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

-- Application Review Criteria --

2021 VPCAT Scholar Cohort

Introduction

You are tasked with evaluating each applicant’s merit, identifying those who will be best 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 2021 Request for Application (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 applicant.
- REMEMBER, apart from comments written specifically in the critique’s “confidential” section, comments and scores will be shared with the applicant as part of the program’s notification response.
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<th>Impact Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
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| 1-2          | Excellent Have no reservations accepting | - 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.  
- Demonstrates an established working relationship with the scientific mentor.  
- Research plan clearly supports and is appropriate to career/research objectives, as well as addresses a significant barrier in their field and strong evidence of prior research.  
- 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; 3) a clear plan describing steps to prevent reduction/fluxuations of committed protected research time; and 4) a detailed, feasible plan to transition into independence.  
- Exhibits a strong likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; understanding of future steps to take in order to achieve long-term goals; and potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
| 3-4          | Very Good Reservations, yet has good potential | - 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.  
- Demonstrates an initial, yet strong relationship with the scientific mentor.  
- Minor gaps in the research plan’s connectivity and appropriateness to the career/research objectives, as well as limited details on significance to the field and minor representation of rigor of prior research.  
- Some evidence of department/college commitment in the letter; committing a minimum of 30% dedicated FTE for research, time for program requirements, and acknowledges need for transition to independence plan.  
- Exhibits a very good likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; includes a plan to transition to independence that raises minor concerns; and very good potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
| 5-6          | Good Needs more experience to benefit most from the program | - 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.  
- Demonstrates minimal working relationship with the scientific mentor.  
- Key gaps in the research plan’s connectivity and appropriateness to the career/research objectives, as well as minimal evidence of significance to their field and rigor of prior research.  
- Minimal evidence of department/college commitment represented.  
- Exhibits a good likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; includes a long-term transition plan that is either unclear or raises some concerns about feasibility; and good potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
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<th>7-8</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Applicant is not ready for the program</th>
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<td>• Career plan is limited in vision and not well defined; research niche is narrow.</td>
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<td>• Scientific mentor plan contains minimal or unrealistic plans.</td>
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<td>• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are not aligned to the proposed research.</td>
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<td>• Demonstrated working relationship with mentor has just started.</td>
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<td>• Research plan minimally supports or is not appropriate to the stated objectives, and minimally represents the significance to their field and evidence of prior research.</td>
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<td>• No clear evidence of support from the department/college or commitment to applicant’s transition to independence plan.</td>
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<td>• Major concerns about the applicant’s likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term and/or their transition to independence.</td>
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<th>9</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Applicant is not ready for the program</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Career plan demonstrates no career vision or defined research niche.</td>
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<td>• Scientific mentor plan is not presented and contains no plans for evaluation.</td>
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<td>• Scientific mentor’s qualifications are not appropriate to the proposed research.</td>
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<td>• No demonstrable working relationship between mentor and applicant.</td>
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<td>• Research plan does not support and is not appropriate to stated objectives, and there is no clear significance or evidence of prior research.</td>
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<td>• No evidence of department/college support for applicant’s time in the program or future transition to independence.</td>
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<td>• Lack in confidence in the applicant’s likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term and/or their transition to independence.</td>
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**Scoring Criteria**

**Career Plan**

- Does the applicant have a clearly defined career vision and an important research niche?
- Are there adequate plans for evaluating the applicant’s career development progress?
- What is the likelihood that the applicant’s career plan will contribute to their success in submitting extramural grant applications as a Principal Investigator 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?
- Does the applicant articulate an appropriate long-term transition to independence plan that will positively contribute to achieving their goals?

**Scientific Mentoring Plan**

- Are the scientific mentor’s qualifications in the area of proposed research appropriate?
- Does the mentor(s) adequately address the applicant’s potential and his/her strengths and areas for improvement?
- Is the mentor’s role in the applicant’s research described adequately in their letter of support?
- Does the applicant’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 applicant’s research progress?
- Does the mentor acknowledge the applicant has the necessary commitment from their department/college 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?
- Does the mentor agree with and commits to implementing the applicant’s Transition to Independence Plan?
Research Plan

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

Institutional Support

- Is there evidence of commitment, support, and resources for the applicant 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 applicant’s career and research program?
- Does the institution agree to release the applicant to attend all the mandatory required VPCAT events and curricular sessions?
- Is there a clear breakdown of applicant’s roles and responsibilities with associated % FTE?
- Specific to applicant’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?
- Is there evidence of the School/College acknowledging and actively supporting the applicant’s transition to independence plan?

Applicant’s Overall Potential

- Does the applicant have a strong likelihood of successfully contributing over the long-term to clinical and translational research?
- Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher within their field?
- Is the applicant’s prior experience (training and research) appropriate for the VPCAT Program?
- Does the applicant’s research plan exhibit a strong likelihood that the applicant could obtain external funding within two years?
- Is the applicant’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality?
- Is there sufficient evidence of the applicant’s commitment to meeting the program objectives?
- Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics between their professional responsibilities and achieving their long-term goals?
- Do the letters of support address the above review criteria and do they provide evidence that the applicant 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?
- Is the applicant in a position to get the most out of the 2-years in the VPCAT Program?