

# VPCAT Scholar Handbook

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

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## PREFACE

Through the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences (SVPHS) Education Unit, the **Vice President's Clinical & Translational (VPCAT) Research Scholars Program**. Research Scholars Program (hereafter known as “**we/us/our**”) offers intensive mentorship and support to **you**, a junior faculty member and VPCAT scholar, committed to a career in clinical and translational research.

You are now part of a prestigious program committed to:

1. A clear **mission** to develop future leaders in academic research and support junior investigators to achieve independent funding through mentorship and training along three key themes: scientific career development, grant writing and management, and leadership; and
2. A clear **vision** to serve as a program that ...
  - Is the University's signature mentoring and training program
  - Is a centerpiece of the University's research mission
  - Shows great value and return on investment to the University
  - Builds and retains a well-rounded corps of principal investigators
  - Strengthens the pool of research mentors of the future
  - Achieves local and national recognition

In support of our mission and vision, we leverage the resources of our institution to augment departmental resources in helping you utilize the *Matrix Mentoring Model* to guide, mentor, and support your *scientific career development* goals.

VPCAT provides you structured courses and training to strengthen your *leadership* talents, and has an established curriculum and multiple resources to enhance your *grant writing and management* skills. All of this and many more program details are described in this Handbook.

**We proudly welcome you!**

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“Physician-scientists and scientists in all the health professions are vital members of the US biomedical workforce, but their numbers in academic health centers are declining. Mentorship has been identified as a key factor in retaining faculty members in academic health centers.

Our program was created as one solution to the decline in physician-scientists. Now, what was once a pilot program serves as the University of Utah's signature mentoring program that has increased our research capacity and contributed substantially to the institution achieving greater research funding each year.”

--Michael Rubin, MD, PhD, MS  
Director, VPCAT Program

## PART 1: MENTORING

### 1A. MATRIX MENTORING MODEL (MMM)

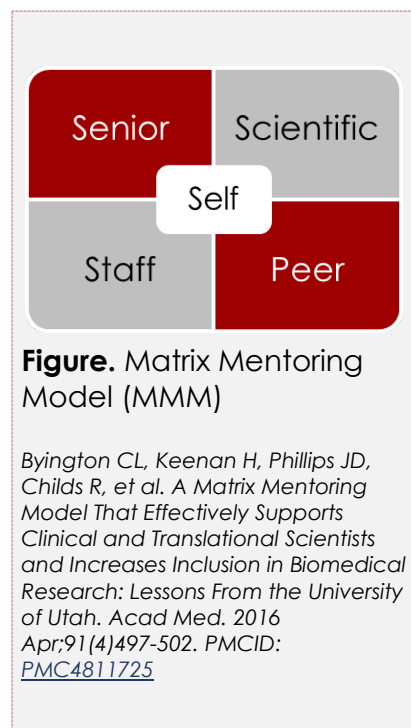
The MMM is an innovative mentoring framework created by Dr. Carrie L. Byington that includes 5 levels of mentorship. The different types of mentorship are synergistic and create an environment that fosters accountability, communication, and skills development to develop empowered principal investigators.

The first and central component of the model is **self-mentorship**. You are your own best mentor. It is critical that you understand your priorities as you advance in your faculty role. This will help you make decisions regarding the investment of your time across a variety of valuable academic endeavors.

The second level of mentorship is **senior mentorship** (i.e., career mentorship). VPCAT senior mentors are experienced, grant-funded, familiar with institutional resources, and understand the faculty advancement process. Consistently meeting with—and gaining regular feedback from—your senior mentor greatly improves your likelihood for success.

The third level is **scientific mentorship**. Your scientific mentor(s) provide specific skills in research methodology or clinical expertise specific to your area of interest. Their experience in your field will enhance the discussion and feedback on your goals. The fourth is **peer mentorship**. By establishing productive relationships with your peers, you gain an interdisciplinary collegial network to further your research. Building relationships with peers offers the possibility of mutual support, friendship, and insights into how to negotiate your professional landscape. Finally, there is **staff mentorship**. Speak with your grant administrators and other close staff to gain a different perspective in solidifying and working towards your goals.

It is important for you to consider the members of your mentoring matrix as you prepare your goals, and how they can best be utilized to ensure your ultimate success.



### 1B. MMM PURPOSE AND SCHOLAR RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **SELF-MENTORSHIP**

**Purpose:** To be an effective self-mentor—and an effective mentee as well—it is important to give yourself space and time to create a plan outlining your short- and long-term goals. Having this plan in place will help you focus your efforts and

interactions with your mentors. To assist you in this process, we created the **VPCAT Scholar Career Development Plan (VS-CDP)**. The VS-CDP is a tool for guiding self-reflection and self-assessment. It assists you in defining where you place your efforts, expands your career vision, helps you decide what resources—including people—you need, and helps to create goals that will facilitate your success. It is your first step towards self-mentorship.

“You get out of it what you put into it.”

--Michael Rubin, MD, PhD, MS  
Director, VPCAT Program

**Scholar Responsibility:** You are required to complete and submit your VS-CDP and self-assessment at 3 intervals: prior to your initial meeting and for both your mid and final reports. We highly advise that you schedule focused time to complete the VS-CDP.

