

DULBECCO TELETHON INSTITUTE

DTI Policies



Introduction

The mission of the Fondazione Telethon is to advance biomedical research towards the cure of muscular dystrophy and other genetic diseases.

Toward this aim, in 1999, the Fondazione Telethon established a Career Program that supports young and talented investigators wishing to establish independent laboratories in a public or private non-profit research institution in Italy to perform research on genetic diseases.

Candidates are selected through competitive Calls for Applications. The awardees join the **Dulbecco Telethon Institute (DTI)**, a virtual institute whose members are given the title of “Telethon Scientists”.

This document reports the **policies** that govern the Dulbecco Telethon Institute.

The current policies replace and substitute all previous DTI policies and apply to all active Telethon Scientists.

Any terms and conditions specified in any previous Call for Applications that differ from the current policies will prevail and be valid for those Telethon Scientists that were awarded a position under that specific Call.

The Career Program

The Telethon Career Program provides salary and grant support for a maximum of eight years.

Three career levels are envisaged (see table below for admission criteria and funding levels).

The entry level as **Assistant Telethon Scientist** is accessible through a competitive Call for Applications. Assistant Telethon Scientists are awarded a 5-year position.

Before the end of the first five-year appointment at the Assistant level, the Telethon Scientist may apply for **promotion** to the level of **Associate Telethon Scientist**.

To this end, they will be thoroughly reviewed by the Telethon Scientific Committee.

Under exceptional circumstances, within the promotion evaluation session, the Telethon Scientific Committee may recognize that the Telethon Scientist deserves promotion to the highest career level of **Senior Telethon Scientist**.

If the evaluation is positive, the scientist may be promoted for another three-year term according to the funding package pre-set by Telethon. Promotion will be granted if funds are available and if the Host Institution can provide compelling evidence that a career path has been developed for the Telethon Scientist within the Institution itself.

If the evaluation is negative, the Telethon Scientist will complete his/her contract. In this case, a phase-out package may be applied.

Telethon Scientist levels			
	ENTRY LEVEL	PROMOTION	
	Assistant	Associate	Senior
Access	Competitive Call	Promotion from the Assistant level	
Admission criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in medicine (M.D.), Italian laurea or Ph.D. in biomedical sciences, or equivalent degrees • At least three first-author original papers in peer-reviewed international scientific journals • Evidence of full independence in the planning and execution of the research program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong publication record • Evidence of international recognition • Clarity of vision for future lines of research • Demonstration of having successfully guided a research group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding track record and potential for further expansion of research program • World-leader standing in a major area of research • Demonstration of having successfully guided a research group • Evidence of ability to train junior scientists
Duration	5 years	3 years (from 2014)§	3 years (from 2014)§
Funding*	610 kE Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual salary: € 40,000 for first 3 years € 45,000 for last 2 years • Research grant: € 70,000/year • Host Institution overhead: € 5,000 Euro/year • Start-up grant: € 25.000 	510 kE Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual salary: € 60,000 • Research grant: € 100,000/year for the 3 years • Host Institution overhead: € 10,000 Euro/year 	1,050 kE Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual salary: € 100,000 • Research grant: € 230,000/year • Host Institution overhead: € 20,000 Euro/year
<p>§ For Assistant Telethon Scientists recruited up to year 2013, the duration of the second appointment after promotion is 5 years. In these cases, the previous funding package (800K total applies), entailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Budget for research grant: € 110,000/year for the first two years and € 90,000/year for the remaining three years. ➤ Budget for salary: € 60,000/year for the first three years and €65,000/year for the following two years. <p>* Current funding level envisaged for Telethon Scientist recruited from 2014. The funding package for each career level is defined at each Call for Applications and associated policies and may change over time. Any change applies to positions awarded from the time the change has been introduced and is not retrospective.</p>			

Other Appointments

Dual appointments of Telethon Scientists with other research Institutions in Italy or abroad are not allowed, with the exception of a temporary academic position at an Italian University.

A concomitant Career Award for young investigators is allowed only if the research program is in line with Telethon's mission.

