



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

Academic Year 2019-2020 Postgraduate Training Bulletin

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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 [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Authority: Sections 338A-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254I-q), as amended. Future changes in the governing statute, implementing regulations and Program Guidance may also be applicable to National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program and Students to Service Loan Repayment Program participants.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Privacy Act Notification Statement	3
Paperwork Reduction Act Public Burden Statement	3
Postgraduate Training Request Overview	4
Postgraduate Training for Physicians	7
Postgraduate Training for Dentists	10
Suspension of the Postgraduate Training Obligation	13
Appendix	14
Definitions	16

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-H of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254I-q), as amended.

Purposes and Uses

The purpose of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program (SP) and Students to Service (S2S) Loan Repayment Program (LRP) is to increase access to primary care in underserved communities. The NHSC SP accomplishes this by providing scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training in return for a commitment to provide primary health care services in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) within the United States. The NHSC S2S LRP provides loan repayment to students in their last year of medical or dental school in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in designated HPSAs. The information supplied by scholars and S2S LRP participants will be used to approve or disapprove requests for postgraduate training and to track the participants' training activities and location during the period of approved postgraduate training.

An individual's information is maintained in a system of records used within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to monitor NHSC SP and S2S LRP related activities. The information may also be disclosed outside of HHS, as permitted by the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, to the Congress, the National Archives, the Government Accountability Office, and pursuant to court order and various routine uses as described in the [System of Record Notice 09-15-0037](#).

Effects of Nondisclosure

Disclosure of the information sought is voluntary; however, if the information is not submitted, 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 07/31/2020. Public reporting burden for this collection of information (the Postgraduate Training Request Form) is estimated to average 15 minutes 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 14N-39, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

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.

Postgraduate Training Request Overview

This bulletin describes the terms and conditions for deferring (postponing) the NHSC service obligation in order to complete postgraduate training, and the types of postgraduate training programs approved by the NHSC (including internships, chief residency, or fellowships) for NHSC Scholarship Program (SP) participants and Students to Service Loan Repayment Program (S2S LRP) participants.

NHSC scholars and S2S LRP participants (from now on referred to as “participants”) who are required, or are electing, to complete a postgraduate training program must submit a request through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) to receive approval by the NHSC. The 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. In addition, participants will be required to complete a Postgraduate Training (PGT) Request for each year that they will be engaged in postgraduate training.

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

Ineligible Postgraduate Training Programs

Participation in a postgraduate training program (including a fellowship or chief residency) 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, orthodontics, prosthodontics, palliative care, hospitalists) or other programs that the NHSC determines are not consistent with the needs of the NHSC to provide primary health care 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, if the other service obligation would be performed concurrently or overlap with the NHSC SP or S2S LRP service obligation;
3. Transitional residency training; and
4. Any training program that is not accredited.

Postgraduate Training Request (Online) Submission

Participants should obtain the required documentation from their training program as listed in the Appendix and submit their completed PGT request online through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

All postgraduate training requests must be submitted to the NHSC, via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **May 1, 2019**. Failure to submit a timely and complete request will delay the processing of the participant's request. For physicians, who are required to complete a primary care residency, failure to submit a timely and complete PGT request may result in a determination that the participant has breached his/her NHSC contract. PGT requests from other health professionals are optional, and failure to submit a timely and complete PGT request may result in the participant being assigned for service immediately.

Requirements While in Postgraduate Training

The NHSC expects participants to start their postgraduate training soon after graduation but no later than July 1. While in postgraduate training, participants are subject to the following requirements:

1. Pursue postgraduate training that is approved by the NHSC;
2. Submit the postgraduate training request by the stated deadline and with all required documentation to the NHSC annually through the [BHW 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 contact information on the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#); and
6. Notify the NHSC immediately of any changes that affect his or her approved training and availability for service.

Failure to Meet the Requirements While Pursuing, or Engaged in, Postgraduate Training

Physicians should refer to their NHSC contracts and the Application and Program Guidance (APG) for their specific program regarding Breach of Contract. If a situation arises in which completion of mandatory postgraduate training is in question, please contact the NHSC immediately by submitting a question through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Dentists, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and Physician Assistants (PAs) who fail to comply with the terms and conditions of any optional postgraduate training must immediately begin their NHSC service commitment. For questions, please contact the NHSC by submitting a question through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).

Switching Postgraduate Training Programs

If a participant plans to switch to another NHSC-approved postgraduate training (residency) program, he or she must obtain prior written approval from NHSC. In addition, the participant must submit a letter to NHSC from the new program director through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) no later than 30 days before the start of the new training program. The letter from the new program director must indicate the participant's anticipated start and completion dates in the new training program, as well as how much credit, if any, will be given for the prior training program.

The NHSC will grant a maximum of **five (5) years** for postgraduate training from the beginning of the initial postgraduate training to complete all required training specific to the participant's discipline and specialty. The training to be undertaken must be consistent with the needs of the NHSC. See Appendix.

