



# **National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program & Students to Service Loan Repayment Program**

## **Postgraduate Training Bulletin** School Year 2016-2017

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
Bureau of Health Workforce  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, Maryland 20857

**For Questions**, please call 1-800-221-9393 (TTY: 1-877-897-9910) Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET or submit an inquiry via the Customer Service Portal.

## **Privacy Act Notification Statement**

### **General**

This information is provided pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), as amended, for individuals supplying information for inclusion in a system of records.

### **Statutory Authority**

*Title III, Section 338A of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I), as amended;  
Sections 338C-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254m-q), as amended*

### **Purposes and Uses**

The purpose of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program (SP) is to provide scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) within the United States. The purpose of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Students to Service Loan Repayment Program (S2S LRP) is to enter into contract with students while in their last year of school, to provide loan repayment assistance in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in designated HPSAs. The information supplied by scholars and participants will be used to approve or disapprove requests for post graduate training.

An individual's information is maintained in a system of records to be used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to monitor NHSC SP and S2S LRP programs related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside the Department, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the General Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses (see <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/privacyact/09150037.html>).

### **Effects of Nondisclosure**

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if the information is not submitted, deferment requests for postgraduate training may be considered incomplete and therefore may not be approved.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement**

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a current OMB control number. The current OMB control number for this collection of information is 0915-0146 and the expiration date is 06/30/2017. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average ¼ hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to HRSA Reports Clearance Office, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10-33, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

### **Discrimination Prohibited**

In accordance with applicable Federal laws and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, the Department does not discriminate on the basis of any non-merit factor, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability (physical or mental), age, status as a parent, or genetic information.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Postgraduate Training Request Overview	4
Postgraduate Training for Physicians	7
Postgraduate Training for Dentists	9
Postgraduate Training for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants	10
Suspensions of the Service Obligation	11
Appendix	12
Definitions	14

## Postgraduate Training Request Overview

This bulletin describes the terms and conditions for, and the types of NHSC approved postgraduate training programs (including internships, chief residency, or fellowships) for Scholars and Students to Service Loan Repayment Program participants (S2S LRP).

NHSC Scholars and S2S LRP participants who are required or electing to complete a postgraduate training program must submit a request through the Customer Service Portal to receive approval by the NHSC. You will be required to complete a postgraduate training (PGT) request annually. Your postgraduate training request must be approved by the NHSC prior to the start of any postgraduate training programs to ensure continued compliance with NHSC requirements.

Required documentation and deadlines are outlined for each discipline in the appendix on page 14. Please review the **Appendix** before submitting your request as deadlines and documentation requirements vary for each discipline and program.

Certified Nurse Midwives are not eligible to request postgraduate training and are required to begin their NHSC service obligation within six months after graduation.

### **Postgraduate Training Request (Online) Submission**

Prepare the documentations required for your training program as listed in the appendix and submit your request online through the Customer Service Portal at <https://programportal.hrsa.gov>.

All postgraduate training requests must be submitted to the NHSC, via the Customer Service Portal at <https://programportal.hrsa.gov> by **June 15, 2016**. Failure to submit a timely and complete request will delay the processing of your request and may result in noncompliance with your NHSC contract.

### **Requirements While in Postgraduate Training**

The NHSC expects Scholars and S2S LRP participants to start their postgraduate training soon after graduation. While in postgraduate training, you are subject to the following requirements:

1. Pursue postgraduate training that is approved by the NHSC;
2. Submit the postgraduate training request with all required documentations to the NHSC annually through the Customer Service Portal;
3. Make no change to the type or period of training without prior written approval from the NHSC;
4. Do not incur a conflicting service commitment;
5. Update any personal information on the Customer Service Portal; and
6. Notify the NHSC immediately of any changes that affect your approved training and status.

### **Switching Postgraduate Training Programs**

If required, you may switch to another NHSC approved postgraduate training (residency) program by submitting a letter from the new program director to the NHSC through the Customer Service Portal no later than 30 days before the start of your new training program. The letter from the new program director must indicate your anticipated start and completion dates in the new training program, as well as how much credit, if any, will be given from your prior training program.

The NHSC will grant a maximum of five (5) years for postgraduate training (deferment) from the beginning of the initial postgraduate training to complete all required training specific to your discipline and specialty.

### **Chief Residencies and Fellowships**

Certain disciplines are eligible for additional postgraduate training, such as a Chief Residency or Fellowship. These requests are approved or disapproved based on the needs of the NHSC and cannot exceed the maximum five year limit. The deadline and documentation requirements for additional training are provided in the appendix on page 14 and 15. The NHSC's goal is to place well-trained providers in underserved communities as soon as possible. Requests for additional postgraduate training must be consistent with the needs of the NHSC in providing primary health care services in an outpatient setting in underserved communities in designated HPSAs within the United States.