Inclusion of a Telethon Scientist in a tenure track/tenure position at the Host Institution

The Fondazione Telethon encourages the Host Institution to promote the integration of the Telethon Scientist into its career development program. If the Telethon Scientist receives an appointment from the Host Institution or from an Italian University, the Fondazione Telethon will retain the funds allocated to his/her salary. However, the Host Institute's salary may be subject to a top-up by the Fondazione Telethon in order to reach the amount that would be earned as a Telethon Scientist. Salary top-ups will be corrected yearly if adjustments to the Host Institution's salary take place. Salary top-ups will be granted only until the Telethon contract expires, and in no case during a phase-out time.

Mentorship plan and Steering session

A mentorship plan is envisaged for all Assistant Telethon Scientists.

Each Assistant must choose a Mentor, possibly among past or present members of the Telethon Scientific Committee or among DTI Alumni. The Mentor will conduct a **formal Steering Session** (to be performed by the end of the 3rd year of appointment) and will be in regular contact with the Scientist throughout his/her period of Telethon appointment.

Telethon also recommends that the first contact between the Mentor and Assistant Telethon Scientist should take place as early as possible in the appointment period.

Apart from the Steering Session, the Mentorship Plan envisages at least twice-yearly contact - either by phone or better yet through face-to-face meetings between the Mentor and the Assistant Telethon Scientist. For personal meetings, it is encouraged that International Conferences and/or Meetings be planned or taken advantage of as much as possible in order to minimize travel costs.

The Steering Session is part of the career path of a Telethon Scientist, and is therefore mandatory. After the Steering Session has taken place, the Mentor will be asked to present the Telethon Scientist and the Telethon Scientific Office with a feedback document detailing all her/his suggestions and insights. The Mentor will not be part of any review panel regarding the Telethon Scientist that he/she has advised, while the feedback document will be part of the documents provided to the Telethon Scientific Committee in the course of the review for promotion, as background information on the Telethon Scientist.

Finally, Telethon will cover the costs of the first visit (Mentor to the Telethon Scientist's lab) while the rest of the travelling for subsequent visits will be charged to the Telethon Scientist's grant.

Participation of a Telethon Scientist in a Call for applications for Telethon Research Grants

All Telethon Scientists can apply for a Telethon Research grant with a budget. The only restriction is that a Telethon Scientist cannot be the Principal Investigator of a Telethon Research grant, but he/she can participate as a Partner in a multicenter grant application. The Host Institution letter is not required.

The availability of salary until the end of the grant's duration in the case of DTI positions whose review will take place before the grant's end date will be addressed in the following way: the Coordinator of the project will acknowledge in the Notes section of the grant the fact that he is aware that the Telethon Scientist's position may be terminated by Telethon before the end of the granting period. If this happens, the coordinator understands and agrees to the following conditions, which are mutually exclusive and should be listed in the Notes section as such:

- 1) The Telethon Scientist remains in his/her Institution that will undertake to pay his/her salary and that will send Telethon a declaration stating that salary will be covered until the end of the grant period.
- 2) The Telethon Scientist moves to a different Host Institution (upon approval by Telethon and by the original Host Institution), and the new Host Institution will guarantee salary coverage until the end of the grant period.
- 3) The Telethon Scientist may decide to discontinue his/her activity on the grant. In this case, the Host Institution may ask for Telethon's approval of the fact that another of its scientists becomes Principal Investigator for the approved grant in place of the Telethon Scientist.
- 4) Both the Telethon Scientist and the Host Institution decide to discontinue activity on the grant. The coordinator of the multicenter grant will ask for Telethon's approval to continue with the rest of the project, which must be drastically revised to accommodate such a critical change.
- 5) Both the Telethon Scientist and the Host Institution decide to discontinue activity on the grant. The coordinator of the multicenter grant will ask for Telethon's approval to terminate the grant due to serious problems.

All Telethon Scientists can apply as a Principal Investigator for an external Telethon grant during the last year of their DTI appointment. In this case, if a Telethon Scientist is not tenured within his/her Host Institution, at the end of the Telethon position the following situations are envisaged:

- 1) The Host Institution will cover the salary of the principal investigator until the end of the grant (or longer): the grant is continued until its conclusion.
- 2) The Principal Investigator moves to a new Host Institution that will cover his/her salary: the Principal Investigator can ask Telethon to transfer the grant to the new Institute.
- 3) The Principal Investigator moves abroad or ceases his/her scientific activity; the grant is terminated unless the Host Institution asks for Telethon's approval of the fact that another of its scientists becomes Principal Investigator in place of the Telethon Scientist.