### **VPCAT SENIOR MENTORSHIP**

**Purpose:** To gain career and research development mentorship, meet and communicate regularly with your assigned VPCAT senior mentor. You should engage with them as they can provide you objective career development support, facilitate accountability, and foster network development. Your mentor serves in the capacity of a career and research mentor. They may not be within your area of expertise, meaning a senior mentor may not be able to act as a content expert. Their role is to advise you on your career and research plans, facilitate access to resources, and review and provide feedback on your grant proposal. They, along with VPCAT staff mentors, will be your guide throughout the VPCAT program.

**Scholar Responsibility:** You are required to meet with your VPCAT senior mentor a minimum of 3 times during your VPCAT tenure: at your VPCAT Initial Team Meeting and Mid- and Final Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings. That said, to receive the greatest benefit from your senior mentor, we *highly recommend* that you meet with him/her at least quarterly.

Note, though we schedule your VPCAT Initial Team Meeting, you are responsible to schedule your Mid- and Final Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings prior to completing your reports (**Part 2B**).

### **SCIENTIFIC MENTORSHIP**

**Purpose:** Scientific mentor(s) serve as your research content expert and advisor(s). His/her/their role is to ensure that the science for your research and grants are both rigorous and comprehensive. He/she/they will help to ensure that you have access to the

“My senior mentor provided me with great advice/tips on how to: 1) establish mentor/mentee relationships throughout my career; 2) how to come up with a 5-10 year career plan that will both meet my primary goal to become a successful independent investigator while at the same time meeting my secondary goal to be a good teacher and “team player” for my department; and 3) I learned how to respectfully take advantage of her offer to review my grant application pieces.”

--Karen C. Schliep, PhD, MSPH  
2017-2018 Scholar

resources necessary to complete your projects.

**Scholar Responsibility:** You are to work very closely with your scientific mentor(s). As part of your VPCAT application, you have submitted a scientific mentoring plan. You are expected to follow this plan, meeting with your scientific mentor and fulfilling submissions of grants and publications as outlined in your plan.

### **PEER MENTORSHIP**

**Purpose:** Peer mentors are an integral part of your career. They are individuals who share similarities in their level of experience, concerns, and challenges. A peer mentor was recently, or is currently, a junior faculty member who has experienced some of the same transitions and situations you may face as you progress through your career. They may not be within your department or field, yet they can give you relatable advice and perspectives to assist you in navigating various aspects of your research or career that you may be struggling with.

**Scholar Responsibility:** To engage and network with your peers during your program tenure and beyond. Peer discussion courses are scheduled as part of the curriculum and social networking opportunities for current and graduated scholars will be offered.

### **STAFF MENTORSHIP**

**Purpose:** Staff mentors are staff within the program ([Part 5](#)); your own college, department and/or division; as well as from within the institution. Staff mentors include accountants, financial analysts, pre-award administrators, assistants, grants/ contracts officers, and others you work with on projects. Recognizing the expertise, resources, services, and support provided by staff is a necessity for your long-term success.

**Scholar Responsibility:** In working with staff, you will gain a basic understanding of administrative processes, responsibilities, roles, and strengths to improve your chances for success. You are required to update us on grants submitted and funded, manuscripts published, and other career successes regularly. Moreover, it is expected that you provide program staff with copies of your grant summary statements/reviews.

## **PART 2: MEETINGS AND REPORTS**

### **2A. VPCAT SCHOLAR CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN (VS-CDP)**

The [VS-CDP](#) is the first step to refine your planned academic activities and goals while still early in your career. It is a tool providing you a framework to learn how to evaluate your priorities, your time, your skills, and your resources in an effort to help you make goals commensurate with your long-term career and research objectives. It is an essential element of the MMM Self-Mentorship.

At **three points** in the program you will complete and submit your VS-CDP, both the paper component and entering your SMART goals via the Customized Career Development Platform ([CCDP](#)) online tool. The **first** is no later than two weeks prior to your VPCAT Initial Team Meeting and the **second and third** time will be with your mid- and final reports ([Part 2C](#)). Considering how highly we regard Self-Mentorship, it will be no surprise that we strongly encourage you to schedule focused time to complete the VS-CDP.

As a program tool, it does not replace reporting requirements set forth by your college, department, and/or the institution to successfully advance in your faculty appointment. Rather, the VS-CDP becomes an organized outline to enhance and motivate discussion around your planned goals and objectives with your mentors and senior peers.

“Most importantly, the program has, by forcing me to take a hard look at all of my commitments, helped me reduce them, which has likely contributed to more progress in the remaining areas—though, I think, I still need to pare down my responsibilities.”

--Brent M. Kious, MD, PhD  
2017-2018 Scholar

## 2B. MEETINGS WITH VPCAT SENIOR MENTORS

At the bare minimum, you are required to meet with your VPCAT senior mentor at least three times during your 2-year program duration: the VPCAT Initial Team Meeting and the Mid and Final Mentee/Mentor Review Meetings. *But really, is bare minimum why you are here? Go beyond 'the minimum' and follow our strong advice: schedule, regular monthly or quarterly meetings during your program tenure to receive the greatest benefit.*

“VPCAT Mentors are invaluable! [They] allowed me to blossom in my career, directed my focus, guided me through my path through many “opportunities” and believed in my SUCCESS!”

--Ana Sanchez-Birkhead, PhD, APRN  
2015-2016 Scholar

### VPCAT INITIAL TEAM MEETING

Program personnel start working in December to arrange your initial team meeting. They will work with you, your scientific mentor(s), senior mentor, VPCAT personnel, and, in some instances, the VPCAT Director to find a time and place amenable to all persons. Depending on schedules, your initial meeting should take place within the first three months of the program.

