F and K Awards 101

Tips and Tricks for Successful F and K Applications

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Discussion of NIH Grant Mechanisms for Predocs and Postdocs

F30/F31: Individual Predoctoral Fellowship Award

F99/K00: Predoctoral to Postdoctoral Fellow Transition Award

F32: Postdoctoral Fellowship

K99/R00 and **K22**: Pathway to Independence Awards

K99/R00: NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Outstanding Early Stage Postdoctoral Researchers

(Data Science, Cancer Control Science, Cancer Research)

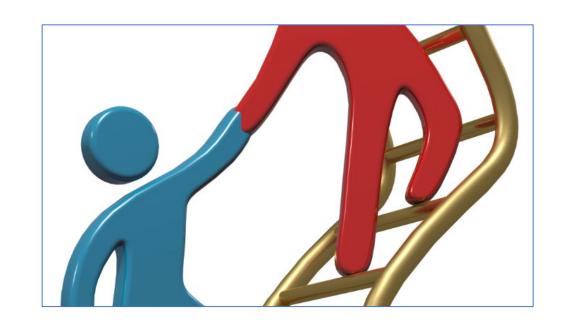
General Tips

- Start early (at least three months prior to deadline)
- Read instructions carefully
- Find examples, confer with F & K awardees, seek input from department's grants administrator
- Seek input from sponsor, other faculty, colleagues
- All the components of the application should tell a cohesive story; tell a consistent story throughout the entire application – every document needs to reinforce your potential
- Revise, revise, revise
- Pay attention to details. Application must be aesthetically pleasing and error free!
- Be prepared to have to resubmit your application
- Make your PO your friend!

F awards

Purpose of a F30/31 award

- F30: To promote the integrated research and clinical training of promising MD/PhD students and enhance their potential to develop into productive, independent physician/clinician-scientists
- F31: To enable promising predoctoral students to obtain individualized, mentored cancer research training from outstanding faculty sponsors while conducting dissertation research



Changes to Fellowship Review Criteria and Application Form (apply to all F awards)

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

New emphasis on:

- Candidate's preparedness and potential
- Research Training Plan
- Commitment to the candidate (without undue consideration of narrow markers of academic success and sponsor/institutional reputation - designed to reduce bias)
- Note that the new application contains same essential elements

SF424 App Guide NOFO (Notice of Funding Announcements) Related Notices

Reorganized Fellowship Review Criteria Areas

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

CURRENT	NEW
Fellowship Candidate	Candidate Preparedness and Potential
Sponsors, Collaborators, Consultants	Research Training Plan
Research Training Plan	Commitment to Candidate
Training Potential	
Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training	

- Shorter application, aligned with new review criteria
- Less emphasis on sponsor track record, more emphasis on training plan and preparedness of candidate

The Three Main Components of an Fapplication

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

NEW

Candidate Preparedness and Potential

Research Training Plan

Commitment to Candidate

The Fellowship Applicant

New: The Candidate

Written by Candidate

Changes to Fellowship Application Form

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

CURRENT	NEW
Candidate Biosketch Grades required	Grades no longer required/allowed
 Fellowship Applicant Section Applicant's background Goals for fellowship training 	Candidate Section (Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential) 1. Statement of professional and fellowship goals 2. Fellowship qualifications 3. Self-assessment 4. Statement of scientific perspective

Candidate Section (Candidate's Goals, Preparedness, and Potential)

1. Statement of professional and fellowship goals

Candidates share career goals and explain how the fellowship training fits in with those goals

2. Statement on fellowship qualifications

Describe scientific, research, and other experiences that have prepared the candidate to successfully complete the fellowship training (courses, workshops, other training, but not grades)

3. Self-assessment

Personal characteristics (e.g., skills, abilities, traits, attitudes) that will contribute to success as a scientist

4. Statement of scientific perspective (beyond own research training project: show that you can think as a scientist)

Reveals candidate's potential to think about and express ideas within a scientific field. Candidates should discuss:

- Why their chosen field of science is important and how their research training project will advance the field
- A broader, unresolved scientific question in the chosen scientific field, the importance of the problem, and the ways biomedical research might advance the scientific field

