

PhD Career Development Award

Application Guidelines 2024

Purpose

The PhD Career Development Award for Research is supported by the Department of Medicine. This award is designed to develop outstanding junior research scientists by supporting mentored research (up to two-years) that facilitates transition into independent scientists.

The Department of Medicine is committed to ensuring all faculty, staff and trainees feel valued and respected regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, rank or title. The pursuit of excellence through a commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in our three pillars: research, education and patient care.

Eligibility

- The candidate must have a Ph.D. and be enrolled in a training program in the Department of Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (Postdoctoral) at no more than 5 years at rank QR junior faculty (Instructor, or Assistant Professor) with less than or equal to two years at rank at the time of award (*leaves of absence will be taken into consideration*)
- Preference will be given to candidates who are early in their research careers and show research potential, but are not yet prepared for independent research.
- Candidates currently funded by Research Training Grants may apply, but must first determine their eligibility with their current mentor and Training Grant Principal Investigator (see also Allowable Costs).
- Candidates who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States should demonstrate that their immigration or visa status will allow completion of their research training and pursuit of an academic research career in the United States.
- The candidate must be able to identify a Faculty Research Mentor with extensive research experience.
- The candidate must be willing to spend a minimum of 75% of full-time professional effort performing research and research career development.
- For those who concurrently apply for both a NIH K award and the PhD Career Development Award and receive notification of funding for both, the awardee must relinquish the PhD Career Development Award.
- An applicant who had or currently has a NIH K award is not eligible for the PhD Career Development Award.

Note: Applicants may self-nominate and more than one person within a Division is eligible to apply.

Submission Requirements

The application should be submitted to domresearch@uabmc.edu by 5:00 PM on January 8, 2024.

Submit the application as a single PDF file. Please include a letter of support from the respective Division Director and a letter of recommendation from the Faculty Research Mentor for the proposed PhD Career Development Award.

Reprints of articles published by the applicant that are pertinent to the application may also be submitted. No other material (including appendices) is necessary.

Candidates who have submitted an application to the NIH K08 Award or equivalent program and have been unsuccessful should provide a copy of that application and the summary statement as part of the application for the PhD Career Development Award.

2024 Deadlines

- Submission of Application: January 8, 2024
- Award Notification: March 20, 2024
- Start of Funding: July 1, 2024
- Research Progress Summary: February 2025

Mechanisms of Award

A. Candidate's Statement

- The candidate's application must provide evidence of serious intent to pursue biomedical research through an academic career.

B. Diversity Statement

- The candidate should provide a description of direct experiences, research and/or scholarship contributes to diversity and/or the promotion of health equity.

C. Research Program

- The candidate must provide a description of a research plan. It should start with a creative and detailed basic science or clinical investigative learning experience and culminate in a research project to be carried out under the guidance of a qualified Research Mentor at UAB.

Application Format

A. Face Page

B. Career Development Plan (limited to two pages)

- Primary career intention
- Explicit short-term goals that contribute to long-term interests and the most important anticipated challenges that must be mitigated/overcome to reach these goals.
- Timeline and 2-3 metrics that will define success in reaching each goal.
- Identify additional skills, knowledge or experience you will need to acquire that may directly or indirectly help you in your current job or future positions, and how you plan to ensure that this occurs.

C. Proposed Research Plan [(a) – (e) limited to six pages – not including Bibliography]

- Specific Aims
 - Provide a clear, concise summary of the aims of the work proposed and its relationship to your goals. State the hypothesis to be tested.
- Background and Significance
 - Sketch the background leading to this application. Summarize important results outlined by others in the same field, critically evaluating existing knowledge. Identify gaps that this project is intended to fill.
 - State concisely the importance and relevance of the research
- Preliminary Studies
 - Describe concisely previous work related to the proposed research by the applicant that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Include pilot studies showing the work is feasible. (If none, so state.)
- Research Design and Methods
 - Description of proposed tests, methods or procedures should be explicit, sufficiently detailed, and well defined to allow adequate evaluation of the approach to the problem. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies.
 - Clearly describe overall design of the study, with careful consideration to statistical aspects of the approach, the adequacy of controls, and number of observations, as well as how results will be analyzed. Include details of any collaborative arrangements that have been made.
 - Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

Note: Page margins must measure at least 0.5 inch (top, bottom, and sides) on pages formatted to be no larger than 8.5" x 11". The font size must be 11 points or larger (smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams and charts is generally acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%). Following NIH guidelines, fonts recommended are one of Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, and Palatino Linotype. Other serif and non-serif fonts are still acceptable if they meet all other size, density, and spacing requirements. The type density must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch (including characters and spaces). The line spacing must be no more than six lines per vertical inch.

- D. Budget and Budget Justification
- E. Biosketches for the Applicant and Faculty Research Mentor (NIH Format – 5 Pages Maximum)
- F. Letters of Support from the Faculty Research Mentor and the Division Director
- G. Reprints of Articles by the Applicant which are Pertinent to the Application

Letters of Support

The candidate must identify a UAB Faculty Research Mentor who is recognized as an accomplished investigator in basic science or translational research, who has experience in training independent investigators, and who will provide the candidate appropriate guidance in the conduct and development of the research plan.

The candidate's Research Mentor and Division Director must each provide detailed letters of support. These letters should include:

- A. An evaluation of the candidate's potential for a research career in academic medicine.
- B. A summary of the candidate's training support, including plans regarding applications for support from NIH, NSF, and/or foundations.
- C. The Research Mentor must detail the laboratory-based resources, i.e. space, supplies, equipment that will be available to the candidate during the fellowship award.
- D. The Division Director must specify his/her commitment to provide the candidate with 75% protected time during the fellowship award (see Duration and Effort).
- E. A statement of cost-share support for candidate if selected for the award (if needed).

Duration and Effort

This is a two-year award. The second year of funding is contingent upon the candidate demonstrating sufficient progress with the proposed research.

A minimum of 75% percent of the candidate's effort must be devoted to the research and the research training program.

The balance of the candidate's effort can be devoted to other clinical and teaching pursuits only if they are consonant with the program's goals.

Allowable Costs

Total Award

- This fellowship will provide two years of support, including up to \$50,000 per year for salary support for fellows and up to \$75,000 salary support for junior faculty (plus appropriate fringe benefits).
- Also, up to \$10,000 per year will be provided for supplies and/or equipment that are directly relevant to the proposed research project.

Salary and Related Benefits

- For fellows, salary support up to \$50,000 per year (plus appropriate fringe benefits) will be provided by the Department of Medicine to support the candidate's salary based on the NIH pay scale for postdoctoral fellows (plus the cost of fringe benefits where applicable).
- For junior faculty, salary support up to \$75,000 per year (plus appropriate fringe benefits) will be provided by the Department of Medicine to support the candidate's salary.
- For successful candidates, additional salary support per year may be provided by the sponsoring Division at the Director's discretion.

Note: Individuals whose salary would be covered by a Training Grant in the year of activation of the PhD Career Development Award will receive a maximum of \$10,000 in supply money, subject to budget approval.

Evaluation

Candidates will be evaluated on their potential to pursue an academic career in research.

Research projects will be reviewed for scientific and technical merit by the Department of Medicine's DREAM Council and appropriate secondary reviewers.

Members of the DREAM Council are available to assist applicants and provide further guidance:

**For questions or additional information, please email:
domresearch@uabmc.edu**