### **Financial Support from the NHSC While in Postgraduate Training**

**NHSC Scholars do not** receive NHSC financial support (e.g., stipend, payment for training expenses or certifying exams) nor do they incur additional NHSC service obligations during postgraduate training.

**S2S LRP participants** will receive the annual installment of their loan award as stipulated in the contract; subject to compliance with the S2S LRP program requirements.

### **Service Obligation Credit during Postgraduate Training**

The postgraduate training period is **not** credited toward satisfying the NHSC service obligation, even if the training occurs in a NHSC approved site or a facility located in a HPSA.

### **Ineligible Postgraduate Training Programs**

Participation in a postgraduate training program that is not approved by the NHSC may result in a breach of the NHSC contract and lead to default. Postgraduate training programs that are **not approved** include the following:

1. Non-primary health care programs (e.g., emergency medicine, surgery, radiology, neurology, anesthesiology, ophthalmology, pathology, oral surgery, endodontics, palliative care, hospitalists, etc.) or other programs that the NHSC determines are not consistent with the needs of the NHSC to provide primary health services in HPSAs;
2. Postgraduate training conducted by any entity that imposes a service obligation, such as a branch of the United States Armed Forces, that conflict with the service obligation required under the NHSC contract; and
3. Transitional residency training.
4. Any training program that is not accredited.
5. Any training that is not approved by the NHSC.

### **Failure to Meet the Requirements While Pursuing Postgraduate Training**

Physicians: Refer to your NHSC contract and the Application and Program Guidance (APG) for your specific program regarding Breach of Contract. If a situation arises in which completion of your postgraduate training is in question, please contact your NHSC Program Support Officer immediately.

Dentists, Nurse Practitioners, and Physician Assistants who fail to comply with the terms and conditions of their optional deferment must immediately begin their NHSC service commitment. For questions, please contact your NHSC Program Support Officer immediately.

### **Training Completion and Site Selection Planning for Service Obligation**

HRSA's Division of Regional Operations (DRO) coordinates the NHSC scholar and S2S LRP participant site selection process to assist you as you transition to begin fulfilling your service commitment. During the final year of the postgraduate training, you will be contacted by a NHSC Regional Advisor to assist you with your site selection process. The NHSC Jobs Center website <http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov> is a useful tool to begin your site search. Please note that the HPSA score listings are subject to change annually.

## Postgraduate Training for Physicians

Allopathic and osteopathic physicians are required to complete a postgraduate training program (residency) in an accredited, NHSC approved primary care specialty. Physician may complete any combination of NHSC-approved postgraduate training listed below, in addition to a Chief Residency or Fellowship as long as the total postgraduate training duration does not exceed five years.

Approved Postgraduate Training Specialties	Duration
Family Practice	3/4 years
General Internal Medicine	3 years
General Pediatrics	3 years
Obstetrics-Gynecology	4 years
General Psychiatry	4 years
Internal Medicine/Family Practice	4 years
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	4 years
Family Practice/Psychiatry	5 years
Internal Medicine/Psychiatry	5 years
Rotating internship with a request to complete a residency in one of the above specialties (DOs only, see below for more details)	1 year

**Allopathic and osteopathic medical scholars** MUST complete one of the NHSC-approved residencies described above prior to beginning service or be subject to the damages provision described in “Breaching the NHSC SP Contract” in the Application and Program Guidance. Physicians are required to use their best efforts to enter an approvable residency program by July 1 of their graduation year either through the residency match process or outside the match process.

### **Osteopathic Internship (DOs Only)**

One-year osteopathic internships are approvable for postgraduate training as some state Osteopathic Boards requires a traditional rotating internship prior to entering a standard postgraduate (residency) training program. If you plan to pursue a one-year osteopathic internship, please provide a letter from your program director confirming that the internship is for one year and is a prerequisite to entering residency training. Upon completion of the one-year internship, osteopathic physicians are required to enter and complete a residency program in one of the approvable specialties listed above.

### **Chief Residency (Optional)**

The NHSC may approve, on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the needs of the NHSC, requests submitted by physicians in their last year of approved postgraduate training to complete a one-year Chief Residency program.

The NHSC’s decision to postpone your NHSC site search to allow for completion of an additional year of training will be based largely on the demand of your specialty for that year. **Do not sign your Chief Residency contract before you have requested and received approval from the NHSC for your additional year of training.**

If you plan to pursue a Chief Residency in an NHSC approved specialty, a Notice of Intent must be submitted to NHSC, as an inquiry through the Customer Service Portal by **February 1, 2016.**

### **Fellowship Program (Optional)**

The NHSC may approve, on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the needs of the NHSC, requests by physicians in their last year of approved postgraduate training to complete one of the fellowship training programs listed below:

- A 2-year Child Psychiatry fellowship following the completion of residency training in General Psychiatry;
- A 1-year Obstetrics/Gynecology fellowship following the completion of residency training in Family Practice; and
- A 1-year Geriatrics fellowship following the completion of residency training in Family Practice or General Internal Medicine or dual residency in IM/FP.

