Vice President’s Clinical and Translational (VPCAT) Research Scholars Program

2020 VPCAT Scholar Cohort Application Review Criteria

Introduction

You are tasked with evaluating each applicant’s merit, identifying those who will be most able to successfully compete for extramural funding during the next 2-years and who demonstrate a strong interest in furthering the quality and scope of clinical and translational research.

Please address any specific questions to the VPCAT Program Coordinator, Jenny Cochrane, by phone (801-585-9354) or email.

Instructions

- Examine each of your review assignments for conflict of interest. If you perceive a conflict, as defined by the National Institutes of Health (here), please contact Jenny Cochrane immediately.
- Familiarize yourself with both the 2020 VPCAT Scholar Cohort RFA Instructions and the below VPCAT program scoring guidelines and criteria.
- Use the review criteria outlined below in determining both applicant career and research merit.
- Give a separate score for each criteria. Keep in mind, an applicant does not need to be strong in all categories to be considered likely to succeed.
- Read, evaluate, and write a critique for each of your assigned applications using the VPCAT critique template provided.
- Use bullet points to note strengths and weaknesses for each of the scored review criteria categories: Career Plan, Scientific Mentoring Plan, Research Plan, Institutional Support, and Applicant’s Overall Potential.
- Provide context and explanations for your comments based on the applicant’s submission. Though brevity is acceptable, bullet points should express complete thoughts and be sufficient to inform the candidate.
- REMEMBER, apart from comments written specifically in the “confidential” section of your critique template, comments and scores will be shared with the applicant as part of the program’s notification response.
### Scoring Guidelines

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<tr>
<th>Impact Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th><strong>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</strong></th>
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| 1-2          | Excellent  | • Career plan is clearly defined, demonstrates an appropriate career vision, and an important research niche.  
• Scientific mentor plan is strong, methodical, and includes a concise plan for monitoring and evaluating progress.  
• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are wholly appropriate to the proposed research.  
• Demonstrated an established working relationship with the scientific mentor.  
• Research plan clearly supports and is appropriate to career/research objectives.  
• Demonstrates strong department/college commitment; importantly, includes 1) statement committing a minimum of 30% dedicated time for the development of their research project and full participation in the program; 2) detailed outline of responsibilities/activities with associated % FTE; and 3) a clear plan describing steps to prevent encroachment of committed protected research time.  
• Exhibits a strong likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; clear potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
| 3-4          | Very Good  | • Defined career plan that demonstrates a career vision and a research niche.  
• Scientific mentor plan has minor gaps in the overall strategy and its proposed monitoring and evaluation of progress.  
• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are appropriate to the proposed research.  
• Demonstrated an initial, yet strong relationship with the scientific mentor.  
• Minor gaps in the research plan’s connectivity and appropriateness to the career/research objectives.  
• Some evidence of department/college commitment in the letter; committing a minimum of 30% dedicated FTE for research and time for program requirements.  
• Exhibits a very good likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; very good potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
| 5-6          | Good       | • Career plan is good with gaps in demonstrating appropriate career vision and validity of research niche.  
• Scientific mentor plan has key gaps in its proposed strategy and plans for monitoring and evaluating.  
• Scientific mentor’s qualifications misaligned with the proposed research.  
• Demonstrated minimal working relationship with the scientific mentor.  
• Key gaps in the research plan’s connectivity and appropriateness to the career/research objectives.  
• Minimal evidence of department/college commitment is represented in the letter.  
• Exhibits a good likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; good potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
| 7-8          | Fair       | • Career plan is limited in vision and not well defined; research niche is narrow.  
• Scientific mentor plan contains minimal or unrealistic plans.  
• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are not aligned to the proposed research.  
• Demonstrated working relationship with mentor has just started.  
• Research plan minimally supports or is not appropriate to the stated objectives.  
• No clear evidence of support from the department/college.  
• Concerns about the candidate’s likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term and/or their transition to independence. |
| 9            | Poor       | • Career plan demonstrates no career vision or defined research niche.  
• Scientific mentor plan is not presented and contains no plans for evaluation.  
• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are not appropriate to the proposed research.  
• No demonstrable working relationship between mentor and candidate.  
• Research plan does not support and is not appropriate to stated objectives.  
• No evidence of department/college support for candidate’s time in the program.  
• Significant concerns about the candidate’s likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term and/or their transition to independence. |
Scoring Criteria

Career Plan
- Does the candidate have a clearly defined career vision and an important research niche?
- Are there adequate plans for evaluating the candidate’s career development progress?
- What is the likelihood that the candidate’s career plan will contribute to their success in submitting career development grants and becoming an independent researcher?
- Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career plan appropriate in the context of prior experience and the stated training and research objectives for the VPCAT Program?

Scientific Mentoring Plan
- Are the scientific mentor’s qualifications in the area of proposed research appropriate?
- Does the mentor(s) adequately address the candidate’s potential and his/her strengths and areas for improvement?
- Is the mentor’s role in the candidate’s research described adequately in their letter of support?
- Does the candidate’s publication record demonstrate an existing relationship with the mentor?
- Is active/pending support for the proposed research project adequate and appropriate?
- Are there adequate plans for evaluating the candidate’s research progress?
- Does the mentor ensure candidate is able to devote a minimum of 30% FTE to their career and research program?
- Is there an anticipated plan to address issues of inadequate devoted time provided?

Research Plan
- Does the candidate convincingly address the significance and innovation of the project?
- Does the candidate provide a clear and compelling description of their proposed research?
- Does the candidate have sufficient research experience in the field and provide adequate description of their previous efforts?
- Does the candidate clearly describe future research plans and how they will be achieved?
- Does the research plan adequately support the candidate’s research career objectives?
- Is the research plan appropriate to the candidate’s stage of research development and to developing the research skills described in the career plan?

Institutional Support
- Is there evidence of commitment, support, and resources for the candidate to carry out the proposed career development and research plan successfully?
- Does the institutional support letter state and ensure the devoted minimum 30% FTE to the development of the candidate’s career and research program?
- Does the institution agree to release the candidate to attend all the mandatory required VPCAT events and curricular sessions?
- Is there a clear breakdown of candidate’s roles and responsibilities with associated % FTE?
- Specific to candidate’s devoted, minimum 30% research time, is there an outline of associated research funding/responsibilities that supports and/or makes up that time?
- Is there an anticipated plan to address issues of inadequate devoted time provided?
- Is there evidence of clear commitment on the part of the School/College to ensure that the remaining percent effort will be devoted to an appropriate balance of research, teaching, administrative, and clinical responsibilities?
Applicant’s Overall Potential

- Does the candidate have a strong likelihood of successfully contributing over the long term to clinical and translational research?
- Does the candidate have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher within their field?
- Is the candidate’s prior experience (training and research) appropriate for the VPCAT Program?
- Does the candidate’s research plan exhibit a strong likelihood that the applicant could obtain external funding within two years?
- Is the candidate’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality?
- Is there sufficient evidence of the candidate’s commitment to meeting the program objectives?
- Do the letters of support address the above review criteria and do they provide evidence that the candidate has a high potential for becoming an independent investigator?
- Does the overall application demonstrate the applicant’s research and career plans in a cohesive and overarching strategy that will lead them to academic success?
- Would the candidate benefit from the VPCAT Program?