Facilitated by your VPCAT senior mentor, the initial meeting is a time to ensure that everyone working with you is aware of your goals and plans, both short- and long-term, during you VPCAT tenure and beyond. The main focus will be to review and discuss your VS-CDP and how mentors and staff can assist you in meeting your SMART goals.

In line with this, we will discuss your current responsibilities and career status to ensure you are on the right path to achieve your goals. This will include comparing your goals with your *Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator* you submitted with your application.

### **VPCAT MID AND FINAL VPCAT MENTEE/MENTOR REVIEW MEETINGS**

Held at both the first- and second-year mark, these required meetings afford you an opportunity to reassess your SMART goals and receive guidance in completing your VPCAT Mid- and Final Program Reports. Moreover, these meetings are an important opportunity to revise goals to better align with your career trajectory, as well as ensure your Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator is still aligned with your needs.

Possible discussion points for your Mid Mentee/Mentor Review Meeting (held at the 1-year mark) could include how your grant writing is evolving, where you stand in preparation of or submitting publications, and status and access to resources. For your final meeting (held at the end of your VPCAT tenure), we advise your discussion to focus on your Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator to ensure you will continue on your career trajectory.

*You are responsible for scheduling these meetings with your VPCAT senior mentor. As you are required to schedule these review meetings, we highly advise that you meet at least 3 weeks before the mid- and final reports' due dates to ensure adequate time to discuss progress and complete the documents. And, though generally, this meeting will only involve you and your senior mentor, you can invite your scientific mentor(s) as you feel is appropriate.*

## **2C. SCHOLAR REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS**

We have established reporting and evaluation requirements at the 6, 12, 18, and 24-month program periods. This process was created to not only support self-reflection on your growth and advancement, it also serves to assist in reassessing your professional priorities and goals. We have found that this approach fosters accountability, communication, and development for all those involved in the program, now and in the future. Required reports and evaluations are as follows:

1. Self-Assessments [Orientation, 12, and 24 months]
2. Program Evaluations [6, 12, 18, and 24-months]
3. Written Mid- and Final Program Reports [12 and 24-months]

### **SCHOLAR SELF-ASSESSMENTS**

Your Scholar Self-Assessment is a personal evaluation of where you think your skills are in the areas of scientific career development, grant writing and management, and leadership. You are required to complete this assessment at Orientation and as part of your Mid- and Final Program reports. We also utilize this to track your skills and competencies progress.



## **6 AND 18-MONTH 'CHECK-IN' EVALUATIONS**

June of each year, we will email you and your VPCAT mentor a brief, mandatory online survey regarding your mentor relationship, interactions with staff, barriers you may be experiencing in accessing resources, and ensuring you are receiving your 30% dedicated research effort. This information helps us provide support for any issues that may arise before the mid- or final program reporting period. Results from this survey assist us in providing additional resources and support as soon as possible.

## **MID AND FINAL PROGRAM REPORTS & EVALUATIONS**

These reports require you to submit the following five components. Combined, we utilize these documents to determine your progress, as well as how you perceive the success of your VPCAT senior mentor relationship. We track achievements, including meeting planned goals related to career advancement, publications, grant submissions, and presentations as well.

1. VS-CDP with updated SMART Goals via the CCDP online system
2. Written Progress Report with your updated CV
3. Scholar Self-Assessment
4. Program Evaluation
5. Updated *Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator*

Program personnel will email you instructions at least one month prior to the due date. *You are required to have completed reports returned, via email, by the stipulated deadline.* Using these data, we will update your senior leaders on your progress.

## **2D. VPCAT SENIOR MENTOR REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS**

You are not the only one responsible to submit reports and evaluations, your senior mentor is responsible as well. Your senior mentor is required to complete and submit both Program Evaluations [6, 12, 18, and 24-months] and Written Mid- and Final Program Reports [12 and 24-months]. As outlined above, they submit their reports at the same time as you and copies of their written reports will be sent to you. Further, their written report will be included in your senior leader update.

## **2E. MEETINGS WITH SCIENTIFIC MENTOR(S)**

Your scientific mentor(s) are an essential part of your MMM. Even though, other than your VPCAT Initial Team Meeting, your scientific mentor(s) are not required to attend VPCAT senior mentor meetings, *we fully expect that you and your mentor will adhere to your application's outlined mentoring plan.* You should be meeting with your mentoring team regularly and your mentor(s) should be monitoring your progress. As you progress in the program and, as you deem appropriate, you are welcome to invite your mentor(s) to attend any VPCAT senior mentor meetings.

## PART 3: DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE SUPPORT

### 3A. VPCAT TEAM PULSE SITE

We have developed a private [VPCAT Pulse Team Site](#) to communicate and share curriculum, resources, and tools in a secure environment. From the home page, you can quickly locate VPCAT program information and forms; curriculum content and course recordings; key articles to advance knowledge on grant preparation, career development, mentorship, etc.; and tools and resources.

Moreover, the site is home to the VPCAT Newsfeed, which is utilized to communicate to you and our mentors, up-to-date local and national funding opportunities, research advances and initiatives, and programmatic updates. Finally, the team site links you to the SVPHS Education Unit [Grant Repository](#) Pulse team site. This strictly confidential site provides samples of funded grant applications with respective summary statements, as well as other resources.

