VPCAT Scholar Handbook

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

Through the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Education Unit, the VPCAT 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 details regarding the VPCAT Program are described in this Handbook.

We proudly welcome you!
A. Matrix Mentoring Model

The Matrix Mentoring Model supports you with a holistic framework that includes five 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.

Consider the members of your mentoring matrix as you prepare your goals, and how they can best be utilized to ensure your ultimate success.

B. Mentoring Roles & Scholar Responsibilities

1. Self-Mentorship

Role: 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, expounds 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.
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.

2. VPCAT Senior Mentorship

Role: You are assigned a senior mentor. 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 Research Scholars 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.

Though your VPCAT Initial Team Meeting is scheduled by the VPCAT Program Coordinator, you are responsible to schedule your Mid- and Final Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings prior to completing your reports (see Section 3. Meetings & Reports).

3. Scientific Mentorship

Role: A scientific mentor(s) serves 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 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 the plan (see Section 3.D for further information regarding Scientific Mentors).

4. Peer Mentorship

Role: 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 throughout your time in the program and beyond. Peer discussion courses are scheduled as part of the curriculum and social networking opportunities for current and graduated scholars will be offered.
5. Staff Mentorship

Role: Staff mentors include staff and administrators within the program (see Section 7. Program Contacts); 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.

3. Meetings & Reports

A. 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 component of the Self-Mentorship component of the Matrix Mentoring Model as well.

You will start your initial VS-CDP during the VPCAT Orientation. A complete initial draft of your VS-CDP is required no later than two weeks before your initial meeting. Further, you must complete and submit your updated VS-CDP as part of your mid- and final reports.

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.

B. Meetings with VPCAT Senior Mentors

You are required to meet with your VPCAT senior mentor at least three times during your 2-year program duration. However, we strongly encourage you to meet more than the minimum and advise scheduled, regular monthly or quarterly meetings during your program tenure.

- VPCAT Initial Team Meeting: The VPCAT Program Coordinator will arrange this meeting. It will include you, your scientific mentor(s), senior mentor, VPCAT staff, and, in some instances, the VPCAT Director. This meeting will take place within the first three months of the program. The objective of the initial meeting is to discuss your VPCAT Scholar Career Development Plan (VS-CDP) (see Section 3.A) and how mentors and staff can assist you in meeting your SMART goals. You are required to complete your VS-CDP prior to the meeting.
VPCAT Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings

- **Mid Program**: This meeting is held at the 1-year mark to support the completion of your required VPCAT Mid-Program Report (see Section 3.C). This meeting will largely focus on your progress towards meeting your VS-CDP SMART goals, preparation of your VPCAT progress report, and, as necessary, discussion on revising goals to better align with your career trajectory. Possible discussion points could include how your grant writing is evolving, where you stand in preparation of or submitting publications, etc.

- **Final Program**: This meeting is held at the end of your VPCAT tenure to support the completion of your required VPCAT Final Program Report (see Section 3.C). The discussion should focus on the VS-CDP goals you achieved during your VPCAT tenure. Possible discussion points could include: where you are with your research, publications, and career advancement, as well as your transition plan to ensure you will have access to the support and resources necessary to continue to succeed.

You are responsible for scheduling these meetings with your VPCAT senior mentor. Generally, this meeting will only involve you and your senior mentor; however, scientific mentor(s) can be invited to attend as you feel is appropriate.

C. Evaluations and Progress Reports

You are required to complete the VPCAT Scholar Mid-Program Report, VPCAT Scholar Final Program Report, and the VPCAT Scholar Self-Assessment.

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.

These reports each have four components:

1. VS-CDP with career timeline
2. VPCAT Written Progress Report with your updated CV
3. VPCAT Scholar Self-Assessment
4. VPCAT Program Evaluation

Instructions for the report you need to complete will be sent to you at least one month before your report is due.

This process was created to not only support your self-reflection on your growth and advancement over the duration of the program, but to assist you in reassessing your professional priorities and goals as well. Further, report deadlines are selected to align with your required mid and final VPCAT Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings (see Section 3.B). 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.

These reports are used to determine your progress, as well as how you perceive the success of your VPCAT senior mentor relationship. We utilize your VS-CDP and CV to track your achievements, including meeting planned goals related to career advancement, publications, grant submissions, and presentations.
Report Submissions Process

At least one month before the deadline, the VPCAT Program Coordinator will email you and your senior mentor the report forms and instructions. Both you and your senior mentor will complete your respective reports and provide all additional requested documentation (e.g., updated CV, written reports, etc.). You are required to have completed reports returned, via email, to the VPCAT Program Coordinator by the stipulated deadline. Further, your VPCAT senior mentor will submit their mentor reports and evaluation forms at the same time. Copies of the mentor reports will be sent to you.

Six-Month Check-In Evaluations

In 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.