If you plan to pursue fellowship training in any of the above listed specialties, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to NHSC through the Customer Service Portal by **February 1, 2016**.

The NHSC's decision to postpone your NHSC site search to allow for completion of a fellowship will be based largely on the demand for your specialty for that year. Do not sign your fellowship contract before you have requested and received approval from the NHSC for your additional fellowship training.

### **Licensure Examination**

The NHSC requires physicians to pass all three parts of the medical licensing examination (USMLE or COMLEX) prior to completing your last year of postgraduate training to ensure that your NHSC service obligation will begin immediately upon completion of the approved postgraduate training.

It is your responsibility to select a residency program that will adequately prepare you to sit for the USMLE or COMLEX and obtain the appropriate license to practice in the United States. You must notify the NHSC when you have successfully completed all three parts of the medical licensing examinations and are required to submit copy of your certificates to the NHSC through the Customer Service Portal.

### **Documentations and Deadlines**

See the appendix on page 14 and 15 for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

## Postgraduate Training for Dentists

Dentists are not required to complete a postgraduate training program. However, they are encouraged to complete one of the following postgraduate clinical training programs approved by the NHSC prior to starting their service obligation.

Dentists may request to defer (i.e., postpone) their NHSC service commitment to complete an NHSC approved postgraduate training program if the NHSC determines that the training is consistent with the needs of the NHSC to deliver primary health care services in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

The total duration of postgraduate training is limited to **two** years including a Chief Residency and/or Fellowship program.

### **Dental Fellowship (Optional)**

The NHSC SP may approve, on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the needs of the NHSC, requests submitted by scholars in their last year of residency training to complete a one-year Geriatric Dentistry fellowship following the completion of postgraduate training.

<b>Approved Postgraduate Training Specialties</b>	<b>Duration</b>
General Practice Dentistry	1 Year
Advanced Education in General Dentistry	1 Year
Geriatric Dentistry Fellowship	1 Year
Pediatric Dentistry	2 Years
Public Health Dentistry	2 Years

If you plan on requesting postgraduate training in any of the above listed specialties, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to NHSC through the Customer Service Portal by **February 1, 2016**.

The NHSC's decision to postpone your service obligation to allow for completion of a postgraduate training program will be based largely on the demand for your specialty for that year. Do not sign your postgraduate training or fellowship contract before you have requested and received written approval from the NHSC.

Dentist not pursuing postgraduate training must begin their NHSC service commitment within six months of graduation from the health professions program.

### **Licensure Examination**

Dental scholars are expected to take the appropriate licensure exams at the earliest possible date. The NHSC requires dentists to pass **both** parts of the National Board Dental Examination (NBDE Parts 1 and 2) prior to completing their last year of dental school or approved postgraduate training to ensure that the NHSC service obligation will begin immediately upon completion of education or approved postgraduate training.

### **Documentation and Deadlines**

See the appendix on page 14 for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

## Postgraduate Training for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants

Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants are not required to complete a postgraduate training program. However, they may request to defer (i.e., postpone) their NHSC service commitment to complete an NHSC approved postgraduate training program if the NHSC determines that the training is consistent with the needs of the NHSC to deliver primary health care services in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants graduating in 2016 have the option to request a deferment to complete a year-long postgraduate training in Primary care.

If you plan to pursue postgraduate training in primary care, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to NHSC through the Customer Service Portal by **February 1, 2016**.

Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants scholars not planning to complete postgraduate training will immediately begin their NHSC service obligation within six months of graduation from their respective health professions program.

### **Documentation and Deadlines**

See the appendix on page 14 for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

## **Suspension of the NHSC Service Obligation During Postgraduate Training**

Suspension of the service obligation during postgraduate training, may be granted only for the reasons listed below. Requests for suspension and all required supporting documentation must be submitted via the Customer Service Portal. For further information, the NHSC can be reached at 1-800-221-9393.

### **Medical and Personal Reasons**

A suspension may be granted for up to one year if the scholar or S2S LRP participant provides independent medical documentation of a physical or mental health disability or a terminal illness of an immediate family member (e.g. – child or spouse, including a same-sex spouse regardless of where the couple lives) resulting in the participant's temporary inability to participate in postgraduate training. Upon receipt of a suspension request, further instructions will be provided that describe the documentation required to fully evaluate the suspension request.