### 3B. CURRICULUM

#### ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Along with mandatory attendance at Orientation, we require you to set aside the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday afternoon (from 12:30-4:30 pm) of each month to attend VPCAT curricular courses. **You are required to attend 80% of these half-day courses each year.**

At the beginning of each year, you will be graced with 19 Outlook calendar invitations, one per course, with the course description and location. In addition, a full course schedule will be given to you at Orientation. We utilize 'sign-in' data to monitor and track attendance throughout the program. For in-person courses, you will be responsible to sign-in; however, for virtual courses, we will track attendance.

#### OVERVIEW

Our objective is to provide you a cohesive learning experience that will expand your skills and understanding in order to better prepare you for your transition to independence. To accomplish our objective, courses have been designed to ensure you receive coherent, integrated material that enhances your personal and professional development. Courses are structured in multiple formats, including didactic; practical, hands-on; example-based; and facilitated open discussion formats.

Further, our curriculum has been structured to offer you a wide variety of knowledge and training aligned with our three key mission themes:

1. **Scientific Career Development:** Course work aligned to this theme aims to provide you knowledge and tools to enhance your ability to successfully traverse

your professional and scientific environment. Course topics range from *Preparing for Promotion to Resources for VPCAT Scholars: Biostatistics, Health Economics, Databases, & Qualitative Research Methods*. Other examples of courses include *Protected Time* and *Experiences in Moving from Mentee to Mentor*, where you will participate in facilitated, peer discussions that provide you opportunities to learn best practices from peers and colleagues. Through our unique, hands-on course, *Communicating Science to the Media*, you will have the opportunity to participate in practice interviews and gain best practices to communicating your science to a large lay audience.

2. **Grant Writing and Management:** Courses focused on the grant writing and management theme provides you contextual information, knowledge, and best practices necessary for continued success. Taught by the VPCAT Research Manager, the didactic courses such as, *Silly Humans! Feasibility is a Fundamental of Grant's Human Subject Sections* and *Important, Yet Often Overlooked: Ancillary Grant Sections*, provide you key details and examples on specific grant application sections. Through courses such as *Tips of the Trade: Common & Uncommon Digital Resources*, you will receive hands on experience in 'mining' research specific resources to better understand and utilize your research environment. Further, you will greatly benefit from senior faculty and your peers through *Principles of Grant Writing* and *Experiences in Grant Submissions*, respectively. Overall, these are unique courses where you will gain real-life examples, tools and handouts, and clear information on "what not to do."
3. **Leadership:** A key benefit of our program is providing you strong leadership training necessary for you to achieve your goals of independence. Our leadership themed courses vary in format to ensure you receive an immersive learning experience. For instance, the *What Does It Take? Preparing Yourself & Your Team for a Grant Submission* course not only provides you fundamentals of a grant team, it also walks you through preparing yourself to lead your research team. Our *Self-Mentoring: Actively Developing Your Career* and *Managing & Navigating Relationship* courses provide you the necessary knowledge and tools

"Attend all sessions as availability allows – even if you don't think it's pertinent. You've heard about particular topics once and at least have an idea of what's coming and what might be expected of you."

--Anthony J. Schaeffer, MD  
2017-2018 Scholar

"Participation in VPCAT provided an environment to meet and network with peers, providing the invaluable peer-mentoring network which helped me with academic survival skills, negotiations, and paper and grant writing. This helped me reach my goal of obtaining a tenure track position."

--Adam Bress, PharmD, MS  
2015-2016 Scholar

"The grant writing sessions taught by Ms. Erin Wachs are awesome and I wish I had attended more of them."

--Robert A. Campbell, PhD  
2018-2019 Scholar

to be able to lead at both a small and large scale. Finally, to ensure you truly benefit from the full resources available to the program, you will attend two [Leadership and Career Development Seminar](#) series via the SVPHS Education Unit. *You are required to participate* in at least two seminar series by the end of the program period. Whether during year 1 or 2, you will benefit from these interactive and experiential seminars that are based on self-assessments taken prior. We support the registration fees automatically, so all you need to do is register and enter "VPCAT" under the providing chartfield option!

### 3C. METHODOLOGICAL AND DATA ANALYTIC SUPPORT: HOW AND WHY

You increase your chances to attain research independence by utilizing statistical, qualitative, economic, and/or systematic review consultation to strengthen your study design prior to submitting a grant and/or publication. Towards this end, our program has established and maintains a strong relationship with the **Utah Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) Population Health Research (PHR) Foundation for Discovery**. Collaboratively, we **support your consultation service fees** for meeting with a PHR Core member to establish an appropriate analysis plan (e.g., [Statistical Analysis Plan](#)) and consult on study design, collection of data, and preparation of language for an upcoming application or publication. You can utilize this support, which is estimated to be approximately 30 hours per year, for research projects aligned to and in support of achieving your career development and research aims.

#### UTAH CTSI PHR FOUNDATION FOR DISCOVERY

The Utah CTSI PHR Foundation provides methodological and data analytic support to investigators who aim to perform research seeking to improve the health of patient populations. The Foundation includes 6 integrated cores: Cancer Biostatistics Shared Resource; Health Economics; Qualitative; Survey Design and Measurement; Study Design and Biostatistics Center (SDBC); and Systematic Review. Members apply state of the art research methodology in their respective areas and are available to collaborate with you.