D. Meetings with Scientific Mentor(s)

Meetings with your scientific mentor(s) should take place as outlined in your mentoring plan. We understand that your scientific mentorship plan may change as you progress through the program. If this becomes the case, we require that you meet with your scientific mentor(s) as outlined in the new plan. You are responsible for organizing all meetings with your scientific mentor(s).

Apart from the VPCAT Initial Team Meeting, your scientific mentor(s) are not required to attend any VPCAT senior mentor or curricular meetings. They are, however, welcome to attend any meetings that you and/or your VPCAT senior mentor may feel would be beneficial for them.

Transition to a New Scientific Mentor

If you change scientific mentor(s) during your tenure in the VPCAT Program, you are required to inform the VPCAT Program Coordinator via email as soon as possible. Instructions on how to complete these documents and the deadline to return them will be sent to you by the VPCAT Program Coordinator upon notification. This will include the submission of an updated ½-page scientific mentoring plan and your new scientific mentor(s) biographical sketch that adheres to the VPCAT Request for Application instructions, as well as a VPCAT Scientific Mentor Contract Precis. These documents assist us in supporting you and your new scientific mentor(s) as you begin your new mentoring relationship.

4. Attendance & Curriculum Requirements

A. Attendance Requirements

Along with mandatory attendance at Orientation, we require you to set aside the 2nd and 4th 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. You will receive an Outlook calendar invitation for all course dates that includes a copy of the full course schedule. In addition, a course schedule will be given to you at Orientation and sent to you at the beginning of each year. A sign-in
sheet will accompany each course, which is used to assess and evaluate attendance, as well as monitor and track attendance throughout the program. You are required to sign-in for each course.

B. Curriculum 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, didactic courses such as, *Silly Humans! Feasibility is a Fundamental of Grant’s Human Subject Sections* and *Important, Yet Often Overlooked: Ancillary Grant Sections*, provides 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 *Facilitating a Meeting* and *HR 101* courses provide you the necessary knowledge and tools 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 the *Leadership I: Foundations in Leadership* and *Leadership II: Applied Techniques and Practices* seminars offered through the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Education Unit and led by Mary Anne Berzins, the Assistant Vice President of Workforce Planning for Human Resources. **You are required to participate** in both seminars by the end of the program period. Whether during year 1 or 2, you will gain greatly from these interactive and experiential seminars that are based on self-assessments you take prior to the seminar. We support the *Leadership I* and *II* registration fees automatically, so all you need to do is register!
Course content is included in your yearly curriculum schedule. Any questions regarding the curriculum should be directed to the VPCAT Program Coordinator.

C. VPCAT Extended Leave Policy

If you take any extended leave, including FMLA, Leave of Absence (LOA), parental, or military leave, you can request a program extension by emailing the VPCAT Program Coordinator with the length of your leave. Once your request is received, the VPCAT Program 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. You will, upon approval, be notified of your new program end date.

Annual notices to request extensions are sent to current scholars every September.

5. Resources for VPCAT Scholars

A. Utah Center for Clinical and Translational Science (Utah CCTS)

Utah CCTS Population Health Research (PHR) Foundation for Discovery

The Utah CCTS 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 five integrated cores: Cancer Biostatistics (CB) Shared Resource, Qualitative, Survey and Measurement (QSM) Core, Health Economics Core, Study Design and Biostatistics Center (SDBC), and the Systematic Review Core (see here). Members within each core apply state of the art research methodology in their respective areas and are available to collaborate with clinical and translational researchers at the University of Utah and partner institutions.

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, we support 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.

To access these services, you must complete the Utah CCTS online ProTrack CCTS Resource and Information Request form. Once submitted, the system will automatically route you to the PHR Request for Services form. On the PHR Request for Service form, make sure you identify yourself as a VPCAT Scholar when asked.

Your first meeting with a Utah CCTS PHR Foundation staff member shall be a consultation visit, the goal of which is to produce a service cost estimate. The PHR Foundation will notify us of new scholar requests along with the associated cost estimates. We will then review the estimate to assess the feasibility of supporting all or part of the costs based on the cumulative PHR Foundation support you will receive during the calendar year. If we can feasibly cover only part of the cost, then we will work with you and your department to find ways to split the costs.
On a case-by-case basis, the program will consider supporting PHR Foundation service fees beyond the typical per-scholar limit. In these instances, scholars must submit a formal email request to the VPCAT Program Coordinator that includes both the proposed budget estimate and a one-page research abstract outlining objectives. All requests will be considered and decision outcomes will be returned as quickly as possible (generally within 1-2 weeks of the request).

We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the Utah CCTS PHR Foundation’s Cores as much as possible. A firm understanding of these services will serve you well as an independent investigator. The Utah CCTS PHR Foundation’s Core descriptions can be found on their website and the Research Process Overview here. We highly recommend reading through steps 1-5 of the Research Process Overview, along with the tips and resources included in each step.

