NIH Appointments and Terminations

Trainee appointments can begin at any time during the budget period unless the notice of grant award or institute-specific guidelines indicate otherwise. Read your NOA carefully when you receive it and take note. UChicago has guidelines based on internal systems:

Predoc Appointments must start Jan 1, April 1, July 1 or Oct 1
Postdoc Appointments must start the first of any given month.

There are external (xTrain - Commons) and internal (OGPA, AURA) steps to appointing a trainee.

External:
NIH stipulates trainees may not be paid a stipend until they are **appointed** through xTRAIN so begin early. I try to begin no later than a month before the appointment date. T32 appointments are generally 12 months. Appointments less than 9 months will require prior permission via URA from Program and Grants management officials. Check your NOA for specifics.

Trainees will need NIH Commons IDs with the trainee role to be appointed. BSD PhD students usually receive Commons IDs when they matriculate. Reach out to Michele O'Neill for BSD PhD predoctoral trainee Commons IDs. URA usually manages other graduate students and postdoctoral IDs but we are happy to answer questions or assist as necessary.

1) Secure Commons IDs for the trainees you are appointing
2) Instruct the trainees to log in and complete their personal profile including the demographic, SSI, and education sections. Demographic and SSI information is masked and seen only by NIH. They must also add their ORCID to their NIH Commons Profile. BSD PhD students share their ORCIDs the summer before they matriculate. Students can navigate from the Profile module to obtain and ORCID if they don't already have one.
3) When trainees have competed their Profile, you will be able to route the appointment with the correct dates, area of specialization and education level, and stipend level to trainees. The initiation and routing of an appointment can be done by a PI delegate (an admin with the ASST role). I find it helpful to note when I email trainees to remind them to login and accept their appointment that the stipend is not what they will receive but what NIH contributes toward their total stipend.
4) Trainees receive an email notice to login to Commons and access their appointments, review them and accept by saving and routing to PI.
5) PIs will review the appointment and submit to NIH. This must be done by the PI, it cannot be done by a delegate. They can be submitted as a batch if there are no warning messages.

Reappointments in xTRAIN are comparatively easy. Reach out to remind trainees to update their profile, route the reappointment to them with the correct period of appointment and stipend level, the trainee reviews and accepts by saving and routing to PI, the PI reviews, saves and submits to NIH. You cannot initiate a reappointment until NIH issues the new budget year NOA but you can prepare so you will be able to appoint as soon as the NOA is issued. A termination form will not be submitted if a trainee is reappointed.

Internal:
Twice a year (for summer and for autumn, winter, and spring combined) OGPA will request new predoctoral funding workbooks to update trainee funding allocations. OGPA is responsible for charging

tuition, stipend, and fees for predocs to the award.

All **postdoctoral** fellow appointments and reappointments must be reviewed by OGPA prior to submission to OAA to ensure appointments are correctly processed. **Only Postdocs have payback requirements**. See the Postdoctoral Fellowship Appointments accordion on the training grant administration webpage for details.

Postdoctoral reappointments must be reviewed by OGPA prior to submission to OAA.

Terminations - National Institutes for Health (NIH) (Happens in xTRAIN – Submitted to NIH by URA)
Trainee terminations are prepared when a trainee's appointment on the training grant ends. Initiate at least a month before the end date, 6 weeks when possible.

1) Initiate TN in xTRAIN. Check the trainees' emails to route to them. Select the appropriate post-award URA BO for the grant in question. Confirm the end dates and stipend paid. This is usually straight-forward for predocs but can be an issue for postdocs – ledgers and xTRAIN must match and confirm that the postdoc was paid at the appropriate level. Remind trainees that their appointment is ending and ask them for a summary of their training during appointment, including research performed, career development activities, honors awarded, fellowships applied for and received, and publications. To save and route the TN in xTRAIN, you may need to confirm by calculating a trainee's previous NRSA support from other awards.
2) Save and route the TN to the trainee, who will confirm or add their termination summary, their next position, and mailing address after their termination date.
3) Trainees complete and review their TN and save and route to PI. The PI reviews and confirms and accepts the terminations by saving and routing to the BO. This affixes the PI signature.
4) Request an award modification in AURA. Attach the PDF from xTRAIN signed by the trainee and the PI and request submission to NIH.
5) BO will verify signatures and stipends paid. If the BO has questions, they will reach out through AURA. When satisfied, the BO will route to NIH. I usually try to have them in larger batches when applicable for grants with multiple appointees for the BO to review and route, but depending on the need for speed (e.g. trainee needs to be appointed to another award) it is ok to submit a single TN.
6) Postdoctoral fellow terminations must also follow HR guidelines and protocol.

Note: TNs will bounce after 2 weeks if there is no action. You need the appropriate signatures, recall them and route back the trainee or PI as applicable – keep the line moving until they are submitted to NIH. Diligence in the month of submission saves problems later and the new xTRAIN layout makes it easier not to lose track of unfinished TNs from previous budget years.

Early Terminations:
If an appointment ends early because of a change of situation, leave or acceptance of another award, a delegate can initiate the TN, but the PI, not a delegate, must enter the new dates in the TN, which will auto-populate the stipend, which they will confirm or adjust. The rest of the steps are the same. In the event a trainee cannot sign their TN because they are out of touch, the BO must be notified and the reason explained, without compromising confidentiality, to advance the TN to NIH

As always, please feel free to contact the training grant office for assistance at mao2@uchicago.edu
We are happy to walk you through the process or answer any questions