“SDBC is a great educational research to learn how to use biostatistics methods for research design and outcome analysis. RATS is very helpful for early grantsmanship development.”

--Yu Kuei "Alex" Lin, MD  
2018-2019 Scholar

We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the Utah CTSI PHR Foundation's [cores](#) and their [Research Process Overview](#). A firm understanding of these services will serve you well as an independent investigator. We cannot stress enough how much you will benefit by taking the initiative to engage with the PHR cores.

#### HOW IT WORKS

There are 3 steps you need to complete to access and utilize the PHR Foundation cores.

1. Review the SDBC [Get Started](#) and follow the suggestions outlined within

2. Complete the Utah CTSI online [ProTrack CTSI Resource & Information Request](#) form (this is required). **Important**, do not stop here, complete Step 3 below.
3. Once submitted, the system will automatically route you to the [PHR Request for Services](#) form. **Important**, on the PHR Request for Service form, make sure you identify yourself as a VPCAT Scholar when asked.

Upon receiving your request, PHR contacts VPCAT personnel to approve scheduling your consultation. Once approved, you will have consult with a Utah CTSI PHR Foundation member with the goal being to complete your Statistical Analysis Plan ([SAP](#)), which includes the estimated service costs. Remember, you **must** forward a copy of your SAP to VPCAT personnel as soon as possible.

Finally, throughout the year, we review your accumulating costs to verify they are reasonable. As necessary, if costs increase to a point we are unable to support, we will work with you and your department to find ways to split the costs.

### 3D. COURSE FEE SUPPORT: HOW AND WHY

While in the program, we strongly encourage you to take advantage of multiple career, leadership, and research developmental opportunities. Towards this end, **we provide up to \$625 per year to support course registration fees**. By taking advantage of this support and attending classes, you further your career development training and increasing your ability to achieve your goals.

For instance, you can use this \$625 support as an opportunity to take up to two University of Utah [Academic Noncredit Classes](#) per year at the ½ tuition reduced rate. Of **great relevance**, the **Utah CTSI Workforce Development (WD) Foundation for Discovery's Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) courses** are available as Academic Noncredit Classes. The MSCI degree program is an essential resource for junior faculty. It provides classroom and mentored research experience in clinical research, preparing its trainees for careers in clinical investigation, both in academic medicine and the allied health sciences. This program prepares trainees to be competitive investigators capable of gaining extramural funding for their clinical research projects. Therefore, its curriculum focuses on the theories, models, competencies, methods, and tools used by investigators who conduct bench-to-bedside and bedside-to-community translational research. To learn more about gaining your MSCI degree, see the [MSCI Handbook](#).

"I am a MSCI student and can attest that several courses I have enrolled in have directly impacted on my research. The most useful course thus far has been the Grant Writing Course as I had intense practice in drafting a grant from start to finish. Currently, I am taking Survey Design course which also is very useful for my project."

--Catherine J. Lee, MD  
2018-2019 Scholar

Another use could be if you decide to enroll in the full MSCI degree program, we can contribute \$625 per year towards your tuition.

### HOW IT WORKS

Below are the 3 steps you complete to utilize our support for Academic Noncredit classes. Once we receive your request, we will process payment and register you.

1. Find your course listed on the Academic Noncredit Classes [website](#)
2. Apply for the [Tuition Reduction](#) online [**important**, the class number must match the Academic Noncredit Class number you plan for us to support]
3. **IMPORTANT:** Directly call Continuing Education at 801-581-6461 to register informing them that your institution will be paying for the course directly [Do NOT pay with your credit card via their online system]
4. Email an official request to VPCAT personnel that includes:
  - a. Your full name,
  - b. Your Unid,
  - c. The complete class name w/link to the course,
  - d. The class dates, and
  - e. The class' registration cost at the ½ tuition reduction rate.

Below are the 5 steps you need to complete to have us contribute to your MSCI degree program tuition. Once we receive your request, we will process the support to offset your tuition cost.

1. Apply to the [Graduate School](#)
2. Apply to the MSCI degree program
3. Once accepted, apply for the [Tuition Reduction](#) online
4. Register for your credit courses
5. Email an official request to VPCAT personnel that includes your full name and Unid

**IMPORTANT!** Do **NOT** pay for course registration fees yourself. We are unable to provide personal reimbursements. To avoid any complications, we advise, prior to starting the above process, that you contact us directly.

### 3E. DATA SERVICE FEE SUPPORT

Whether you call it “big data,” “data-intensive research,” “data analytics,” or “data science,” research approaches and methods to extract meaning from large volume information to drive discoveries are ever expanding. However, without access to data, your chances to drive discovery is mute. Towards this end, our program, on a case-by-case basis, will support the costs of University of Utah data service fees not already supported by a funded project (*i.e.*, Utah Population Database ([UPDB](#)), Data Science Services ([DSS](#)), [DIGIT Lab](#), Wasatch Front Research Data Center ([WFRDC](#)), etc.).

## HOW IT WORKS

You will need to email an official request to VPCAT personnel that includes an abstract or description of the proposed work and an attached, official detailed estimate or invoice that itemizes expenses. Upon receipt, we will review the request within 1-2 weeks and notify you of our decision. All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

### 3F. UTAH CTSI K-CLUB

Hosted by the Utah CTSI WD Foundation, [K-Club](#) is an important research peer and senior forum for you. It provides you and other faculty participating in career development programs (e.g., K12, KL2, VPCAT) a venue to present your current research for peer and senior faculty feedback.