### **Failure of Licensure Examination**

A scholar or S2S LRP participant who fails to pass the licensure examination **may** be granted a suspension for up to one year to retake the USMLE, COMLEX, or a National Board of Dental Examination and obtain results only if failure to pass the exams prevents the scholar from continuing in the postgraduate training program. In addition to a written request for a suspension, the scholar or S2S LRP participant must submit to the NHSC: (1) a copy of his/her examination results within 15 days of receipt and (2) a letter from the residency program director verifying the scholar or S2S LRP participant's inability to progress further in the training program. The scholar or S2S LRP participant is required to apply for and retake the examination at least twice (or until he/she passes) during the suspension year. Further, the scholar or S2S LRP participant should take the necessary steps to maintain his/her knowledge and skills while waiting to pass the licensure examination.

### **Call to Active Duty in the Armed Forces**

Scholar or S2S LRP reservists who are called to active duty will be granted a suspension for up to one year beginning on the activation date described in the order. In addition to the written request for a suspension, the scholar or S2S LRP participant must submit to the NHSC a copy of the order to active duty. The suspension will be extended if the applicable Armed Forces entity continues the period of active duty. A suspension request and a copy of the extension orders must be submitted to the NHSC. The period of active duty will not be credited toward the NHSC service obligation.

### **Parental (Maternity, Paternity or Adoption) Leave**

If the scholar or S2S LRP participant's parental leave from the residency training program causes a change in the residency graduation date, the scholar or S2S LRP participant must request a suspension. Scholars and S2S LRP participants are allowed up to 12 weeks of leave, unless the state permits additional time. In addition to the written request for a suspension, the scholar or S2S LRP participant must submit to the NHSC appropriate documentation confirming the need for parental leave. If the scholar or S2S LRP participant's parental leave will exceed 12 weeks due to a documented medical reason, a longer suspension of up to one year may be granted.

## Appendix:

### Deadlines and Required Documentations

Applicable to NHSC SP Scholars:

Deadline	Activity	Required Documentation	Physicians	Dentists	NPs, PAs
February 1, 2016	Initial Postgraduate Training	Notice of Intent		✓	✓
April 15, 2016	Initial Postgraduate Training	Online Postgraduate Training Request	✓	✓	✓
		Letter from the Program Director	✓	✓	✓

Applicable to NHSC SP Physicians and Dentists who are continuing postgraduate training:

Deadline	Activity	Required Documentation	Physicians	Dentists
February 1, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellowship</li> <li>• Chief Residency</li> </ul>	Notice of Intent	✓	✓
April 15, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing Postgraduate Training</li> <li>• Fellowship</li> <li>• Chief Residency</li> </ul>	Online Postgraduate Training Request.	✓	✓
		Letter from the Program Director	✓	✓
At least 30 days prior to anticipated start date	Changing to a different Residency Program	Online Postgraduate Training Request	✓	✓
		Letter from the Program Director	✓	✓

Applicable to NHSC S2S LRP Participants:

Deadline	Activity	Required Documentation	PGT Year One	PGT Year Two	PGT Year Three	PGT Year Four	PGT Year Five	Year 1 Service
February 1, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellowship</li> <li>• Chief Residency</li> </ul>	Notice of Intent				✓	✓	
June 15, 2016		Online Postgraduate Training Request	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Letter from the Program Director	✓	✓	✓	✓		
		Proof of Graduation	✓					
		Documentation Step II of USMLE/COMLEX	✓					
		Documentation Step III of USMLE/COMLEX			✓			
		Loan Payment Verification Documents		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Resource to verify the accreditation status of your residency program:

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/education-careers/graduate-medical-education/freida-online.page>

## Definitions

**Deferment** : A delay in an NHSC scholar or S2S LRP participant's service obligation start date, granted upon their request by the Director of NHSC, or designee, for a specified period of time to enter and complete approved postgraduate training, in accordance with the NHSC's Federal statute and regulations and the administrative guidelines set forth in this Bulletin.

**Suspension**: A delay in an NHSC Scholar or S2S LRP Participant's service obligation start date, in intervals of up to one year, which may be granted for reasons other than approved postgraduate training (e.g., illness, maternity, etc.). Requests for suspensions must be submitted in writing to the NHSC as set forth in page 11 of this Bulletin.

**Letter from the Program Director**: A signed and dated letter from the postgraduate training Program Director on official letterhead stating acceptance/continuance in the residency program to include the start and end dates of the entire length of training.

**Loan Payment Verification Documents** – S2S LRP Participants must provide documentation showing that all previous S2S LRP award funds were applied to reduce qualifying education loans approved by the NHSC. The payment history must be on official document which includes the lenders name, accounts holder's name, account number, and identification of all payments made during the contract period.

**Notice of Intent**: Required for MD's/DO's requesting approval for a Chief Residency or Fellowship and all dentists, NP's and PA's requesting approval for postgraduate training. The Notice of Intent is completed at the Customer Service Portal and is due by February 1<sup>st</sup> unless stipulated otherwise by the NHSC.