F Fellowship Candidate

- The candidate must be US citizen or permanent resident
- Must show strong potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher: highlight qualities such as scientific understanding, creativity, curiosity, resourcefulness, drive, resilience
- Productivity
 - A first-author publication is a definite plus, but not required for success (new review criteria put less emphasis on publications)
 - Most applicants list middle author papers (with specific contribution to the study indicated)
 - Oral and poster presentations at meetings can reflect productivity
 - OK to include "manuscripts in preparation" in the Candidate section
- Having honors and awards is also a plus mention accomplishments repeatedly in the application (Biosketch, Candidate section, Sponsor Letter, Letters of Recommendation)
- Highlight prior research experience; courses; workshops; technical skills; professional memberships; leadership roles; community outreach

The Research Training Plan

Written by Candidate in Consultation with the Advisor

Changes to Fellowship Application Form

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

- Some headings revised to emphasize the <u>importance of training</u> in the fellowship project
- Selection of Sponsor and Institution information moved elsewhere in the application

CURRENT	NEW
Research Training Plan	Research Training Plan
 Specific Aims Research Strategy Respective Contributions** Selection of Sponsor and Institution** Training in Responsible Conduct of Research 	 Training Activities and Timelines (aligned with Goals)* Research Training Project Specific Aims* Research Training Project Strategy* Scientific Foundation and Rationale Approach Training in Responsible Conduct of
	Research (Institutionally Provided)

^{*} Section added or revised

^{**} Moved to a different part of the application

F Career Development Plan

- Identify gaps in training and justify the need for further career development
- Must prepare a detailed training plan that <u>expands</u> technical, professional, and/or research skills
- Describe what you will learn and where the training will come from (didactic classes; seminars; workshops; one-on-one training)
- Explain how filling these gaps will contribute to achieving career goals
- Describe opportunities to present and publish findings; attend conferences, additional lab meetings, journal clubs; interaction with scientists; learn new techniques; enhance manuscript and grant writing skills; etc.
- Include a <u>timeline</u> with milestones (including manuscripts) and benchmarks for evaluation of progress by your mentor(s). Sponsor statement should echo this timeline

Career Development Plan Time-Line

Include a timeline with milestones and benchmarks for evaluation of progress by your mentor(s)

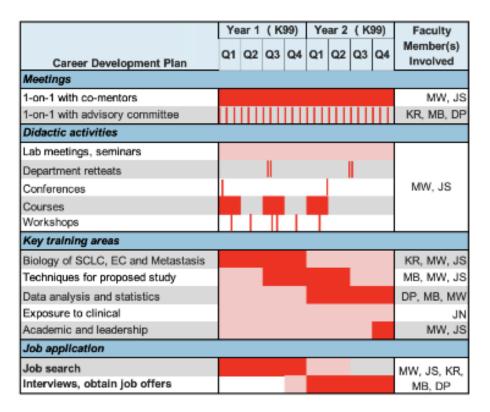


Table 3. Timeline for Training Plan, Career Development, and Transition to Independence

Phase	K99 phase							R00 phase									
Year	Year 1 Year 2			Year 3 Year 4 Year 5													
Semester	Fall		Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall		Cummor	Fall		Cummor	Fall		Summer		
Semester	Fall												Summer				
	Weekly meetings with primary mentor (1 hr)							Continue collaborations with mentoring team									
Mentoring	Bi-weekly meeting with co-mentor (1hr)							Seek out opportunities to co-mentor undergraduate and graduate students									
	Monthly collaborator meetings, more frequent as needed (1 hr)																
	Qua	Quarterly evaluation meetings with entire team (1.5 hrs)						with mid-career and senior faculty									
Research				& 2 analyses				Aim	3 - partici	pant rec	ruitment,	clinic visi	ts, data a	nalysis			
Experiential	Mentore	d research	activities	(health dispa	arity/physic	al activity)											
Training (1 day/wk)	os	DM		erometers tra	ining with (Or. Diaz											
	MR BC ML BC						Seek out additional institutional training activities designed to support my career						ny career				
Scientific	(2 days) (2 c						development. This includes opportunities for further training in grant writing,								writing.		
Workshops			IBDCR			NIH SI						s, and ethic					
			(3 days)			(1 week)		•		-							
Semester	Genetic	Survival			Molecular												
Courses	Epi	Analysis			Epi												
Reading	(Suided read	dings with	mentors and	collaborat	ors	Stay updated on relevant scientific literatures										
Scientific	SABCS		SER	AACR	ASPO		SABCS	ASPO	SER	AACR	ASPO	ISBNPA	SABCS	ASPO	SER		
Conferences	(5 days)	(3 days)	(4 days)	(4 days)	(3 days)	(4 days)	(5 days)	(3 days)	(4 days)	(4 days)	(3 days)	(3 days)	(5 days)	(3 days)	(4 days)		
				Yearly train	ning in Res		Conduct of Research (12 hours didactic training per year)										
			De	velop individu	ual develop	ment plan,	review a	at quarter	ly mentori	ng mee	tings and	update ye	arly				
Career				Reach R01	Mentor	PI Crash											
Development				(1 hr/wk,	Wkshp	Course											
Development		semester) (1 day) (2 days)															
		Attend internal seminars, journal clubs, and lab meetings (1 hr each, attend 2-3 per week)															
	Writing activities related to scientific manuscripts and									t propo	sals (1 da	y/week)					
Pathway to Independence	Academic Career Practice Job Interview							lab, hire ch assist		Develo	p and su	bmit R01		submit R0 y to other			