**Utah CCTS Workforce Development Foundation’s K-Club**

The Utah CCTS Workforce Development Foundation hosts K-Club for junior faculty participating in career development programs (e.g., K12, KL2, VPCAT) as a venue to present their current research for peer and senior faculty feedback. K-Club provides you opportunities to gain insights from peers, learn about research taking place on campus, formulate collaborations, and, if presenting, gain feedback in real-time. We would encourage you sign up to present as you are preparing grant proposals.

K-Club sessions are announced via the VPCAT Research Newsfeed, as well as the CCTS feeds. Though not required, we expect scholars to attend as many as they are able. To present your proposed aims at K-Club, please contact the VPCAT Program Coordinator.

**Utah CCTS Peer Grant Review (PGR) Program**

Through the Utah CCTS PGR Program, you can submit research proposals for pre-submission peer review three times per year. The deadline, eligibility, and submission requirements are located on their webpage. In addition, you can participate 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 CCTS Program Manager.

**B. Institutional Career Development Programs**

University of Utah Health, with its combined colleges and schools, has actively invested in enhancing institutional career development programs that support a range of junior faculty members across multiple disciplines. The VPCAT Program partners with several colleges, schools, and organizations across campus and with Intermountain Healthcare to contribute to a sustainable, innovative, and collaborative academic environment.

This is especially true for the following programs:

- The Utah Women’s Reproductive Health Research (WRHR) K12 Program aims to increase the quantity and augment the skill sets of University of Utah Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology investigators through a mentored research and career development experience. WRHR seeks to advance research on and produce meaningful improvements in women’s reproductive health.

- The Utah Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) K12 Program aims to increase the number of junior faculty investigators from the University of Utah who will develop successful independent scientific careers as principal investigators. This program achieves its goals through a mentored research and career development experience. Successful
scholars will be engaged in fundable interdisciplinary research relevant to women’s health and sex/gender influences on health and disease.

- The Utah CCTS KL2 Mentored Career Development Scholars Program offers training for mentored research and career development support for clinical junior investigators. Its goal is to stimulate innovative research initiatives and career development. The KL2 program is tailored to the research and career development needs of each scholar and offers didactic education, mentored research, interdisciplinary works-in-progress seminars, and team-building experiences.

C. Extra-Curricular Learning Opportunities

We afford you the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular institutional program in addition to department Grand Rounds and Research in Progress sessions. During each year of the program, you have the option to take up to two courses through the Utah CCTS Workforce Development’s Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) degree program and one Grant Writing Academy Workshop and one CCTS Grant Writers Seminar and Workshop (GWSW) training session. Fees associated with these opportunities are supported by the VPCAT Program. Contact the VPCAT Program Coordinator to register for these opportunities.

Grant Writing Academy (GWA) Workshops

The University of Utah Vice President for Research (VPR) Research Education Program sponsors the GWA Workshops, which are offered twice per year—one in spring and once in fall. GWA Workshop is a 2 ½-day program, held at the Deer Valley Resort, designed to support University faculty members in strengthening grant proposals to increase the likelihood of funding.

This workshop provides individual mentoring sessions with an experienced and diverse team of senior faculty members, key subject matter experts, and funding agency representatives (as available). You will receive direct feedback on grant proposals; attend group training activities; and have an opportunity to network with peers from across the University. Information on registering for workshops will be emailed to you as they become available.

Utah CCTS Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) Degree Program Courses

The MSCI degree program, sponsored by the Utah CCTS Workforce Development Foundation, 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. The curriculum of the MSCI focuses on the theories, models, competencies, methods, and tools used by investigators who conduct bench-to-bedside and bedside-to-community translational research.

These courses are offered as extra-curricular learning opportunities and can be used as part of your career development training. We offer financial support for these courses as follows:

If you are not completing a full MSCI degree:

We support the cost of up to two MSCI courses per year through Continuing Education at a University of Utah resident faculty reduced tuition benefit per year.
If you do not qualify for the reduced tuition benefit (i.e., have been a faculty member at the University for less than one year), we will support the cost of each MSCI course up to the reduced tuition benefit rate. You may need to seek funding for the remaining course fees from other sources.

Please contact the VPCAT Program Coordinator for questions regarding these courses. We will consider all circumstances on a case-by-case basis and will provide support as best we can.

To register for these courses, you must:
- Select and register for the course(s) you want via the Continuing Education website.
- Complete the reduced tuition benefit form, which takes 5-7 minutes to complete.
- Send an email to the VPCAT Program Coordinator with the following information:
  - The course number, title, the term the course is being taught, and the instructor for the course(s) you would like to take.
  - A PDF copy of your faculty tuition discount approval form (to acquire this form, follow the steps below under “Completing the Reduced Tuition Benefit Form”).