We ask that you utilize this opportunity to gain insights from peers, learn about research taking place on campus, formulate collaborations, and, when presenting, gain feedback in real-time. You can request to present at K-Club by contacting VPCAT personnel or the K-Club program contact.

“The CTSI K-Club is terrific for not only getting excellent feedback on my own proposal versions, but having the opportunity to see how other scholars successfully put together their winning proposals.”

--Karen C. Schliep, PhD, MSPH  
2017-2018 Scholar

### 3G. PEDIATRIC GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP (GWW)

Twice per year, the Department of Pediatrics hosts the Pediatric GWW. The workshop is a 2 ½-day program held at the Deer Valley Resort. It is designed to support faculty members in strengthening grant proposals to increase the likelihood of funding. Attendees receive individual mentoring sessions with an experienced and diverse team of senior faculty members, and key subject matter experts. If you are interested in applying or want to learn more, contact VPCAT personnel.

### 3H. UTAH CTSI PEER GRANT REVIEW (PGR) PROGRAM

You have an amazing opportunity to submit research proposals for pre-submission peer review three times per year through the Utah CTSI [PGR Program](#). In addition, we advise you to consider participating as a PGR Program Early Career Peer Reviewer. Not only is this an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience in grant review, it is an experience appropriate to include in your NIH biographical sketch. If you are interested in becoming reviewer, please contact the Utah CTSI program manager.

### 3I. VPCAT TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE NATIONAL CONFERENCE TRAVEL STIPEND

Our mission and vision greatly align with the Association for Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) annual Translational Science National Conference. Towards this end, we offer an annual [VPCAT Translational Science Travel Stipend](#) opportunity to current

VPCAT scholars with accepted abstracts. Through this travel stipend opportunity, you would receive \$2,500 support in travel expenses (e.g., registration fees and travel related costs). Up to 2 current VPCAT scholars with accepted ACTS Translational Science abstracts will be awarded. Please note that any additional remaining expenses above the \$2,500 will need to be supported by your department/division.

### 3J. SVPHS EDUCATION UNIT'S UNIQUE LEADERSHIP SERIES

In pursuit of national distinction, the SVPHS Education Unit, home of our program, aims to integrate, support, and create exceptional educational activities, programs, and strategies for faculty and learners across the University of Utah Health. Through their Leadership Program series, there are the following two additional unique leadership opportunities we strongly advise considering. Though you still need to attend the Leadership and Career Development series as stated in [Part 3B](#), if you take the opportunity to register for one or both of the following, we will support the additional registration fees automatically. Again, all you need to do is register and enter "VPCAT" under the providing chartfield option!

"Very helpful to learn more about myself and how I give and receive feedback, and the ways other give and receive feedback – learned more about myself and my interactions."

--Anthony J. Schaeffer, MD  
2017-2018 Scholar

#### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: BUILDING COMPETENCIES FOR LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

You will benefit from attending [Emotional Intelligence \(EI\)](#). EI refers to a distinct combination of emotional and social skills and competencies that influence your overall capacity to interact effectively with the demands of work and life. EI is a 1-day (6 hour) interactive session that includes the Emotional Quotient Inventory assessment. You will also have the opportunity to schedule an individual debrief and coaching session.

#### RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (RLI)

You will receive multiple benefits from registering and attending the [RLI](#), which is a 3-month cohort-based learning collaborative designed to develop relational competencies in self-management, fostering teamwork, coaching and mentoring others, and accelerating change. A multi-disciplinary, multi-generational training model with foundations in enhancing teamwork, communities, and relationships serves as the course foundation. You will receive hands-on training from a national cohort of experienced presenters and technical resources.

### 3K. FEDERAL INSTITUTIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT K PROGRAMS

The University of Utah is home to multiple federal institutional career development K programs and other early stage investigator opportunities. It may be in your interest to look further into the following programs to determine your eligibility.



1. Utah Women's Reproductive Health Research ([WRHR](#)) K12 Program
2. Utah [CTSI KL2](#) Mentored Career Development Scholars Program

### 3L. OTHER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The importance of taking part in and being seen by your scientific community is critical. This is the same for your academic community. Taking advantage of attending and participating the multiple opportunities at the University of Utah is to your benefit. The following are just a few opportunities that we advise you to participate in during your program tenure.

1. Utah CTSI annual Translational Research Trainee Symposium ([link](#))
2. Clinical Research and Methods ([CRAM](#)) Lunch and Seminars
3. Patient Voice ([link](#))
4. VPR Research Education ([REd](#)) PI Faculty Portal Courses Offerings ([link](#))
  - a. Rigor, Transparency and Reproducibility in Research ([link](#))
  - b. Research Data Management and Sharing ([link](#))
5. VPR REd Grant Writing Portal ([link](#))
6. [E<sup>3</sup>](#): Ethics, Education, and Engagement
7. Utah CTSI Translational Research in Progress ([link](#))
8. Utah CTSI Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Seminars ([link](#))
9. Utah CTSI K to Research Success Program: R01 Writing Group ([link](#))
10. The University of Utah Grant Writing Coaching Groups via NRMN ([link](#))
11. Research Mentor Training ([link](#))

## PART 4: EXTENSIONS AND TRANSITIONS POLICY AND PROCESSES

### 4A. LEAVE EXTENSIONS

We want you to take advantage of your full 2-year tenure in the program. If you take any extended leave, including FMLA, Leave of Absence, parental, or military leave, you can request a program extension by emailing VPCAT personnel your request. Though annual reminder notices are sent in September, you can request your extension earlier.

