WHO Fellowships
Information booklet

Required reading for all WHO fellows in the Western Pacific Region
1 About WHO and its Fellowship Programme

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its objective, under its Constitution, is the “attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health”.

Under its Constitution, WHO is required:
- to assist governments in the strengthening of health services
- to promote cooperation among scientific and professional groups which contribute to the advancement of health
- to promote improved standards of teaching and training in the health, medical and related professions

Through these activities, WHO helps national health administrations to progress towards universal health coverage, to raise the level of health and to reduce health inequity in their countries.

For more information on WHO and its goals, policies and achievements, please refer to its website: http://www.who.int/en/.

The WHO Fellowship Programme is one mechanism used by WHO to help countries achieve these aims. Fellowships provide individuals and groups with opportunities for:
- training and study in health areas that are not available in the candidate’s own country (training can be provided abroad or through distance learning)
- international exchange of scientific knowledge and transfer of technology
- specialist training in the candidate’s own country where suitable facilities exist

Award of a WHO fellowship constitutes a contract and joint undertaking by WHO, the study country, you as the fellow and your home government, as follows:
• WHO, in agreement with your home government and you as the fellow, establishes appropriate plans for study, makes the necessary arrangements with countries and training institutions, and provides financial assistance

• The study country (in cases of study tours) agrees to provide the experiences prescribed for the fellows

• You, as the fellow, commit to return to your home country immediately at the end of your study and work as required by your national health administration (see also section 2)

• As specified on the application form, your home government assures that it will make full use of the knowledge and experience gained by you as a WHO fellow. It also assures that your status, seniority, salary, pension and other rights will not be adversely affected by your absence from home for the purpose of your fellowship study.

For a fellowship to succeed, all of the above obligations must be well integrated and fulfilled.

**Read this booklet carefully.** It gives you information on your entitlements and obligations as a WHO fellow.

As a WHO fellow, you are expected to work and study seriously to maximize benefit from your fellowship and to leave the best impression on the host institute and country. In doing so, you help to maintain the goodwill of governments and of teaching institutions towards the WHO Fellowship Programme from which you have benefitted.
2 Your obligations as a WHO fellow

You have been awarded a WHO fellowship. By signing the fellowship application form and accepting this fellowship, you make a commitment to return to your home country and to place your services at the disposal of your national health administration immediately after the end of your fellowship.

The specified minimum period of service required is in relation to the duration of your fellowship, as follows:

- at least 1 year of service for fellowships of less than 6 months
- at least 2 years of service for fellowships of 6 months to 2 years
- at least 3 years of service for fellowships of 2 to 4 years
- equal to length of study for fellowships of 4 years or more

3 Fellowship award

3.1 Letter of Award

The Letter of Award is the only formal documentation relating to your fellowship studies issued by WHO. Note the details included in the Letter of Award:

a) award sequence number
b) exact subject of study or full title of the course
c) duration of the award and exact starting date
d) reporting address(es)
e) itinerary, contact information and instructions on how to obtain your tickets
f) stipend rate(s)

You are requested to carefully check the information in the Letter of Award. If there is any doubt or uncertainty, you should immediately contact the WHO office that issued the Letter of Award, for clarification or correction.
3.2 Preparing to be abroad

3.2.1 Customs, climate and clothing

You are urged to learn as much as possible about your study country. Many countries have short publications written especially for intending visitors, and sometimes specifically for foreign students. Websites also provide valuable information on lodging, weather, culture, etc.

Buy suitable clothing before leaving your home country to avoid problems during seasons that you are not used to.

3.2.2 Reading on subjects of study

Before leaving home, you should prepare for your fellowship by reading on important subjects of the curriculum or study tour. In addition, fellows enrolled in a postgraduate public health course should gather and take with them, materials such as statistics, graphs and photographs about health conditions in their home country for contribution to seminars or for a thesis.

3.3 Travel arrangements and cancellations

a) The Letter of Award indicates how you as the fellow will obtain tickets for your authorized travel.

b) If a government does not pay for international travel for the fellowship, then the WHO Regional Office will make the arrangements for the ticket.

c) Travel is authorized to the place(s) listed in the Letter of Award. Additional travel in the study country may be authorized by the WHO fellowship officer.
d) The mode of travel is normally by air, by the most direct and most economical route, in economy class.

e) Round-trip tickets for international travel will be purchased at the beginning of your fellowship if they are valid for the fellowship’s duration.

f) When the itinerary is not covered by air services, alternative travel by sea, rail or road may be approved, as follows:
   - **sea**: tourist class or equivalent
   - **rail**: tourist class or equivalent, with sleeping accommodation
   - **road**: public transport
   In view of the difficulties and risks to fellows, travel by private car is not authorized and not paid for by WHO.

