General Program Information

Q: I will be away for part of the semester- can I still apply for and get BFP?

A: Yes, but depending upon the reason for the absence and timing, it may or may not affect whether you will receive the fellowship. If you will be absent then you need to state so IN the application and give your reasoning. If your absence is a direct result of the research you are proposing (e.g. field work) then it is probably OK. Failure to disclose may result in retraction of the fellowship. We do understand that emergencies can happen.

Q: Can I get research units and participate in BFP at the same time?

A: You cannot get research for units for the same research hours you are being paid for through BFP (10 hours a week). Please discuss this with the BFP program coordinators if you have any questions or concerns. If you are taking honors research units, it may be allowable, but you must ask for permission from the BFP program coordinators.

Q: I am already getting paid to do research in the lab- can I still get BFP?

A: Yes, but only if the hours you are working as part of BFP are in ADDITION to your paid hours. That is, you cannot be compensated twice for the same effort. However, BFP is intended to provide support for students who would otherwise NOT be able to afford to engage significantly in research. Generally, this means that BFP is intended to assist students who have no alternative means of support for research. We have access to campus HR data and can verify your appointment, so you must mention all your employment activities.

Q: I am not getting paid enough by my lab and I can really use the money - can I still get BFP?

A: Yes. However, you legally cannot be paid to work more than 49% time on campus during the semester. It all depends on your financial package and keep in mind that we have access to campus HR data and can verify your appointment.

Q: Am I required to report all my employed / paid commitments?

A: Yes. You are required to report all of your employment. We need to accurately verify that you are employed under the standards of the university policies.

Q: I have an off campus job during the semester. Can I keep my job and get BFP?

A: Yes. As long as you are meeting the program requirements, which include working in the lab at least 10 hours a week, attending required meetings and workshops, and organizing and presenting at the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Q: Will BFP affect my financial aid?

Depending on your financial aid package, it may cause changes in how your financial aid is allocated. Please see this link from the Financial Aid Office for more information: http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/undergraduates/outside_scholarship.htm

If your actual financial need exceeds your current financial aid budget, you can apply for a budget appeal from the Financial Aid Office. See this link for the budget appeal form http://students.berkeley.edu/finaid/undergraduates/forms.htm. Please direct all specific financial aid questions to the Financial Aid Office and more general questions about BFP funding to BFP staff. If you are concerned about BFP affecting your financial aid package, you have the option of being hired directly. Please contact the BFP Program Manager, Laura Slakey (lslakey@berkeley.edu) if you have questions about this option.

Q: Can I apply for and receive BFP if I am an international student?

A: Yes, but it will affect how you will receive the funding. If you are a US Citizen or permanent resident, the funding will be distributed through the DSAS system or you will have the option of being hired. If you are an international student, you will have to create a Glacier account to receive the funding. See the Glacier website for more details: http://controller.berkeley.edu/payroll/GLACIER/index.htm

Application Questions

Q: I am not a UC Berkeley Student. Can I apply for the Biology Fellows Program?

A: No. You must be an enrolled student at UC Berkeley in order to apply for the program. There are no exceptions.
Q: Can I appeal a decision on my Biology Fellows Program application?

A: No. There is no appeal process. If you are unsatisfied with the program’s decision, you may schedule an appointment with the program coordinators to talk about weaknesses or areas in your application that you can improve on. This does not guarantee that you will be granted BFP for the following semester.

Q: I missed the deadline. Can I get an extension?

A: No. All application materials are due by the application deadline.

Q: Who reviews my Biology Fellows Program application?

A: The selection committee consists of faculty, post-doctoral fellows and graduate students who volunteer to read applications for the Biology Fellows Program. The selection committee changes each application cycle. The Faculty Coordinator and Program Coordinator serve as objective observers.

Lab Selection Questions

Q: I don't have a lab yet. Can I apply for BFP?

A: Yes. We understand that students are sometimes in the process of finding labs when they are applying for BFP. Having a lab already in place adds to your application and increases your chances of being selected. If you are selected for BFP, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to start in a lab by the beginning of the semester when your funding starts. If you are selected and are having trouble arranging a lab placement, the BFP faculty coordinator and program coordinators can assist you.

Q: I work in a lab off site (e.g. UCSF, Molecular Science Institute, CHORI, etc.). Can I apply for BFP?

A: Yes. The basic requirement for your research is that it has some biological component. Please check with the program coordinators if you are unsure about whether your lab is suitable. You must also be able to participate in the other events (workshops, symposium, etc.) held at UC Berkeley as outlined in the expectations below.

Special Info for Fall and Spring BFP

Q: What are the program expectations for the Fall or Spring Semester?

A: We expect you to embrace the experience and hope that you will enjoy it and learn from it. We also expect you to:

- Work a minimum of 10 hours *per week* in the lab for the duration of the semester.
- Help plan and execute the spring undergraduate research symposium (~early May).
- Present a poster or talk at the symposium.
- Participate in the semester meetings and workshops.
- Complete any program evaluations/surveys as requested.

Special Info for Summer BFP

Q: What are the program expectations for the Summer Program?

A: We expect you to embrace the experience and hope that you will enjoy it and learn from it. We also expect you to:

- Work a minimum of 30 hours/week in the lab for the full 10 weeks.
- Participate in the weekly events including seminars and workshops.
- Plan and execute the Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium.
- Present a poster or talk at the symposium.
- Complete any program evaluations/surveys as requested.
- Let the program advisors know if you are experiencing any problems.

Q: How long is the summer Program?

A: The program is approximately 10 weeks.
Q: Do I have to attend all of weekly meetings in the summer?

A: Yes. Participation in the workshops / seminars is a required component of BFP. If for any reason you are unable to attend a meeting please discuss this with the Program Coordinator.

Q: Do I have to participate in the Research Symposium?

A: Yes. Participation in the research symposium is a required component of BFP. You will have the option of doing an oral presentation or poster presentation. All BFP students must also participate in planning and executing the research symposium, which requires meeting periodically throughout the semester with the other students and the program coordinators.

Q: Is there an email list to contact my peers in the Biology Fellows Program?

A: Yes. There is a list serve that you will be invited to join for the Biology Fellows Program if you have been selected to participate in the program. If you are a member and you are not receiving emails, check your spam inbox.

Q: Whom do I contact with questions or for more information?

A: You may contact:

Corey Welch, Ph.D., Assistant Program Coordinator
coreywelch@berkeley.edu, (510) 643-3866