Upon receipt of your request, the VPCAT Director will contact your Dean/Department Chair to request his/her approval of your extension and his/her confirmation that your 30% dedicated time for research will continue for the duration of your extension. Upon their approval, he will contact your VPCAT senior mentor to request his/her approval of providing continued mentorship over the duration of the request. You will be notified of your request's status as soon as possible.

## 4B. DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE SUPPORT EXTENSIONS

Three to four months prior to the end of your tenure, the VPCAT Director will send an email to remind you of the process to request extensions to either/both VPCAT support for methodological and data analytic support (aka PHR Usage) and course fees. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

You must include in your request specific details, including proposed cost estimates and detailed description of need. Your request will be considered by the VPCAT Director and, generally within 1-2 weeks, you will be notified of your request's status.

## 4C. SCIENTIFIC MENTOR TRANSITION

It is important to keep us informed on the status of your primary and other scientific mentors. While in the program, if you change scientific mentor(s) we require you to follow the [Scientific Mentor Change Instructions](#), emailing us the requested documentation as soon as possible. This will include an updated Scientific Mentoring Plan, your new mentor(s) NIH biographical sketch, and a signed [Scientific Mentor Contract Addendum](#) per new mentor. Please contact us if you have questions.

## PART 5: PRE-AWARD AND GRANT MANAGEMENT MENTORSHIP

You will be better prepared to excel as independent principal investigator by utilizing the full breath of VPCAT and the [Pre-Award & Grant Management Mentorship](#) opportunities, as shown in this [11 minute video clip](#).

Overall, the Pre-Award & Grant Management Mentorship arm of the program aims to provide you expanded knowledge and new tools to submit and manage your grants successfully. This is accomplished via a combination of personal and didactic mentorship. Working in conjunction with your division/department/college pre-award and financial support team members, you will gain guidance and knowledge across 5 key areas.

“Erin has served (and I hope will continue to serve into the foreseeable future) as a truly remarkable staff mentor to junior faculty across the Health Sciences Center. She is the ‘queen bee’ for the VPCAT Scholars and has helped launch innumerable careers, particularly with individual K-awards. She has been a great asset for many of our junior faculty (and for some of us not-so-junior faculty as well).”

—Michael W. Varner, MD  
VPCAT Senior Mentor

## 5A. GRANT EDITING AND/OR FORMATTING REVIEW OPPORTUNITY ([GEFRO](#))

You may know that rigorous grant review prior to the submission of a proposal to a funding agency is an essential component of successful applications. During 3 annual, 4-6 week cycles, you and other current and past scholars may reserve up to two days [a day equates to 8 hours of time] for the VPCAT Research Manager to complete pre-submission edits, formatting, and/or general documentation review for either new or resubmission applications.

By utilizing this opportunity, you gain:

1. an outside perspective on application organization to increase overall content impact;
2. thorough and impartial feedback on continuity, readability, and thematic presentation; and
3. tips to enhance overall grantsmanship.

The 2-year GEFRO schedule, including announcement and reservation periods, is posted [online](#). Reservations are based on a first come first serve basis and, during high demand cycles, priority is given to current scholars.

“Wow, just wow and thank you to Erin. She made the narrative portion of my K01 clean, easy to read, beautiful tables, and helped me figure out how to get the training plan and research strategy down to 12 pages. She also gave me direction on the biosketch, which has always been an awful chore for me. Thank you!”

--*Jacqueline L. Eaton, MS, PhD*  
2018-2019 Scholar

## 5B. INITIAL GRANT SUBMISSION ([IGS](#)) CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITY

Though not always easy to do, using an organized, collaborative approach for your grant submission is a critical. Towards this end, you and other current and past scholars can take advantage of the IGS Consultation Opportunity.

When you, ideally, request and attend an initial consult at least 3 months prior to your grant deadline, you take part in a collaborative forum where you, your pre-award staff member, and the VPCAT Research Manager discuss and plan for your upcoming submission. You receive tailored, technical walkthrough of upcoming internal and external submission requirements. Based on your preferences, the VPCAT Research Manager will provide you access to a tailored VPCAT Grant Preparation Walkthrough resource, which is a structured file system organized to walk you through every section of your application with examples, templates, and training modules (see [video](#)).

“This was said at our capstone event, but I’ll say it again – Erin Wachs was incredibly helpful!”

--*Megan E. Vanneman, PhD, MPH*  
2017-2018 Scholar

“Erin was instrumental in helping me prepare and submit my AATS Grant (got awarded funding)!”

--*Jason P. Glotzbach, MD*  
2018-2019 Scholar

By utilizing this opportunity, you are able to:

1. actively engage in and learn about department's pre-award requirements, grant expectations, and available support personnel and resources;
2. set reasonable writing, editing, and section preparation timelines;
3. organize application sections concisely and consistently to meet the agency's "big picture;"
4. have decreased levels of stress throughout the submission period; and
5. develop trusting relationships with your pre-award staff to enhance future submissions.

## 5C. RESEARCH SPECIFIC EDUCATION, MENTORSHIP, & TRAINING

"You don't know what you don't know" is a statement you will hear a lot as a scholar. It is why, as a scholar, you will have access to multiple tools and resources to better prepare you for all points of the grant's life cycle.