g) If air tickets are purchased by WHO, they cannot be cancelled for part of the round-trip travel if this entails a loss to WHO. If tickets can be cancelled without loss, alternative tickets will be made available to you as the fellow, only after WHO has been reimbursed by the travel agency.

h) WHO does not accept any liability for expenses that you may incur because of late cancellation of travel reservations. You must be aware of the airline’s regulations on ticket cancellation.

i) WHO is not responsible for any loss or additional charge that you may incur due to expiry of your return tickets.

j) If WHO approves an extension of the studies beyond the validity of the ticket, you must ask the WHO Regional Office for revalidation of the ticket at least 2 months in advance of its expiry date.

k) You are advised to set all relevant dates as reminders in your calendars, both electronic and hard copy.
3.4 Timetable, notifications, accommodations

a) You are required to conform to the timetable given in your Letter of Award. If a required date cannot be met, it is essential that you quickly notify WHO and the contact person, as noted on the Letter of Award.

b) Immediately upon arrival in the study country, you are required to fax or email your new address to the contact person, as noted on the Letter of Award.

c) If accommodation is not arranged by the study country or WHO, you are required to make your own arrangements for accommodation. As a WHO fellow, you are expected to pay all your bills, including advance deposits and cancellation fees, whether or not the cancellation is due to circumstances beyond your control. Some host institutes can provide practical support or advice on suitable accommodation.

d) As a WHO fellow, you should not bring your family to the study country. However, if you must do so, you should inform WHO and the host beforehand. You must ensure that the family does not interfere with your study programme or accommodation arrangements if they were made by the host or WHO.

You must also understand that all costs related to your family, including accident and health insurance, are your personal responsibility.
4 Medical expenses, accident and health insurance

a) WHO arranges limited insurance coverage for life-threatening emergencies and accidents for fellows based in the Philippines.

b) Elsewhere, WHO does not directly provide illness or accident insurance coverage for fellows or their families. Similarly, WHO does not pay any expenses (including dental and optical) resulting from illness or accident.

c) In some countries, including Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, health insurance is compulsory. Insurance coverage can be included in the tuition fees of some training institutions. You are responsible for being aware of these situations.

d) WHO reimburses the cost of health insurance for you (not family) for the period of your fellowship only. For reimbursement of your health insurance, you must submit claims to WHO, along with the insurance plan and receipts, within 6 months of purchase.

e) Submission and settlement of insurance claims must be handled directly between you and the insurance company.

f) In case of death, WHO covers the cost of preparing and transporting a deceased fellow to their home country, taking into account family wishes.

g) WHO does not compensate for the death or disability of a fellow resulting from illness, accident or any other cause.
5 Travel expenses

5.1 WHO assistance
To facilitate the study programme outlined in your Letter of Award, WHO assists with some expenses.

a) **International travel** from your home country to other countries and return, only if the government or other organization does not pay for it.

b) **Airport taxes**

c) **A termination allowance** of US$100 for fellowships lasting 3 months or more. This allowance is payable as a lump sum only if WHO receives the Termination of Studies Report within 1 month of completion of the fellowship. If the report is late, the allowance may not be paid.

Termination allowance is given only if the 1-month deadline for the Termination of Studies Report is met.

5.2 You obtain your passport and visas

a) You are responsible for obtaining your own passport and visas. WHO will, if requested, assist applications for visas you cannot obtain in your home country.

Before leaving your home country, you should obtain visas including transit visas for all countries you will visit during your fellowship or study tour. Ensure that your passport and/or re-entry permits are valid for at least 2 months beyond the fellowship’s end date (or 6 months for the United States of America).

If needed, you can request WHO for a letter of support to assist with your visa application(s).

Ensure sufficient valid periods on your passport and visas.
5.3 Your responsibility for expenses

You (NOT WHO) are responsible for the following expenses:

a) travel in your home country, except when your home is more than 50 km from an international airport

b) cost of passport and photographs

c) fees for visas

d) expenses incurred because of avoidable delays in travel, or any travel not authorized

e) taxi or airport bus fares or tips

f) packing, baggage insurance, porterage of luggage or custom duties (WHO does not accept any responsibility for loss of, or damage to, your baggage)

g) travel expenses in the study country

h) any travel out of the study country before the end of the fellowship, except for home vacation as outlined in 6.2 on page 12

If you wish to extend your stay to attend your graduation ceremonies, you are responsible for:

a) your allowance as WHO's liability for stipends and expenses ceases on the date of expiry of your fellowship.

b) fees for ticket revalidation

5.4 Authorized expenses reimbursed

a) Claims for valid and reimbursable travel expenses should be made on a **travel claim** (form WHO 51). The purpose of and authority for any expenditure must be stated clearly on the travel claim.

b) Travel claims should be sent with original receipts to the WHO Regional Office within
3 months of the date of the first (oldest) expense being claimed.

c) Reimbursement is normally made to your bank account in the study country within 1 month of receipt of a properly completed claim for valid and verifiable travel expenses. For the last month of your fellowship, payment is usually made to your bank account in your home country.

