



RAND Postdoctoral Training Program in the Study of Aging

Overview

The RAND Postdoctoral Training Program in the Study of Aging enables outstanding junior scholars in demographic and aging research to sharpen their analytic skills, learn to communicate research results effectively, and advance their research agenda. Housed within RAND Labor and Population, the program blends formal and informal training and extensive collaboration with distinguished researchers in a variety of disciplines. Fellowships are for one year, renewable for a second. Each fellow receives an annual stipend, travel stipend and health insurance.

Fellows must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and must have completed a Ph.D. (or its equivalent) in a relevant discipline before they begin the program. The RAND Fellows program is open to new scholars in the field of demographic and aging research, as well as individuals who already have research experience on these topics. For example, in some cases, fellows are on leave from an academic position so they can engage in research and writing full time, and extend their research agenda and funding base.

The Program gives Fellows a great opportunity to jump-start their research careers. After completing the program, RAND Fellows have taken positions at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Minnesota, Johns Hopkins University, SUNY Stony Brook, the World Bank, and CDC, for example.

Advantages of the RAND Environment

RAND provides a distinctive environment for fellows in the program.

- *RAND's primary activity is research.* The environment provides a rich variety of ongoing studies and an experienced staff of professional researchers with whom fellows can collaborate. The fellows also have the opportunity to interact with other scholars at RAND. In addition, each fellow will design and pursue an individual research program.
- *RAND projects are typically interdisciplinary,* bringing together, for example, economists, sociologists, psychologists, statisticians, and health professionals. Thus fellows can collaborate on research projects already under way that link population studies and aging research to other areas.
- *RAND's research in population and aging is distinguished by its scholarly orientation and by the productivity of its staff.* The value and visibility assigned to publications increase the likelihood that fellows will produce scholarly articles, either individually or in collaboration with RAND staff.
- *Fellows have full access to RAND's research facilities.* These include state-of-the-art computer hardware and software, a nationally acclaimed library, an extensive data facility that obtains and maintains research data bases, and special consulting and training services in computing, statistical analysis, and written and oral presentations.

Structure of the Program

Each fellow, in regular consultation with a staff adviser, will design a program that reflects his or her research needs and interests, and stage in their research career.

Formal Training. When appropriate, fellows may choose from a wide range of substantive and methodological courses in policy analysis offered by the Pardee RAND Graduate School. These include statistics, econometric methods, social science research methods, health policy analysis, and a number of other courses in applied policy analysis. In addition, members of the RAND Statistics Group, who have doctorates in statistics, offer a series of short courses on current topics of interest. Examples of recent courses include survival analysis, general linear models, regression diagnostics, and the analysis of cluster-sampled data. Fellows also enhance their experience in preparing and using large data bases. In addition, fellows can sharpen their communications skills by taking advantage of classes in effective writing and briefing for scientific and policy audiences.

Collaboration and Informal Training. Fellows benefit not only from formal education opportunities, but also from the opportunity to collaborate closely with senior researchers. The Research Profile of Training Staff (see below) shows the exceptionally broad analytic interests of the RAND staff. Typically, fellows work on two or three projects each year, including ongoing studies in collaboration with RAND researchers and studies of his or her own design.

Fellows broaden their informal interaction with the research staff by participating in several seminar series on topics concerning population and aging offered at RAND, at the University of California at Los Angeles, and at the University of Southern California.

Developing a Research Agenda. An important goal of the program is to help fellows enhance their careers as independent researchers. Staff advisers will mentor fellows in the preparation of presentations for professional meetings and papers for journal publication. In addition, fellows will be encouraged to design and submit a proposal for a research project to be conducted after leaving RAND. Fellows can sharpen the skills vital to preparing a successful proposal by drawing on the experience of senior staff and by taking advantage of classes on writing effective proposals.

Research Profile of Training Staff

The training staff includes both members of RAND's permanent staff and academic consultants. The former are always available to fellows; the latter, who spend from several weeks to several months at RAND each year, enrich the training environment and extend the valuable informal scholarly network to which fellows have access.

The director of the Program in the Study of Aging is James P. Smith.

Applications

The application deadline is January 31, 2017.

Applicants should submit a completed application form, curriculum vitae, two or more letters of recommendation, a sample of written work, and a statement of their research goals for the Fellows program. Application forms are available online or by writing to the address below. Members of the program's steering committee will rank applications on the basis of academic performance, the match between the applicant's research interests and those of the RAND staff, and the applicant's ability to benefit from the program.

As part of RAND's continuing commitment to affirmative action, members of minorities are encouraged to apply. **Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.**

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