

## HHMI BioInteractive Ambassador Academy FAQs

Please read the frequently asked questions below. If your question isn't addressed, please email us at [biointeractiveacademy@hhmi.org](mailto:biointeractiveacademy@hhmi.org) or call us at 301-215-8868.

### Current Applicant Pool

#### How many educators have submitted an Intent to Apply?

For the 2020-2023 academy, we received 1191 eligible Intents to Apply. Applicants come from all states, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Canada; 62% are high school educators and 38% higher ed faculty.

### In the Future

#### Will BioInteractive have additional academy cohorts in the future?

We plan to offer academies in the future and encourage you to sign up for BioInteractive's newsletter to stay current on future academies.

#### After the 3-year academy, will participants continue to have opportunities to collaborate with BioInteractive?

Upon completion of the 3-year academy, participants will join the HHMI BioInteractive Ambassador community and help to design and facilitate BioInteractive professional learning experiences for other educators, serve as program advisors, and contribute to BioInteractive content as developers, reviewers, and field testers. Ambassadors may remain members of this community as long as they stay in science education. However, there is no obligation to remain part of the community.

### The Academy Commitments

#### I am interested in applying for the Ambassador Academy; however, my institution won't approve/guarantee professional days for the conferences. Should I still apply?

**Yes.** Administrator approval is not a condition to apply. However, administrator approval is a condition to participate in the academy when selected as a finalist. Specifically, we will ask administrators **each August** to indicate their support for you to attend the required conference for that academic year and to provide professional leave. We understand that you may not be able to obtain your administrator's full support for all three years at once, but it will be an annual requirement to continue in the academy.

#### I am not currently teaching full-time in a high school or college classroom. Can I participate in the academy?

**It depends.** You are eligible to apply if you will be employed full-time in a school, college, or university setting during the timeframe of the academy—September 2020 to July 2023—and, as

part of your assignment, you will teach a biology or environmental science course at the high school or college level. If you would like to discuss your particular situation, please email us.

**If I cannot attend NABT or the BioInteractive conference in year one, does that disqualify me from being selected?**

**It depends.** Attending **ALL** face-to-face commitments is important for building a strong community and experiencing the professional development that is incorporated in these experiences. If you have prior obligations or anticipate competing demands, we suggest that you apply to a future academy. If an emergency or personal situation occurs during the three-year commitment, we understand these things happen.

**How long are the BioInteractive Conferences?**

They will be 5-6 days each July. We will provide the specific dates at least 6 months in advance.

**The academy description indicates that participants should be able to devote 5-15 hours a month to the academy; that is quite a difference. How would you describe the actual workload?**

During the months that you are not attending conferences, you will engage in activities designed to cultivate the community and deepen your understanding of the components outlined in the professional development pathway. Such activities may include trying a BioInteractive resource in your classroom, reading a journal article, or responding to a reflective prompt or sharing ideas virtually with other participants. We recognize that the amount of time it takes to accomplish these activities may vary from task to task and from individual to individual, so we provided a broad range. Most of this work will be done *asynchronously* and we will not expect you to commit to more than 60-75 minutes *synchronously* per month.

**Is making content for the BioInteractive website part of the academy?**

**No.** While our ambassadors are key to our content development, participants in the academy will focus on the elements of our work as outlined in the Academy Pathway graphic on the Ambassador Community webpage. After participating in the academy, it is possible that an ambassador will work on content development, but it is not an expectation or a guarantee.

**Benefits**

**Is travel support provided to attend face-to-face commitments?**

**Yes,** full travel support and registration is provided to attend the weeklong conferences at HHMI Headquarters in Chevy Chase, MD, as well as NABT 2020, 2021, and the participant-specific 2022 or 2023 (Year 3) conference.

**Are substitute costs paid for by HHMI when academy participants miss work to attend the conferences?**

HHMI will not reimburse schools for hiring substitute teachers. If academy participants have to pay for a substitute while they attend a required face-to-face meeting for the academy, HHMI

will reimburse the participant for this cost on an as-needed basis. HHMI will not reimburse participants for this cost when participants are receiving a stipend in year 3. This will be addressed in the administrator letter that finalists submit.

### **Creating a Strong Application**

We've received a variety of questions about how to create a strong application. Keep in mind that we can only accept up to 30 educators in the first academy cohort and it is likely that many excellent educators will not be selected. Our goal is to identify qualified applicants, as well as create a strong community with varied expertise.

To submit the most competitive application:

- Explore the website to make sure you understand the work of BioInteractive and the academy and that you demonstrate this understanding in your application.
- Read the directions and respond to the prompts provided.
- The components of the application are listed in order of importance. The personal statement and teaching philosophy will weigh most heavily in the review process. The education, professional learning opportunities, and leadership components will weigh less heavily, as we recognize that not everyone has access to the same opportunities.
- The personal statement is a video and can be edited, but that is not an expectation. We will not be evaluating the video on whether it is professionally produced. The purpose of this video is to demonstrate your understanding of the prompt and your comfort and effectiveness in public speaking and potential to be an effective and engaging facilitator.
- The teaching philosophy and collaboration components should be written in narrative form. Other components, such as familiarity with BioInteractive, professional learning, and leadership, can be in list form; for education, complete all requested information.
- Focus on effective communication in your own voice. You will demonstrate your ability to connect to an audience verbally (in the video) and in writing (in the teaching philosophy and other shorter prompts).
- Share your experiences with us fully, so that the reviewers get to know you and understand what you will gain from being a part of the community and what strengths and unique perspectives you bring to the community.