AACR=American Association for Cancer Research – The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved; Academic App BC=Academic Application Boot Camp; ASPO=American Society of Preventive Oncology; DM=Digital Mammograms; Epi=Epidemiology; IBDCR= International Breast Density & Cancer Risk Assessment Workshop; ISBNPA=International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity; ML BC=Machine Learning Boot Camp; MR BC=Mendelian Randomization Boot Camp; NIH SI=National Institutes of Health Summer Institute on Randomized Behavioral Clinical Trials: OS=Ootical Societysocy: SABCS=San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium; SER=Society for Epidemiologic Research; Wksho = Workshop

F Research Training Plan

- Research project should be scientifically rigorous, novel and fill a knowledge gap
- Should be based on high quality preliminary data and well integrated with training plan
 - Unconvincing preliminary data will reflect poorly on mentors and training
- Should provide potential for growth in skills such as data analysis, techniques, communication skills, etc.
- The project should relate to the sponsor or co-sponsor's expertise; work closely with sponsor(s) in drafting the plan
- Experimental plan should be feasible; avoid being overambitious
- Rigor of the research training project will be assessed
- Potential pitfalls and alternative strategies should be addressed
- Exploratory experiments are accepted, especially if they are linked to the training plan

F Research Training Plan

- Spend time on your application and figures. Aesthetics matter
- Pay attention to grantsmanship issues; seek help with proofreading
 - A poorly crafted application will raise questions about attention to detail and mentorship
- If using vertebrate animals, take time do the sample size calculations and include the information in the research plan

Sponsor(s), Collaborator(s), and Consultant(s) Section

New: Commitment to Candidate, Mentoring, and Training Environment

Written by Sponsor

Changes to Fellowship Application Form

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

CURRENT	NEW						
Sponsor(s), Collaborator(s), and	Commitment to Candidate, Mentoring, and						
Consultant(s) Section	Training Environment						
 Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training** Description of Candidate's contributions to Program Goals 	 Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements Mentoring approach and candidate mentoring plan Prior commitment to training and mentoring Commitment to candidate's research training plan Research training environment (aligned with candidate's needs) Candidate's potential Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants Description of Candidate's contributions to Program Goals 						

^{**} Moved to a different part of the application

F Mentoring Team

- Mentor/Co-mentor Credentials
 - Primary mentor must have a rigorous research program
 - Less emphasis on training record (having an early career sponsor is no longer a disadvantage)
 - Important that needs and goals of the candidate are matched by sponsor
 - Include a co-primary mentor if needed
- Include co-mentors who will complement the primary mentor's strengths: ensure that relevant expertise is available for all proposed training
- Each member of the candidate's "team" must play a role in the training/research plan
 - Call out mentors and collaborators throughout the application
 - Include biosketches that specify role
- Mentor must provide a strong mentoring plan that echoes the candidate's training goals - must show commitment to the candidate's success
- Specify <u>how often you will meet with primary mentor</u>,
 <u>co-primary mentor if relevant</u>, and members of mentoring team

F Sponsor/Co-Sponsor Statement(s)

- Another very important component; must be tailored to the applicant
- Must align with candidate's training plan (conferences, classes; manuscripts, workshops, lab meetings, training in scientific integrity, etc)
- Lab environment should be described
- Should discuss applicant's qualifications and potential for a research career strengths of the application should be highlighted

Revisions to Reference Letters (updates in progress)

(for due dates on or after January 25, 2025)

- Strong letters of reference very important
- Should attest to candidate's talents, accomplishments and potential for independent research

Vagaries of the Review Process

Average scores (from 3 reviewers) on first non-funded grant in lab #1:

Fellowship Applicant: 2.33

Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants: 4

Research Training Plan: 5.33

Training Potential: 3.67

Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training: 1.67

Average scores (from 3 reviewers) on successfully funded grant in lab #2:

Fellowship Applicant: 1.67

Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants: 1.33

Research Training Plan: 2

Training Potential: 2.33

Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training: 1

Reviewers are biased to more favorably review the remaining information when they are more impressed with the key components of the grant, namely the research strategy/training plan itself

F99/K00 award – Hints for Success

Candidate

- 3rd or 4th year of PhD training (domestic or international)
- Need to convince Reviewers that candidate is ideally suited to advance and succeed as an independent researcher; strengths should be clearly identified
- Compelling body of preliminary research a paper, especially first-author, is a big plus
- Compelling project with potential for questions that can be carried into postdoctoral and independent phases
- Prior funding is a plus
- Need for additional training should be clearly conveyed

Sponsor

 Must be committed to the career development of the candidate and be in a position to help the candidate achieve goals

F99/K00 award – Hints for Success

Training Plan

- Training goals should be broader cover F and K phase goals separately
- Identify gaps in knowledge/training and describe how they will be addressed
- Include training in managing a research group, building a professional network, mentoring trainees, relevant skillsets
- A timeline is helpful
- Assembly of a strong, diverse F99 Advisory Committee of experts to supplement training; consider adding co-sponsor from a different institution

Research Plan

- 2 Specific Aims (one for F and one for K phase)
- A clear plan for the postdoctoral phase with a list of names that indicates the type of mentor/institution that will be sought to help fulfill career development goals

K awards

Purpose of a K award

- To facilitate transition of <u>outstanding</u> <u>postdoctoral fellows</u> to independent research
- To support acquisition of new technical and professional skills
- To protect time for research activity and facilitate establishment of a record of independent research
- To generate pilot data
- To obtain R01 funding by the end of the K or soon after



The Ideal Candidate

K99 and K22 Fellowship Applicants

Eligibility: No citizenship requirement for <u>K99/R00</u> applications

Citizenship or green card is needed at the time of <u>K22</u> award issuance (citizenship or green card is not needed to apply for K22 funding)

Career Stage: Postdoctoral or Clinical Fellows

K99: Applicants must have <u>no more than 4 years of postdoctoral</u> <u>research experience</u> at the time of the initial or the subsequent resubmission application

K99/R00: NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Outstanding Early Stage Postdoctoral Researchers – 2 years

K22: ≥ 2 years and ≤ 8 years of mentored research training experience after doctorate at time of submission and resubmission

K Fellowship Applicant

Productivity is key:

- First-author papers from PhD and postdoctoral work essential
 - Manuscripts in review or uploaded to bioRxiv do not count
- Preferable to have sole first-author paper(s)
- Co-first author papers count
- Co-authored papers are valued because they point to collaboration and willingness to be part of a team
- Awards, conference presentations
- Track record of extramural fellowships



A Strong Career Development Plan

K Career Development Plan

BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

- Identify gaps in training and justify the need for further career development
- Describe career development activities for K99 phase:
 - hands-on training
 - didactic courses
 - conferences and workshops
 - training in professional skills (laboratory management, grant writing, networking, oral and written communication)
- Provide a plan for separation from mentor
- Provide a plan for transition to independent position and first R01 submission (R00 phase)



K Career Development Plan

 Include a detailed timeline with milestones and benchmarks for evaluation of progress by your mentor(s)

