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

-- Request for Application (RFA) Instructions --
2021 VPCAT Scholar Cohort

Formatting Instructions

- **File type:** Documents must be in Adobe PDF format only
- **Font size:** 11-point, not condensed
- **Font type:** Arial or Times New Roman
- **Spacing:** Single space (no more than six lines of type within a vertical inch)
- **Margins:** At least 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) in all directions
- **Tables, graphs, figures, etc.:** All tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts must be included within the overall page limit
- **Application questions:** Please direct any questions to the VPCAT Program Coordinator, Jenny Cochrane, either by phone (801-585-9354) or email, or see the VPCAT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
- **Application organization:** The content of the application and requested narrative is required to be structured as outlined below. Each section should be clearly labeled with the provided headers. Please organize the application into a single PDF as outlined in the checklist at the end of the document.

Application Instructions

Cover Letter *(maximum 2 pages)*

- Letter should be addressed to:
  Michael A. Rubin, MD, PhD, MS
  Director, VPCAT Program
  University of Utah Health, SVPHS Education Office
  EHSEB 5515
- Include an introduction of yourself
  - Describe your prior training and how it relates to your objectives and long-term goals
  - Present evidence of your commitment to an academic career in clinical and translational research
  - Describe all of your professional responsibilities/roles with estimated % level of effort and describe their relationship to your career development *(a small table presenting effort is advisable)*
  - Include a description of any associated research funding/ responsibilities that support(s) and/or make(s) up your dedicated research time *(program requires institutional commitment of a minimum of 30% protected research time, which can be supported via multiple sources)*
- Summarize why you should be considered for the VPCAT program
  - Provide evidence of your potential to develop into an independent investigator
  - Describe your enthusiasm for your research path and willingness to work towards your goals

Curriculum Vitae (CV) *(no page limit)*

- Include an up-to-date CV with content reflecting your eligibility for the program *(see Applicant Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements)*
- For applicants with University CV (U-CV) access, export your CV via the U-CV system using “SOM format”
- For applicants without U-CV access, provide a detailed, up-to-date CV
Application Narrative (5-page limit, not including References)
Your application will be reviewed by a study section with broad expertise. Reviewers may be in a related field, rather than an expert directly in your area. Use a clear and concise writing style avoiding jargon a non-expert may not understand.

1. Career Plan (1-1 ½ page(s) recommended)
   a. Career Statement
      - In **boldface**, include 2-3 sentences stating your proposed unique research contribution and your long-term goals for your academic career (i.e., a career vision statement, “elevator speech”)
   b. Career Goals and Objectives
      - Clearly define and list 2-4 career goals and objectives you aim to achieve while in the program
      - Must reflect a logical progression from your prior research and training experiences, as described in the **Cover Letter** and **Section 3c**, to the training and research experiences that you propose during the program period
      - Demonstrate an important research niche
      - A simple career goals and objectives timeline summarizing your stated career and research activities, publications, and grant submissions over the program period can be included
      - Justify the need for further career development to become an independent investigator and to advance your career goals and objectives
      - Outline your **Career Development Plan** as it aligns to your stated career goals, specifying training, coursework, and/or other activities you plan to participate in while in the program and why it supports your overarching career trajectory

2. Scientific Mentoring Plan (½ - 1 page recommended)
   - Name your scientific mentor who, together with you, is responsible for planning, directing, monitoring, and executing your career and research development
   - If more than one mentor, identify your primary mentor and name your co-mentor(s), briefly describing your mentoring plan with each and how these plans will interrelate
   - Describe your mentor(s)
     - Background of qualifications, track record of success in research, and previous experience as a mentor with evidence of successfully guiding young investigators to independence
     - How they will contribute to the development of your research career
     - How they will assist and guide you in moving your research plan forward
   - Outline your mentoring plan, which should:
     - Reflect your mentors’ commitment to your development over the 2-year period
     - Demonstrate an established working relationship
     - Describe how often you plan to meet, as well as the nature and extent of supervision
     - Describe not only research, but other developmental activities you will/may be/have undertaken with your mentor (including seminars, scientific meetings, training in the responsible conduct of research, and presentations)
     - Provide a monitoring plan and measurable expectations (e.g., publications, meetings, etc.) you will adhere to over the 2-year period