Chief Residencies and Fellowships

Physicians and dentists are eligible for additional postgraduate training, such as a Chief Residency or Fellowship. The deadline and documentation requirements for such training are stated in the Appendix. Deferral requests for chief residencies or fellowships are approved or disapproved based on the needs of the NHSC, and cannot exceed the total maximum five-year limit. The NHSC's goal is to place well-trained providers in underserved communities as soon as possible.

Financial Support from the NHSC While in Postgraduate Training

NHSC SP participants do not receive NHSC financial support (e.g., stipend, payment for training expenses or certifying exams) nor do they incur an additional NHSC service obligation during postgraduate training.

S2S LRP participants will receive the first, second, and third annual installments of their award funds while they are in the first, second, and third years of approved postgraduate training, respectively. They will receive the fourth annual installment during their fourth year of postgraduate training or first year of service, as applicable. Disbursement of the S2S LRP funds is subject to compliance with program requirements.

No NHSC Service Credit during Postgraduate Training

The postgraduate training period is **not** credited toward satisfying the NHSC SP or S2S LRP service obligation, even if the training occurs in an NHSC-approved site or a facility located in a HPSA.

Training Completion and Site Search for Service Obligation

HRSA's Division of Regional Operations (DRO) coordinates the site search process to assist participants as they complete approved postgraduate training and prepare to begin fulfilling their service commitment. During the final year of their postgraduate training, participants will be contacted by an NHSC Regional Advisor to assist with the site search process. Please note that for NHSC Scholars, the applicable HPSA requirement will be determined by their postgraduate training completion date. The [Health Workforce Connector](#) is a useful tool to begin a site search.

Postgraduate Training for Physicians

Allopathic and osteopathic physicians are required to complete accredited primary medical care postgraduate training in an NHSC-approved primary care specialty before commencing service.¹ Physicians 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. Physicians are required to begin an approved residency program by July 1 of their graduation year, either through the residency match process or outside the match process.

Approved Postgraduate Training Specialties for Medical Students	Duration
Family Practice	3 or 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 students who are obligated under the NHSC SP or S2S LRP **MUST** complete one of the NHSC-approved residencies described above prior to beginning service or be subject to the damages provision described in the Breach section of the applicable APG and in their NHSC SP or S2S LRP Contract.

Osteopathic Internship (DOs Only)

One-year osteopathic internships are approved for postgraduate training as some state Osteopathic Boards require a traditional rotating internship prior to entering a standard residency program. If a participant plans to pursue a one-year osteopathic internship, please provide a letter from the 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 approved specialties listed above.** The total period of postgraduate training (including internship) cannot exceed 5 years.

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 postgraduate training to complete a one-

¹ The [accreditation status of an allopathic residency or fellowship program can be verified through the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.](#)

year Chief Residency program.

The NHSC's decision to postpone a participant's NHSC site search to allow for completion of a Chief Residency will be based largely on the demand for that participant's specialty for that year. **Participants are advised not to sign a Chief Residency contract before requesting and receiving approval from the NHSC for an additional year of training.**

If a participant plans to pursue a Chief Residency in an NHSC-approved specialty, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to the NHSC through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **February 1 of their final year of residency.**

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 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-to-2-year Addiction Medicine fellowship following the completion of residency training in Family Practice or General Internal Medicine or dual residency in Internal Medicine/Family Practice;
- 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 Internal Medicine/Family Practice.

If a participant plans to pursue fellowship training in any of the above listed specialties, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to the NHSC through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **February 1 of their final year of residency.**

The NHSC's decision to postpone a participant's NHSC site search to allow for completion of a fellowship will be based largely on the demand for his or her specialty for that year. **Participants are advised not to sign a fellowship contract before requesting and receiving approval from the NHSC for 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 their last year of postgraduate training to ensure that the participant's NHSC service obligation will begin immediately upon completion of the approved postgraduate training.

It is the participant's responsibility to select a residency program that will adequately prepare

him or her to sit for the USMLE or COMLEX and obtain the appropriate license to practice in the United States. **Participants must notify the NHSC when they have successfully completed all three parts of the medical licensing examinations, and are required to submit documentation of a passing score for each part of the exam through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#).**

Documentation and Deadlines

See the Appendix for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

Postgraduate Training for Dentists

Dentists may request to defer (i.e., postpone) their NHSC service commitment to complete a 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 HPSA. Dental students are highly encouraged, but not required, to complete one of the following postgraduate clinical training programs approved by the NHSC prior to starting their service obligation.

Approved Postgraduate Training for Dental Students	Duration
General Practice Dentistry	1 year
Advanced Education in General Dentistry	1 year
Pediatric Dentistry	2 years
Public Health Dentistry	2 years
Geriatrics Dentistry Fellowship following completion of postgraduate training	1 year

If a participant plans on requesting postgraduate training in any of the above listed specialties, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to NHSC through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **February 1, 2019**.

The NHSC's decision to postpone a dentist's service obligation to allow for completion of a postgraduate training program will be based largely on the demand for his or her specialty for that year. **Participants are advised not to sign a postgraduate training or fellowship contract before requesting and receiving written approval from the NHSC.**

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

The NHSC will not approve any other postgraduate training programs. Dental students who wish to pursue postgraduate training other than the postgraduate training programs listed above are advised not to apply for participation in the NHSC SP or NHSC S2S LRP.