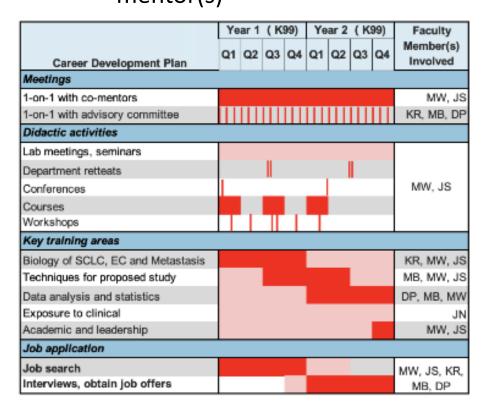


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Mentoring	Monthly collaborator meetings, more frequent as needed (1 hr)																
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Research				& 2 analyses		,		Aim	3 - partici					nalysis			
Experiential	Mentore	d research	activities	(health dispa	arity/physic	al activity)			•								
Training (1 day/wk)	os	DM	Accel	erometers tra	ining with [Dr. Diaz											
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Scientific	(2 days) (2 days																
Workshops			IBDCR	NIH SI			department seminars and journal clubs, and ethical conduct of research.										
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Development	(1 hr/wk, Wkshp Course																
				semester)	(1 day)	(2 days)	olubo or	ad lab ma	otingo /4 h	r ooob	ottond 2 2	nor woold					
				Attend inter													
Dethananta	Writing activities related to scientific manuscripts and grant proposals (1 day/week)									4 4							
Pathway to		Academic	Career Counsel	Practice Job Talk	Interview			lab, hire ch assist		Develo	p and su	bmit R01		submit R0			
Independence		App BC	Counsei	Talk			researc	cii assist					appi	y to other	KFAS		

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The Research Plan

K Research Training Plan

- Must have strong preliminary data in support of the proposed Aims, preferably published
- Clearly define work that will be done in the mentored
 (K99) vs independent (R00) phase of the award
- Indicate what you still need to accomplish during the https://xykademiqz.com
 mentored phase to successfully launch an independent research program



- Avoid exploratory and overambitious aims
- Pay attention to grantsmanship issues; seek help with proofreading



https://xykademigz.com/2016/04/21/preliminary-data/

Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborators

K Mentoring Team

- Identify a primary mentor(s) and co-mentors with relevant expertise
 who are committed to your career development (include biosketches)
- Primary mentor must have a strong research program, a record of training and sufficient funding to cover the costs of the mentored phase (can include a co-primary mentor if needed)
- Ensure that relevant expertise is available for all proposed training
- Mentor statement should echo your training goals
- Specify how often you will meet with mentor(s) and members of your mentoring team
- Mentor should indicate that you can take your project,
 reagents etc with you to the independent phase



Environment and InstitutionalCommitment

K Research Environment and Institutional Commitment

- Institution should show commitment to the career development of the candidate – this is extremely important
 - Protected time
 - Space
 - Resources
- Letter of Institutional Commitment should be included in the application (should state that continued support of the candidate is not dependent on receipt of the award)
- The Institution does not need to commit to hiring the candidate

THE F AWARD PANEL



Mary E. Reyland, PhD
Professor, Department of Craniofacial Biology
University of Colorado Denver – Anschutz Medical Campus
Director, T32 Training Program in Cancer Biology
Research Interests: Protein Kinase C and Salivary Gland
Apoptosis, Radioprotection of the Salivary Gland

THE F AWARD PANEL

F31 RECIPIENT



Justin Engel
PhD Candidate, Cancer Biology
UT Southwestern
Research Interests: Mechanisms
Underlying Genomic Rearrangements,
Chromothripsis

F31 RECIPIENT



PhD Candidate, Cancer Biology
Emory University
Research Interests: Pancreatic Cancer
Immunotherapies

F31 RECIPIENT



Michael Sturdivant
PhD Candidate, Pharmacology
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
Research Interests: Mutagenic Effects of
APOBEC3A and APOBEC3B in Urothelial
Carcinoma

THE F AWARD PANEL

F99/K00 RECIPIENT



Gwenyth Joseph, PhD
PhD Candidate, Cancer Biology
Vanderbilt Center for Bone Biology
Research Interests: Metabolic States
that Regulate the Cancer Epigenome

F99/K00 RECIPIENT



Viral Oza, PhD
PhD Candidate, Molecular and Cellular
Biochemistry
University of Kentucky

Research Interests: Role of Diffuse Midline Glioma-derived Extracellular Vesicles in Tumor Radioresistance

THE K AWARD PANEL

RECIPIENT K99/R00 Award



Rachelle W. Johnson, PhD
Associate Professor
Vanderbilt Center for Bone Biology
Director of Graduate Studies
Program in Cancer Biology
Vanderbilt University

Research Interests: Mechanisms of Bone Metastasis; Tumor Dormancy and Recurrence in Bone

REVIEWER (NCI-I) (K99/R00, K22)



Steven J. Kridel, PhD
Chair, Cancer Biology
Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Research Interests: Role of Fatty Acid Synthesis
in Tumors

REVIEWER (NCI-I) (K99/R00, K22)



Jennifer Black, PhD
Professor, Cancer Biology
PI T32 Cancer Biology Training Program
University of Nebraska Medical Center
Research Interests: Cell Signaling in GI
Cancers