3. Research Plan (3 pages recommended)
   a. Specific Aims (1-page limit)
      - State your proposed research goals concisely and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will have on your research field(s)
      - Include details on the **knowledge gap** you are addressing, the **significance** of the work you want to do, and the **innovation** of your project (i.e., research niche)
      - List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology)
      - Demonstrate objectives appropriate to achieve your overall career and research short- and long-term objectives, obtain independent extramural funding, and aligned to your stated career development goals and objectives
b. Significance & Rigor of Prior Research (1 page recommended)
   - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that your proposed research plan addresses
   - Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research (both published and unpublished) that serves as the key support for your proposed research plan (see NIH Guidance: Rigor and Reproducibility in Grant Applications; NIH Reviewer Guidance on Rigor and Transparency; and Open Mike: Resources for Rigorous Research websites)
   - Explain how your proposed research plan will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in your research field
   - Describe how your concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive your field will be changed if your proposed aims are achieved

c. Prior Research Efforts (½ page recommended)
   - Summarize your research efforts to date, including description of prior and/or current funded research, and how it supports your proposed research plan
   - Discuss preliminary studies, data, and/or experience pertinent to your application
   - Describe how your prior efforts contribute to your potential to achieve independence

d. Future Research Plan (½ page recommended)
   - Describe how your proposed 2-year research plan will contribute to your long-term success
   - Specifically indicate the extramural applications you plan to apply for, including agency titles and mechanism types, and how they will contribute to expanding your research platform
   - Your future research plan should demonstrate a thoughtful plan to maintain a funding trajectory commensurate with your career and research goals

4. References (not included in 6-page limit | no page limit)
   - Should include references cited in Research Plan
   - Advise Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) citation style (here)

Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator (1 page limit)
   - Transition plan must be signed by both you, the applicant, and your senior leader (i.e., chair or chief)
   - Provide a detailed plan describing the steps that you and your senior leader(s) plan to take to facilitate your transition into an independent investigator
   - Your plan must clearly address:
     - What research effort you require to achieve research independence?
     - What is your and your senior leader(s)’ plan to adjust your current and/or future workload to accommodate the effort you require to achieve research independence (e.g., in order to provide the effort required to be a PI on an extramural award, there will need to be a plan to switch effort away from clinical, educational, and/or administrative)?
     - What specific steps are you and your senior leader(s) going to take now and in the future to ensure your transition plan is implemented (i.e., a timeline for reduction or full withdrawal from administrative roles, outline steps to reduce clinical or teaching effort, a plan for reduction or full withdrawal from other research roles, etc.)?
   - Your transition plan should demonstrate an applicant able to acknowledge the dynamics between their professional responsibilities and achieving their long-term goals

Mentor(s) Letter of Support (no page limit)
   - Letters must be on letter head and include a signature
   - If more than one mentor, the identified primary mentor’s letter must be included first, followed by proposed co-mentor(s)’ letter(s)
   - Letter(s) must include:
     - Statement of their research qualifications and prior experience, and how this is wholly appropriate to your proposed research and career development, including:
- Record of extramural funding (preferably NIH, AHRQ, VA, DoD, or other equivalent)
- Mentoring experience and success in training and placing independent investigators (a table of current and past mentees outlining mentee status is encouraged)
- Additional resources in terms of space, finances, and/or protected time they can afford you

- Statement that they have read, understood, and can meet the required responsibilities outlined in the Scientific Mentor(s) Requirements and Expectations, including:
  - An acknowledgement that you have the necessary commitment from your Chair and/or Dean to be able to devote a minimum of 30% FTE (3.60 person months) to the development of your career and research program during the 2-year program period
  - An anticipated plan to prevent and/or address issues of inadequate devoted time to your career and research development due to encroaching clinical, administrative, and/or teaching effort; include specific steps of action that will be taken
  - An agreement with and commitment to implementing your Transition to Independence Plan (Section 3d) in order to ensure your successful career progression from mentored stage to independence