6 Stipends

a) A stipend is not a salary. It is an allowance for room, board and incidental expenses incurred during the period of your fellowship.

b) The stipend is not meant to cover clothing or routine expenses for you or your family and is not a substitute for any salary normally paid to you in your home country.

c) The United Nations’ standard stipend varies from place to place because of differences in the cost of living, but it does not vary from fellow to fellow in the same place.

d) A travel stipend is paid for the first 30 days at the place(s) of study. A lower, monthly resident stipend is paid thereafter because you are expected to find long-term accommodation. Stipends are expressed and normally paid in the currency of the study country, by electronic transfer to a bank account.

e) For fellowships longer than 2 months, you must open a bank account in the study country in local currency and notify WHO of the bank’s name, address, sort code, Swift code and your account number.
f) For fellowships shorter than 2 months, the full stipend is normally authorized and paid to a bank account in your home country before you depart for your programme.

g) If a programme calls for a series of study or observation periods at different places, you are paid the travel stipend except for any period in one place longer than 30 days, in which case the resident stipend is used after the first 30 days.

h) If your home country is among the places of study, during that period, you will be paid 50% of the resident stipend applicable in your home country.

6.1 The stipend may be reduced
   a) WHO may set reduced stipends for undergraduates
   b) if a husband and wife are both WHO fellows studying in the same place, each is paid 75% of the standard stipend
   c) if accommodation and/or board are available to you at no cost or at rates well below the standard stipend
   d) if you receive a subsidy in cash or kind from another source
   e) if you spend time in a hospital that provides “hotel” services that are free or paid for by other means
   f) when WHO and other participating organizations arrange a special activity or training, a special stipend will be established for all who attend
   g) if you leave the study country during your fellowship, except for home vacation and vacation in between semesters or equivalent, the stipend is stopped for that period. You must notify WHO whenever you leave the study country. Failure to do so may result in termination of your fellowship.
6.2 Home vacation after 2 years

a) If your study lasts 3 years or more, air travel to your home country for vacation of at least 1 month may be paid each 2 years, provided that:
   - you have all passing grades on your programme, and
   - another full year of study abroad remains to be completed before the scheduled end of the course.

b) Plan your home vacation 4 months in advance. WHO will arrange and pay for the most direct and economical air tickets to and from your home country.

c) While on home vacation, your stipend is usually 50% of the resident rate in your home country. If you have to pay rent in the study country while you are away, you can claim up to 100%, but you must send to WHO Regional Office the original signed lease agreement and receipts showing rent paid.

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<th>Home vacation</th>
<th>Vacation in between semesters</th>
<th>Vacation during semesters</th>
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<td>Airfare</td>
<td>c/o WHO</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>50% resident rate of home country and reimbursable rental fee</td>
<td>Not paid by WHO, not allowed</td>
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7 Tuition fees and book grants

a) WHO pays tuition fees for all courses included in authorized study programmes. You must send the invoice for tuition fees from the study institution to the WHO Regional Office to pay.

b) For all fellowships, a book grant of up to US$100 per month may be paid if needed. Maximum allowance is US$ 960 per year. The WHO Regional Office is responsible for determining the amount, means and frequency of payment of the book grant, relative to the study programme. This means that the amount varies according to the duration and type of study.

c) To best use the book grant, you should seek guidance to ensure that you purchase the books most suitable for your course.

d) Book grants can also be used for renting a computer and/or printer, and for printing and binding thesis documents.

e) You may apply to WHO for additional support if you can present sufficient information about your needs. You should make these requests to WHO prior to committing expenses. Requests will not be granted simply because you have already spent the money.

Do not pay the tuition fees directly as WHO will not reimburse you.

Make requests for additional support before committing expenses.

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8 WHO information products

You will receive free catalogues of WHO information products, and can purchase products contained in these catalogues at 50% discount for books and 25% discount for subscriptions to journals.

You can find the catalogue of WHO information products online at: http://www.who.int/publications/en/

You can order products using the form at the back of this booklet either hard copy or electronic version of this booklet at: http://www.wpro.who.int/fellowships/en/

9 Security clearance

The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) clearance is ALWAYS required for official travel regardless of security alert phase of the destination.

You will receive a Security Clearance Requirement Instruction by e-mail – please read this instruction carefully.

If in doubt, please check with any WHO country office or the security officer at the WHO Regional Office in Manila:
email: ASO@wpro.who.int; Tel: +6325289608 or +6325289606.

