

Lab Separation Policy After an HHMI Laboratory Head's Death, Permanent Incapacitation, or Involuntary Separation

Purpose

This policy describes the support HHMI provides the laboratories of HHMI Investigators or Freeman Hrabowski Scholars (each, an “HHMI Laboratory Head”) after an HHMI Laboratory Head’s death, permanent incapacitation, or involuntary separation from HHMI and the host institution with less than 30 days’ notice (each an “Event”).

Scope

This policy applies to HHMI Laboratory Heads and their laboratories.

Policy

If an HHMI Laboratory Head experiences an Event, HHMI will provide their HHMI laboratory with the support specified in this policy for up to two years after the date of the Event (the “Separation Period”), provided that the laboratory maintains an active research program at the host institution for the entire Separation Period. The Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer will decide the length of the Separation Period, taking into consideration the ongoing research in the laboratory, the time remaining in the HHMI Laboratory Head’s HHMI appointment, and the amount of funding available to the lab at the time of the Event, among other factors. The Separation Period is intended to provide the laboratory members time to complete research in progress and transition to other opportunities before the laboratory separates from HHMI. If the laboratory ceases to maintain an active research program at the host institution, the Separation Period will end early.

If HHMI receives notice that an HHMI Laboratory Head is permanently incapacitated (e.g., the HHMI Laboratory Head or, if the HHMI Laboratory Head is not legally competent, their next of kin or designee with power of attorney notifies HHMI that the HHMI Laboratory Head is permanently unable to perform essential duties as an HHMI Laboratory Head, with or without an accommodation), the Science Operations Manager (SOM) for the laboratory or other recipient of such notice should contact HHMI’s Director, People and Culture with responsibility for host institution sites. The Director of People & Culture will present a recommendation to the Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer. The Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer shall make the final decision on the HHMI laboratory’s eligibility for a Separation Period under this policy.

Each HHMI laboratory in a Separation Period must work with its host institution to create and submit to HHMI a brief written document that describes the plan for supporting the laboratory

members during the Separation Period and helping them transition to other opportunities (the “People Plan”). The host institution and HHMI will share information as needed to create, implement, and update the People Plan. The People Plan must identify other HHMI Laboratory Heads or scientists at the host institution who can, in the absence of the HHMI Laboratory Head, provide scientific and professional development advice to the trainees and other laboratory members. The HHMI personnel assigned to the host institution, including the Senior Director-Scientific Officer (for Investigators) or Senior Director-Scientific Program Officer (for Freeman Hrabowski Scholars), SOM, HR Business Partner, HHMI site attorney, and Director, People and Culture with responsibility for host institution sites, together with the host institution scientists and officials identified in the People Plan, will work together to support the laboratory during the Separation Period. The HHMI Senior Director-Scientific Officer or Senior Director-Scientific Program Officer, SOM, and HR Business Partner, and the host institution scientists and officials identified in the People Plan as supporting the separating lab, should meet (virtually or in-person) at least quarterly to discuss the separating laboratory and update the People Plan.

HHMI Support

For separating laboratories that maintain an active research program at the host institution, HHMI support during the Separation Period will include:

- The HHMI Laboratory Head’s laboratory operations budget for the Separation Period, prorated for any partial HHMI fiscal years; the budget level will remain unchanged throughout the Separation Period. The budget level will be the level of the HHMI Laboratory Head’s laboratory operations budget at the time of the Event;
- The ability to carry forward during the Separation Period up to \$500,000 of unspent laboratory operations budget funds; and
- Occupancy payments to the host institution, consistent with the collaboration agreement between HHMI and the host institution.

HHMI will not provide the HHMI Laboratory Head’s salary and benefits during the Separation Period (except to the extent provided under other existing HHMI employee benefit plans or programs, such as a short-term disability program). The SOM for the separating laboratory’s host institution will control the laboratory’s HHMI laboratory operations budget during the Separation Period.

It is not expected that the separating laboratory would need to purchase equipment during the Separation Period, but in the rare instance that equipment is needed to complete ongoing research, the separating lab may work with its Senior Director-Scientific Officer or Senior Director-Scientific Program Officer to request equipment (i) if at least 12 months are remaining in the Separation Period, as part of HHMI’s standard equipment cycle for HHMI Laboratory Heads, or (ii) to be funded from the laboratory operations budget. No equipment costing greater than \$15,000 may be purchased in the last 6 months of the Separation Period. All requests must be limited to equipment needed to complete ongoing research and must be approved by the Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer. Disposal of equipment at the end of the Separation Period will be managed in accordance with HHMI’s standard procedures.

All HHMI support for the laboratory will end at the end of the Separation Period, and any remaining funds in the HHMI laboratory operations budget will remain with HHMI.

Laboratory Personnel

The SOM for the separating laboratory's host institution will supervise the HHMI employees in the separating laboratory. Nothing in this policy constitutes an express or implied contract of employment or warranty of any benefits. Employment at HHMI is a voluntary employment-at-will relationship for no definite period of time, unless otherwise agreed in writing by an employee authorized by an HHMI officer to commit to different employment terms. An employee in an at-will relationship has the right to terminate their employment for any reason and at any time, with or without cause or notice; an employer in an at-will relationship has the right to do the same.

Once the Separation Period is determined by the Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer, HHMI will provide written notice to the HHMI employees in the separating laboratory of the anticipated date the lab will separate from HHMI. Consistent with HHMI's standard procedures, accrued and unused personal time off payouts for eligible laboratory members due upon separation from employment, and severance benefit payments that are determined to be payable under HHMI's Severance Pay Plan, will be charged to the laboratory's HHMI laboratory operations budget. The SOM will encumber the estimated amounts of these funds, whenever possible, at least six months before the end of the Separation Period.

If an HHMI Postdoctoral Scientist in the separating laboratory moves to another HHMI Laboratory Head's laboratory during the Separation Period, HHMI will transfer from the separating laboratory's HHMI laboratory operations budget to the other HHMI Laboratory Head's HHMI budget an amount equal to the Postdoctoral Scientist's salary and benefits for a period beginning on the Postdoctoral Scientist's start date with the new laboratory and ending the earlier of (i) one year after the date the Postdoctoral Scientist moves, and (ii) the end of the Separation Period.

Generally, it is not expected that the separating laboratory will hire during the Separation Period, but an exception may be made if the hire is needed to complete ongoing research. Any requests by the separating laboratory to hire should be made through the Senior Director-Scientific Officer or Senior Director-Scientific Program Officer and must be approved by the Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer. No exceptions will be made for the separating laboratory to support or hire new graduate students or postdocs. For clarity, this paragraph does not limit the separating laboratory's ability to move existing laboratory members' employment from the host institution to HHMI if such a move is consistent with HHMI and host institution policies.

HHMI Policies

During the Separation Period, the separating laboratory will be subject to, and must comply with, all HHMI policies, procedures, and practices, including HHMI's research policies; however, HHMI may decide, in its sole discretion, not to be a party to certain research-related agreements for the laboratory. The Collaboration Agreement between HHMI and the separating laboratory's host institution shall continue to apply to the separating laboratory as if the separating laboratory's HHMI Laboratory Head were still leading the laboratory. The separating laboratory's host institution

must enter into a side letter to the Collaboration Agreement documenting the arrangement for the separating laboratory.

Related Procedures, Forms and Policies

None

Contact

[Senior Director-Scientific Officer](#)

[Senior Director-Scientific Program Officer](#)

[HHMI attorney](#)

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