Via the VPCAT Pulse Team Site ([Part 3A](#)), managed by the VPCAT Research Manager, you have access to pre- and post-award tools to assist in better communication, goal setting, and management. These tools can help you reduce administrative burden, improve overall project outcomes, and limit post-award errors. Moreover, the VPCAT Research Manager leads the majority of the curriculum courses focused on grant writing and management ensuring you receive consistent and up to date details.

"Hands down [Erin] is the best resource at the University of Utah on grant writing for trainees (K01, K08, etc.). She is extremely knowledgeable and thorough on all aspects of a grant submission and spends substantial time making significant edits to grants. She certainly helped turn my grant into a fundable score. [...] staff are essential mentors for junior faculty aiming to develop into independent investigators. We are kidding ourselves if we think as a PI or a senior investigator we know everything or have the time to explain everything about a grant submission. Erin and Laura have been invaluable to my success."

--Robert A. Campbell, PhD  
2018-2019 Scholar

## 5D. INFORMATION AND RESOURCE FACILITATION

We believe an attribute of a successful independent investigator is one who is well informed. Therefore, we provide you multiple resources via the VPCAT Opportunities [websites](#). Here you can always find up-to-date information on career development resources, internal and external funding opportunity announcements, and FAQs to your most common questions.

In addition, by signing up for the [VPCAT Research Newsfeed](#) announcements, you gain information around policy updates, early-stage investigator applicable resources, noteworthy research, and more!

## 5E. DATA AND VICTORIES

Data is essential and dissemination of program results is critical to maintain credibility and negotiate future growth. This is no different for you, an early stage investigator. Disseminating your progress, success, and status is important. Annually, the VPCAT Research Manager tracks your grant submissions and status, publications, honors, nominations, and leadership positions. However, we strongly encourage you to email us, right away, with updates on recent victories because every month we release the [VPCAT Victories Newsletter](#).

This newsletter is widely disseminated to University of Utah and Intermountain Healthcare senior leaders as well as to University of Utah college and research deans, department chairs, and all past and current scholars. Further, because it is so easy to [subscribe](#), we have multiple researchers and administrators across campus receiving this news. So, tell your friends and have them subscribe to celebrate with you and VPCAT!

## PART 6: “PAYING IT FORWARD” INITIATIVE

### 6A. WHAT IT MEANS TO US

In the VPCAT Program, we subscribe to the ethos “*once a VPCAT Scholar, always a VPCAT Scholar.*” You will carry the title of “VPCAT Scholar” with you throughout your career. We want you to be proud of that and proud of the program that you participated in.

As a program, we want to ensure that being a scholar identifies a researcher who is a leader in their field because of the quality training and mentorship received during their time in VPCAT. Because of this, we strive to maintain the highest standards in our mentoring, curriculum, and research and grants mentorship.

We believe alumni VPCAT scholars are a key component in achieving this goal. We rely on our alumni scholars to:

“VPCAT training program resources are clearly a valuable asset.”

–NINDS K23 Reviewer #4

“[...] including the exceptional junior clinical faculty development program (VPCAT) [...] the VPCAT program has a strong training record and exceptional outcomes.”

–NCI K12 Reviewer #1

1. Serve as Peer Mentor support for current scholars through involvement in curricular courses;
2. Be available to network with current scholars who may have similar research interests;
3. Participate in panels during the VPCAT Orientation, as well as facilitating other curricular sessions; and
4. Participate on the VPCAT Alumni Advisory Board.

“He was competitively-selected by the University of Utah as a Vice President’s Clinical & Translational (VPCAT) Scholar, a highly prestigious position and award.”

--NIGMS K23 Reviewer #1

VPCAT continues to send all scholars information on training and grant opportunities, the VPCAT Victories Newsletter, and information on our curricular sessions, which *they are welcome to attend*. Our program is here to help and serve as a signpost for resources to which our graduated scholars can always return.

We are always very grateful for the support of our scholars and hope that you will continue to be a part of this program, even after you have graduated!

## **6B. ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD (AAB)**

Established in 2019, the VPCAT AAB improves our program and generates a stronger sense of community. The AAB members are graduated VPCAT scholars who are:

1. Nominated due to their excellence in leadership, knowledge, and skillset;
2. Funded, mid-career investigators experienced in grant submission and management;
3. Familiar with institutional resources; and
4. Near peers who have firsthand knowledge of junior faculty experiences, demands, and responsibilities

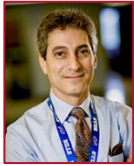
Our honored AAB members are nominated to serve a 3-year term in which time they participate in quarterly meetings to provide critical guidance, feedback, and new ideas to enhance the impact and scope of the program.

In addition, they serve as facilitators for VPCAT’s peer focused curriculum courses providing opportunities for scholars to learn best practices and mentorship from their peers and colleagues. Of great import, the members contribute to the VPCAT program selection process by serving as essential applicant reviewers.

The VPCAT AAB is the quintessential definition of “Paying it Forward.” We hope to see you join the AAB in the future!

## PART 7: PROGRAM CONTACTS

### 7A. VPCAT PERSONNEL



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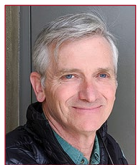
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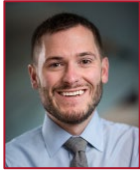
## 7C. VPCAT ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD (AAB) MEMBERS



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