FAQs - T32 Applications

Eligibility

Q: Are international students eligible to apply and receive funding?

A: Huck T32 programs receive matching funds from various units at Penn State that allow programs to offer international students with the same benefits as trainees appointed to the NIH slots of the program. The number of available PSU matching slots varies from year to year and program to program. It is best to consult with the PI of your T32 program of interest to determine if applicants from international students are being accepted. Admission of a qualified applicant as an unfunded participant – to receive the value-added training of the program – may also be considered.

Q: Is it a requirement to pass the Qualifying Exam of the major program before being admitted to a T32 program?

A: Only the Physiological Adaptations to Stress (PAS) program requires successful completion of the Qualifying Exam before participating in the training program. If the student's exam is scheduled but not yet completed at the time of application, the timeline for completion should be discussed with the PAS Director.

Q: Can students who have passed the Comprehensive Exam apply?

A: Yes. While admission to the Huck T32 programs is prioritized for rising 2nd- and 3rd-year doctoral students, who likely will complete the Comprehensive Exam sometime during their traineeship, students who have completed the Comprehensive Exam can be admitted. Post-comp trainees will still need to complete the required coursework for the training program and the training grant will be charged the additional tuition for post-comp enrollment.

Q: Can students working on plants apply to PAS?

A: Stress is defined broadly in Physiological Adaptations to Stress. Most of the coursework focuses on animals. The student's overall background in physiology would need to be reviewed vis a vis the T32 curriculum.

Application

Q: If part of the program application, are there guidelines for the application statement?

A: Components of the application are detailed on each T32 program's application web page. In general, and if required, the statement should be 1-2 pages long and contain information about the applicant's background, experience, proposed research, and perceived benefit of the selected T32 program. If the dissertation lab was only recently selected, the applicant should be able to describe topics and approaches within this statement. Different requirements such as one or more letters of reference, an unofficial transcript (available in LionPATH), and a current CV are also required by each program.

Q: The application page mentions an interview. When will the interview take place.

A: Interviews with selected applicants are generally held within 2-4 weeks of the application deadline.

Q: Can a student apply to more than one T32 program?

A: Applicants must choose the program that is the best fit for their research and training interests. However, the application does allow for the selection of a secondary program of interest. If the review committee of the primary T32 views the applicant as a better fit for the secondary program, the PIs of both programs will determine which program may offer a traineeship to the applicant.

Program Opportunities and Requirements

Q: What are some advantages of participating in a T32 program?

A: Each program has a unique value-added component in addition to the subject matter and coursework. Please review the website of your program of interest for details. In addition, these programs exemplify interdisciplinary research. Opportunities abound for new collaborations with trainees and mentors within and across programs.

Q: Will I need to change my research project if admitted to the training program?

A: Not necessarily. Your research topic should fit the theme of the training program, but you should select the training program that best suits your research and training interests. If your research direction changes after you start the program, you will need to update it in your annual progress report; it should still be related to the theme of the training program.

Q: Does participation in a T32 program extend time to degree?

A: Despite the additional coursework and other required activities, the average time to degree of trainees is not longer than that of their peers. It is not yet known if participation in a dual-title degree program in combination with a T32 program extends time to degree.

Q: Do courses taken prior to enrollment in the T32 program count toward the T32 curriculum requirements?

A: Individual coursework can be reviewed with the T32 PI to determine if a prior course can fulfill a T32 program requirement.

Q: How does appointment to a T32 affect my stipend level?

A: Trainees are paid the equivalent of a grade 14 over 12 months. If a higher level of funding is customary for peers in the student's major program, the student's advisor may provide supplemental funds to meet the anticipated pay grade.

Q: How long can I be supported on the T32?

A: Appointments are for one year. Trainees who make expected progress in their first year in the training program, may be appointed for a second year.

Q: What are my obligations to the T32 after funding ends?

A: Trainees agree to provide progress reports (contact information, milestones, awards, grants, employment, etc.) for 15 years from start of appointment. In addition, programs may have several career development activities for trainees after they rotate off the grant and will stay connected through degree completion.

Q: Are there any other T32 programs?

A: There are many T32 programs across the university. The NIH database (NIH RePORTER) can assist your search.