

CABTRAC 2024: Update from the Office of Cancer Centers

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Cancer Research Career Enhancement and Related Activities

▪ **PAR17-095 released in December 2016**

- The cancer research career enhancement activities in which the core will be engaged, such as coordinating travel opportunities, seminars, workshops, and related activities
- The process for coordinating existing cancer education and training activities at the center, including with other institutional efforts, and integrating them into programmatic efforts
- The inclusion of special or unusual areas of cancer research education (health disparities, global health, etc.)
- New initiatives and plans for the next funding cycle

Cancer Research Training and Education Coordination

- **PAR21-321 released in October 2021**
- The cancer research training and education activities, in which the core will be engaged, such as coordinating the distribution of travel funds to those who do not have access to them, organizing educational seminars, workshops, and related activities
- Efforts by the Center to assist trainees, including junior faculty, in preparing grant applications, and for senior faculty in preparing institutional training grant applications
- General outcomes of education and training activities, as available
- The process for coordinating existing cancer education and training activities at the Center, including with other institutional efforts, and integrating them into programmatic efforts
- Financial commitments of the institution to further the Center's training activities
- Special areas of cancer research training and education (health disparities, global health, etc.)
- The inclusion of underrepresented populations in education and training activities
- New initiatives and plans for the next funding cycle

CRTEC – Review Trends (as of September 2024)

- 65 centers

exceptional	7
exceptional - outstanding	4
outstanding - exceptional	8
outstanding	15
outstanding - excellent	10
excellent - outstanding	8
excellent	6
excellent - very good	5
very good - excellent	1
very good	0
very good - good	1

CRTEC – Review Trends

2018-2019 - 22 centers

exceptional	3
exceptional - outstanding	0
outstanding - exceptional	3
outstanding	3
outstanding - excellent	2
excellent - outstanding	2
excellent	3
excellent - very good	3
very good - excellent	0
very good	1
very good - good	2

2023-2024 - 22 centers

exceptional	3
exceptional - outstanding	0
outstanding - exceptional	2
outstanding	4
outstanding - excellent	2
excellent - outstanding	6
excellent	4
excellent - very good	1
very good - excellent	0
very good	0
very good - good	0

Strengths Noted in Reviews

- **Maintains a portfolio of effective, peer-reviewed, and institutionally funded training programs across the continuum of education including K-12 and Graduate and Postdoctoral Programs.**
- **Several grants and Institutional support that provides matching funding for additional trainees to increase number of URG trainees.**
- **Developmental Funds support pilot projects from URGs and early-stage investigators and protected time is provided for clinical ESI.**
- **System allows tracking of publications and grants associated with awardees of the trainees.**
- **Experienced leadership, training programs supported by grants that have increased the programmatic activities in number and in breadth, partnerships with other agencies, and inclusivity of URGs and ESI.**

Strengths Noted in Reviews: contd.

- **Has comprehensive program encompassing K-12 through junior faculty.**
- **Holds substantial training grant portfolio**
- **Leverages collaborations with neighboring institutions**
- **Provides metrics**
- **Has a dedicated office for education and training activities**
- **Includes substantial DEI efforts**
- **Have training advisory committees with good bidirectional communication**
- **Have numerous well integrated programs across the Center and Institution.**

Weaknesses Noted in Reviews:

- **Modest evidence for curricular development for graduate students**
- **Minimal grant writing educational efforts**
- **Mechanisms to ensure equal quality across all sites incompletely developed**
- **Unclear future planning for career enhancement**
- **Insufficient concrete examples of how the E&T office will meet the evolving needs of cancer research**
- **Unclear how junior faculty are mentored beyond institutional efforts**
- **Lack of a centralized process for tracking the progression of trainees**
- **Institution-wide initiatives seemingly without oversight or input from the CC.**
- **Modest mentoring of cancer research faculty.**
- **Underdeveloped strategy for recruitment and career development of diverse faculty and trainees.**



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PED – Review Trends (as of September 2024)

- 27 centers

exceptional	2
exceptional - outstanding	2
outstanding - exceptional	1
outstanding	4
outstanding - excellent	3
excellent - outstanding	2
excellent	4
excellent – very good	6
very good - excellent	2
very good	1