Dental Fellowship (Optional)

Requests from participants in their last year of residency training to complete a one-year Geriatric Dentistry fellowship following the completion of postgraduate training may be approved. Other fellowship requests may be approved on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the needs of the NHSC.

Dentists not pursuing postgraduate training must begin their NHSC service commitment within six months of graduating from dental school. **Dental participants are not allowed to pursue postgraduate training after starting their NHSC service obligation.**

Licensure Examination

Dental participants 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 for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

Postgraduate Training for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician Assistants (PAs) 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 HPSA.

If an APRN or PA plans to pursue postgraduate training in primary care, a **Notice of Intent** must be submitted to NHSC through the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#) by **February 1, 2019**.

APRNs and PAs who are **not** planning to complete postgraduate training must begin their NHSC service obligation within six months of graduating from their respective health professions program.

Documentation and Deadlines

See the Appendix for program specific required documentation and deadlines.

Suspension of the Postgraduate Training Obligation

A participant's obligation to complete approved postgraduate training may be suspended only for the reasons listed below. Requests for suspension and all required supporting documentation must be submitted via the [BHW Customer Service Portal](#). For further information, contact the Customer Care Center at 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.

Medical and Personal Reasons

A suspension may be granted for up to one year if the 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) resulting in the participant's temporary inability to participate in postgraduate training. Upon receipt of a suspension request, the NHSC will provide further instructions that describe the documentation required to fully evaluate the suspension request.

Failure of Licensure Examination

A 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 participant from continuing in the postgraduate training program. In addition to a written request for a suspension, the 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 participant's inability to progress further in the training program. The participant is required to apply for and retake the examination at least twice (or until he/she passes) during the suspension year. Further, the 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

NHSC SP 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 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 participant's parental leave from the residency training program causes a change in the residency graduation date, the participant must request a suspension. 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 participant must submit to the NHSC appropriate documentation confirming the need for parental leave. If the 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 Documentation

For NHSC SP Participants:

Due Date	Required Documentation		
	Medical Students	Dental Students	APRNs, PAs
February 1, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent for Chief Residency or Fellowship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent for PGT, Chief Residency or Fellowship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent for PGT
May 1, 2019 (End of the final year of school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Postgraduate Training Verification (PGTV) • Acceptance Letter from Program Director • Step/Level 2 USMLE/COMLEX Scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Acceptance Letter from Program Director <i>(required if postgraduate training is pursued)</i> • Part II NBDE Scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Acceptance Letter from Program Director <i>(required if postgraduate training is pursued)</i>
May 1, 2020 (End of PGT Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	N/A
May 1, 2021 (End of PGT Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director • Step/Level 3 USMLE/COMLEX Scores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Acceptance or Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director* 	N/A
May 1, 2022 (End of PGT Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan Payment Verification 	N/A
May 1, 2023 (End of PGT Year 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	N/A	N/A
May 1, 2024 (End of PGT Year 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	N/A	N/A

*Chief Residency or Fellowship Requests – See page 7 and 8 for instructions.

For NHSC S2S LRP Participants:

Due Date	Required Documentation	
	Medical Students	Dental Students
February 1, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent for Chief Residency or Fellowship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of Intent for Chief Residency or Fellowship
May 1, 2019 (End of the Final Year of School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Expected Graduation by July 1, 2019 • Step/Level 2 USMLE/COMLEX Scores • Online PGTV • Acceptance Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of Expected Graduation by July 1, 2019 • Part II NBDE Scores • Online PGTV • Acceptance Letter from Program Director <i>(required if postgraduate training is pursued)</i>
May 1, 2020 (End of PGT Year 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Loan Payment Verification • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Loan Payment Verification • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director
May 1, 2021 (End of PGT Year 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Step/Level 3 USMLE/COMLEX Scores • Loan Payment Verification • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Loan Payment Verification • Acceptance or Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director*
May 1, 2022 (End of PGT Year 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV • Loan Payment Verification • Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan Payment Verification
May 1, 2023 (End of PGT Year 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Loan Payment Verification • Acceptance or Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	N/A
May 1, 2024 (End of PGT Year 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online PGTV <i>(if applicable)</i> • Acceptance or Verification of Good Standing Letter from Program Director 	N/A

*Chief Residency or Fellowship Requests – See page 7 and 8 for instructions.

Definitions

Approved Postgraduate Training: Those postgraduate training programs approved by the NHSC for deferment of the service obligation.

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 physicians requesting approval for a Chief Residency or Fellowship and all dentists, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants requesting approval for postgraduate training.

Postgraduate Training: Additional training that a health professions student may participate in after they graduate from a health professions education program (e.g., internship, residency, chief residency, or fellowship).

Suspension: A delay in fulfilling training obligations, in intervals of up to one year. Requests for suspensions must be submitted in writing to the NHSC, with supporting documentation, as set forth in the "Suspension of the NHSC Service Obligation During Postgraduate Training" section of this Bulletin.