Who is eligible to apply for this program?

To apply, you must be a US citizen, US national or permanent resident, and you must be employed as a teacher in a local Austin-area Independent School District. ESI’s Scientist in Residence program specifically targets educators of STEM disciplines in grades 5-12.

What benefits will I receive by participating in this program?

Teachers receive a financial stipend (when funding is available) and approximately 30 hours of professional development credit for participating in our program. At the conclusion of our program, teachers will also have accumulated an entire year’s worth of curriculum developed by their partnership Fellow.

I am not in AISD, will that be a factor?

We do work with teachers outside of Austin ISD, depending on a number of factors such as school location, graduate fellow location, fit of teachers with graduate fellows, etc. The time that a graduate fellow would spend commuting to your school from the UT area would be time that would keep them out of a classroom, and given the tight time schedule they are on in the program, this would be a significant fraction of their contact time for a given week. It’s possible that a graduate fellow applicant will live close to your school and make this less of an issue, but there’s no guarantee that both the fellow and you would be selected for the program.

However, we do have workshops for teachers once per semester and we would be happy to hold a place for you in these, and we also have Hot Science - Cool Talks three times per semester and you’d be welcome at these as well. If you’re interested, please contact Scientist in Residence Program Coordinator Natally Mendez (natally@esi.utexas.edu)

What is the application deadline for teachers?

Applications are due on Monday, February 8th, 2016.

Do the letters of recommendation need to be in by the same deadline?

Yes

When will applicants know if s/he has been selected?

We will announce our selections by April, 2016.

What is the application process after I submit my application?
We select 10-12 teachers to interview based on the quality of the applications. We usually conduct the interview during March on the UT campus. We generally select 8-10 teachers.

**When does the appointment start/end?**

Nine-month appointments will start in September, but program participants are required to attend a pre-program orientation workshop in the summer.

**What will make a competitive applicant?**

We seek applicants that convey enthusiasm and genuine interest in the goals/objectives of our program. We would like to know what you will contribute, as well as what you hope to gain.

**How many teachers apply?**

We generally have a small applicant pool (< 20 applications), 8-10 teachers selected.

**How is the program run?**

Teachers are partnered with a graduate student scientist that will work with you to develop and improve science lesson plans and be a role model scientist in your classroom. Teachers will mentor graduate students in the classroom, helping them improve their ability to convey complex science concepts to K-12 students, as well as guide them through the challenges of teaching science within the constraints of the current system. Teachers will cooperate with graduate students to incorporate their excitement in and expertise of their research into engaging science learning activities for K-12 students.

Teachers will also gain from professional development workshops, content lectures, and monthly meetings to discuss science teaching strategies and challenges with other teachers in the program. An additional benefit is the connections made with UT faculty and research scientists, as the program requires some participation of the graduate student advisor in the classroom.

**Will this program interfere with my professional responsibilities?**

Throughout our 13-year history, we have continued to work with educators and district officials to remove any aspect of the Scientist in Residence program that interferes with teachers’ responsibilities. All meetings and workshops are scheduled outside of school hours, and we are happy to work with each participating teacher to address any conflicts between Scientist in Residence responsibilities and existing professional commitments.

I have a lot of content to cover in a small amount of time! Can you promise that a Fellow will not slow me down?

It is important that our Fellows are helping you to achieve your teaching goals and do not hinder your efforts. Teachers and Fellows are expected to work together, and Fellows will develop new lessons under the teacher’s direction to ensure that everyone is staying on task. For example, if the teacher knows that the class will be covering a unit on molecules the following week, the teacher will then direct the Fellow to develop an engaging lesson that incorporates the topics of interest.
(i.e. atoms and bonding). By using this approach, the Fellow facilitates the presentation of course topics on the schedule determined by both the teacher and required curriculum standards.

**How often can I expect a Fellow in my classroom?**

Fellows are normally expected to spend one day a week in the classroom. However, the classroom schedule is ultimately based on the availability of both the Fellow and partnership teacher. Other factors, such as travel time and hours used to prepare a lesson, will affect the total number of hours spent in the classroom. We make a concerted effort to ensure that Fellows are not spending more than 15 hours a week on all of their fellowship responsibilities.

**Do you have any evidence that this program benefits students?**

Independent evaluators have assessed our program’s effectiveness annually, and these assessments have included teacher and student surveys and test score comparisons. Student surveys have documented that classrooms with Scientist in Residence Fellows often produce students that are more confident in their own scientific abilities and more interested in STEM subjects than students in control groups without Fellows. Furthermore, a higher percentage of students passed end of year standardized tests in classrooms containing Scientist in Residence Fellows. ESI has used the results of these assessments both as evidence of our program’s effectiveness and as a means to refine the continued development of our Scientist in Residence program.

**Who should questions be directed to?**

Natally Mendez, Program Coordinator

Email: natally@esi.utexas.edu

Phone: (512)232-5551