- A mentoring plan that describes:
  - Frequency and duration of face-to-face meetings,
  - Mentor's mentoring philosophy and how it will be utilized
  - The specific nature of the supervision and mentoring that will occur during the 2-year period, including their role in your outlined Career Development Plan
  - How your mentor will monitor your research, publications, academic promotion, and progression towards independence including measurable milestones and outcomes
  - Any foreseeable limitations of the plan, mentoring team, etc.
  - If you have proposed co-mentor(s), how your primary mentor will interact with co-mentor(s)

- Letters should clearly demonstrate:
  - Mentor’s enthusiasm and knowledge of your career development
  - Mentor is closely involved in critical areas such as advising on important research questions, facilitating research collaborations, helping to outline experimental design, critiquing rough drafts, etc.
  - Mentor’s qualifications are wholly appropriate to the proposed research
  - An established relationship between the Mentor and yourself, which may be evidenced by publication(s), abstract(s), etc.
  - Mentor(s) have read and understood the Scientific Mentor(s) Requirements and Expectations list

- If you propose co-mentor(s), their letter(s) of support must contain similar information as listed above clearly describing how they will coordinate mentorship

Institutional Letter of Commitment (no page limit)

- Letters must be on letter head and include a signature
- Letters must:
  - Include a statement of their commitment to your development into a productive, independent investigator, as well as to meet the requirements of the 2-year program
  - Include a statement agreeing to release your time to attend:
    - The mandatory 1 ½-day VPCAT Orientation from Monday, December 7th to December 8, 2020 (location TBD)
    - The required twice-monthly, ½-day curricular sessions held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday from 12:30 to 4:30 pm at EHSEB in order to achieve your minimum 80% attendance requirement
    - The required 3-day Leadership Seminar Series I and Series II during the program period
    - The mandatory 1-hour VPCAT Initial Mentoring Team Meeting with your scientific mentor
    - A minimum of three mandatory VPCAT mentor meetings over the 2-year program
    - Supplemental career development opportunities, including grant-writing workshops, Utah Center for Clinical and Translational Science (Utah CCTS) K-Club, or other applicable courses
• Describe how the institution will provide you with appropriate office and laboratory space, equipment, personnel, finances, and/or other resources to carry out the proposed career development and research plan
• State their commitment to ensure you will be able to devote a minimum of 30% FTE (3.60 person months) to the development of your career and research program during the 2-year program period
• Include detailed descriptions of:
  − Your responsibilities/activities with associated levels of % FTE
  − associated research funding/responsibilities that supports and/or makes up your devoted minimum 30% research time
  − An anticipated plan, including steps of action that will be taken, to prevent and/or address issues of inadequate devoted time to your career and research development due to a change in clinical, administrative, and/or teaching effort
• Describe your Transition to Independence Plan, including acknowledgement of and support for your outlined steps for successful transition to independence
  ▪ Letters should clearly demonstrate:
    • Strong commitment to your success and development
    • Institution’s commitment to ensuring your required minimum effort will be devoted to the development of your career and research program
    • Willingness to address and correct issues of inadequate devoted time, if this should occur
    • A commitment to your full participation in the VPCAT program, including time to participate in mandatory curricular events

Mentor(s) NIH Biographical Sketch (5-page limit)
  ▪ Biographical sketches must follow the NIH format (here)
  ▪ Personal statements must be personalized to reflect their specific role during your time in the program
  ▪ Include up-to-date position and honors information, as well as accurate research support details for both current and completed research support
  ▪ If more than one mentor, the identified primary mentor’s biosketch must be included first, followed by proposed co-mentor(s)’ biosketch(es)
# 2021 VPCAT Application Checklist

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Submission Method</th>
<th>Length/Limit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate and Project Information</td>
<td>Enter into Competition Space Online System</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPCAT Senior Mentor Selection Form</td>
<td><a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Save file as “VPCATSelection_PI Last Name.pdf” and upload as a single file</td>
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<td>Cover Letter</td>
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<td>Candidate’s Curriculum Vitae</td>
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