Keep in mind that you are also responsible for your personal safety and for the safety of your belongings and valuables.
10 Reports and publications

Reports are submitted:
- by you as the fellow during and at the end of your fellowship,
- by training institutions during your fellowship, and
- by you and your government on the use of your services after your fellowship.

Forms with guidance for these reports are available on the website of the WHO Regional Office at:
http://www.wpro.who.int/fellowships/en/

10.1 Reports during your fellowship

a) If your fellowship is longer than 6 months, you are required to submit a Progress Report to the WHO Regional Office, after each academic term, or at 6-month intervals.

Progress reports serve to:
- maintain contact between you and WHO
- help to initiate remedial action if needed
- provide you with a record of your activities, which will be useful in preparing your Termination of Studies Report
- provide WHO with material for evaluation and possible publication

b) WHO requests training institutions to submit an Interim Report on the performance of fellows pursuing studies for more than 6 months.

10.2 Reports at the end of your fellowship

Within 1 month of the end of your fellowship, you are required to accomplish a Termination of Studies Report on form WHO 635 to be sent electronically to the WHO Regional Office. Upon receipt of your report and all necessary attachments, your termination allowance may be paid (see section 5.1c on page 8).

No termination report on time means no termination allowance. The Regional Office will remind you only twice.
10.3 Reports on the use of your services

The purpose of these reports is to determine application of your knowledge and skills gained during the fellowship, and usefulness of the fellowship programme to countries in improving their health system for progress towards universal health coverage and equity.

10.3.1 After 1 year of service at home

For all fellowships lasting 3 months or more, a Utilization of the Fellows’ Services Report (form WHO 55) is required 12 months after the end of your fellowship. This report must be completed by you and your national health administration.

10.3.2 After 2 years of service at home

For fellowships lasting 6 months or more, an additional utilization report is due after 2 years of service at home. At the appropriate time, the national health administration sends form WHO 55 to you to complete Part III and return it to the government. The government adds its comments on page 1, retains one copy and sends the other to the WHO Regional Office.

10.4 WHO use of your reports

WHO may publish extracts from any of your reports, and may publish the report in full after obtaining permission from you (and from your government if needed).

10.5 Publications by fellows

During your fellowship or following service period, you might prepare articles for external publications. Article contents that reflect work performed while funded by WHO or information obtained arising out of such work, should be cleared by the Regional Director. Therefore, you must submit to WHO articles that you wish to publish. Any articles that WHO chooses not to publish will be returned to you.

If these are later published elsewhere, you must state that the work was done during a WHO fellowship, and you must indicate that the statements made and the opinions expressed are not necessarily
those of WHO. You and any co-authors must not claim the authority of, or any direct connection with WHO (except for the fellowship). Similarly, you must not claim to speak for your country unless appropriately authorized to do so.

11 Extension of a fellowship

a) An extension to a fellowship with financial support from WHO may be granted only in exceptional circumstances. An extension of more than 30 days may be considered only if recommended in writing by a senior staff member of the institution where you are studying and approved in writing by your national health administration. Such an extension may be authorized by the WHO Regional Office if funds are available.

b) Decisions to grant extensions for less than 30 days may be made exceptionally by the WHO Regional Office if justified reasons exist and sufficient funds are available.

c) Fellows who obtain alternative funding may continue their studies provided that the original fellowship objectives remain the same and provided that their home government approves the requested extension duly endorsed by the WHO Regional Office.
12 Cancellation or termination of a fellowship

a) WHO may at any time cancel or terminate a fellowship if a fellow inexplicably does not begin on the date indicated in the Letter of Award, or if it is inadvisable for the individual to continue to hold a fellowship. Reasons could include ill-health; inadequate credentials or pre-requisites for the course; inadequate language skills; changes in study subject; unsatisfactory performance; failure to keep WHO informed of whereabouts; failure to ensure valid visas; inappropriate use of fellowship funds; and personality problems.

b) Any conviction for a violation of the common law in the study country, whatever the nature of the offence, is a reason for cancelling a fellowship.

c) Academic courses are structured differently in different countries. If in two academic years, fellows fail 50% or more of their courses/units or their host institution indicates unsatisfactory performance, they may lose their fellowship award.

d) If an award is terminated, any continuation of the fellow's studies would be a matter for the government and for the fellow. No funding by WHO through any other means would be given.

e) A breach of the conditions of a fellowship occurs when any of the requirements outlined in this WHO Fellowship Information booklet are not met.

f) When there is a breach of the conditions of the fellowship, the fellow will be liable to reimburse to WHO all fellowship funds paid, including tuition fees, travel costs, stipends, health insurance costs, book grants, and all other allowances and payments.
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