Strengths from PED Reviews

- PED is part of a center's Strategic Plan and aligned with the institutional activities for enhancing diversity.
- There are ongoing efforts to increase diversity of the Senior Leadership and advisory groups (EAB, CAB, etc.)
- Establishing infrastructure with leaders empowered with decision making authority
- Utilize institutional and center resources to support junior to mid-career researchers from underrepresented minorities and women to prepare them for center leadership
- Center's initiatives/activities are intended to encourage participation from diverse groups to expand the pipeline of members at all career levels.
- **Partnering with CTREC and COE to increase underrepresented minorities and women in cancer research workforce**
- Strong initial baseline assessment and well-developed metrics to evaluate progress; logic models used for evaluation

Weaknesses from PED Reviews

- Under-developed infrastructure - Reviewers expect to see a PED in place – not “we are working on it.”
- Insufficient authorities of DEI leaders
- Beyond institutional practices, there are no specific evaluation metrics to monitor progress of center’s DEI activities.
- Insufficient description of the baseline survey of research workforce, follow-up surveys, and monitoring criteria to guide DEI planning and evaluation
- **Limited details for proposed interactions with CRTEC and COE**
- If you mention a specific group of concern, for example gender diversity, there should be a plan in place to gather data and set goals

Proposed CCSG Plan to Enhance Diversity

- Establish infrastructure and utilize institutional resources to expand the pathway of members of diverse backgrounds through training or mentoring opportunities to encourage participation of students, postdoctoral researchers and other scientists from diverse backgrounds, including those groups shown to be nationally underrepresented in the research workforce
- Leverage institutional commitment and infrastructure to enhance diversity of center membership, leadership, and training workforce
- Establish criteria for monitoring and evaluating progress of diversity

Proposed CCSG Plan to Enhance Diversity

- How clearly and effectively has the center identified and justified its potential for diversifying its membership, leadership, and training workforce?
- How effective is the center's plan to enhance the participation of groups nationally under-represented in the research workforce in its membership, center leadership, and training efforts?
- How effectively has the center established infrastructure and utilized institutional resources to support career-enhancing research opportunities for junior and early- and mid-career researchers from diverse backgrounds?
- How effectively has the center used training or mentoring opportunities to encourage participation of students, postdoctoral researchers, and other scientists from diverse backgrounds to enhance the center's diversity?
- **How have interactions with Community Outreach and Engagement and Cancer Research Training and Education Coordination impacted efforts to enhance the center's diversity infrastructure?**
- How effectively has the center leveraged institutional commitment and infrastructure to enhance diversity among the center's membership, leadership, and trainees?
- How well has the center established criteria for monitoring and evaluating progress in diversity?
- **How qualified is the PED leader and how effective has the PED leader been in establishing the center's diversity infrastructure?**

NIH Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP)

- **Any new and re-issued NOFOs** that plan to include a PEDP are **REQUIRED** to utilize the new approved language in relevant NOFO Sections. **NO changes to the approved PEDP language are permitted**
- Approved by the HHS Office of General Counsel (OGC) for use in all NIH NOFOs
- **Implementation:**
 - Opt-out OR opt-in
 - The PEDP may be no more than 2 pages in length and should include:
 - Actionable strategies using defined approaches for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the project
 - Description of how the PEDP will advance the scientific and technical merit of the proposed project
 - Anticipated timeline of proposed PEDP activities
 - Evaluation methods for assessing the progress and success of PEDP activities

Examples of items that advance inclusivity in research and may be appropriate for a PEDP

- Partnerships with different types of institutions and organizations (e.g., research-intensive; undergraduate-focused; HBCUs; emerging research institutions; community-based organizations)
- Project frameworks that enable communities and researchers to work collaboratively as equal partners in all phases of the research process
- Outreach and planned engagement activities to enhance recruitment of individuals from diverse groups as human subjects in clinical trials, including those from underrepresented backgrounds
- Description of planned partnerships that may enhance geographic and regional diversity
- Outreach and recruiting activities intended to diversify the pool of applicants for research training programs, such as outreach to prospective applicants from groups underrepresented in the biomedical sciences, for example, individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, those with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and women
- Plans to utilize the project infrastructure (i.e., research and structure) to enhance the research environment and support career-advancing opportunities for junior, early- and mid-career researchers
- Transdisciplinary research projects and collaborations among researchers from fields beyond the biological sciences, such as physics, engineering, mathematics, computational biology, computer and data sciences, as well as bioethics

Examples of items that are NOT appropriate in a PEDP

- Selection or hiring of personnel for a research team based on their race, ethnicity, or sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation or transgender status)
- A training or mentorship program limited to certain researchers based on their race, ethnicity, or sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation or transgender status)