Completing the Reduced Tuition Benefit Form:
- To complete the HR Faculty Tuition Form, please visit the HR benefits website.
  - You will need to enter your UNID and password to access this tuition form.
- Fill in the 3 boxes of requested information and click on submit
  - Note: In the dropdown box for “Course Type” on this form, please choose “Lifelong Learning, AOCE, Continuing Education Courses”
- On completion of this form, you will receive an e-mail from HR with a “Receipt of Tuition Reduction” attached to it.
- You will need to send a PDF version of this receipt along with your chosen course information via e-mail to the VPCAT Program Coordinator (as requested in the process above).

If you are completing a full MSCI Degree:

We will support one full-credit course at the University of Utah resident reduced tuition benefit rate per year, each year that you are in the program. You will register for the course as you normally would, and will need to let the VPCAT Program Coordinator know:

- When you are registering for courses
- When tuition is due

The VPCAT Program Coordinator will then organize payment of course tuition.

If you are interested in taking the full MSCI degree, please speak to your VPCAT senior mentor. They will serve as a conduit to put you in touch with the resources and information required to consider or begin the MSCI degree program.

Utah CCTS Grant Writers Seminars and Workshops (GWSW) Training Sessions

Each year, the Utah CCTS sponsors 1-2 GWSW Training Sessions focused on helping you write more competitive grant proposals. These sessions emphasize idea development, identification of the most appropriate granting agency, grantsmanship, and strategies that will help you present your case to reviewers. Information on registering for these workshops will be emailed to you as they become available.
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. For further details and application instructions, please see our website [here](#).

Additional Learning Opportunities

You are encouraged to take part in additional monthly learning opportunities available on campus throughout the year, including:

- **The Clinical Research and Methods (CRAM) Lunch and Seminars** sponsored by the Center of Excellence in Women’s Health, aims to foster communication between members of the clinical research community, aid beginning level clinical investigators in developing and executing research, and provide a forum for exploring controversies in clinical research.

- **The Dr. Charles James Nabors, PhD Conference Series (Patient Voice Series)**, sponsored by the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion, showcases patient voices from various communities and their thoughts on how to improve health care equity. Each month’s presentation focuses on a different community. CME credit is available for this series.

- **The VPR Research Administration Training Series (RATS)**, sponsored by the Vice President for Research Education Office, provides professional development opportunities for all faculty, staff, postdocs, students, and members of the University research community in order to learn, develop and improve your job skills and performance, maintain an understanding of best practices and current methodologies, meet compliance requirements and standards for the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), earn Certificates of Achievement and professional association continuing education units and accreditation, and more.

- **Emotional Intelligence (EI): Building Competencies for Leadership Effectiveness** refers to a distinct combination of emotional and social skills and competencies that influence our overall capacity to interact effectively with the demands of work and life. EI is a one day (6 hour) interactive session that includes the Emotional Quotient Inventory assessment. Participants will also have the opportunity to schedule an individual debrief and coaching session. We will cover the cost for scholars to attend this session. You will still need to attend both Leadership I and II if you choose to take this workshop.

- **Relational Leadership Initiative (RLI)** 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. We will cover the cost of your attendance at this session if you choose to attend. You are still required to attend Leadership I and II if you attend this initiative.
The objective of the Pre-award & Grant Management Mentorship arm of the program is to provide you knowledge and tools to submit and manage your grant successfully. This is accomplished via a combination of personal and didactic mentorship.

In conjunction with your division/department/college pre-award and financial support team members, the VPCAT Research Manager provides guidance and knowledge to you through **four key capacities**.

1. **Grant Editing and/or Formatting Review Opportunity (GEFRO)**

   Rigorous grant review prior to the submission of a proposal to a funding agency is an essential component of successful applications. During three annual, 4-6 week cycles, 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. This review:

   - Provides you with an outside perspective on application organization that could increase overall content impact.
   - Affords you an opportunity to incorporate feedback on continuity, readability, and thematic presentation.
   - Encourages idea generation.
   - Serves as a chance for you to receive tips to enhance overall grantsmanship.

2. **Initial Grant Submission (IGS) Consultation Opportunity**

   An important aspect of successful grant submissions is utilizing an organized, collaborative approach. Those that utilize a team approach in their grant submission are more likely to:

   - Actively engage in and learn about department’s pre-award requirements, grant expectations, and available support personnel and resources.
   - Set reasonable writing, editing, and section preparation timelines.
   - Organize application sections concisely and consistently to meet the agency’s “big picture.”
   - Have decreased levels of stress throughout the submission period.
   - Develop trusting relationships with your pre-award staff to enhance future submissions.

   The VPCAT Research Manager provides team consultation between you, your pre-award administrator, and (if applicable) your accountant for upcoming grant submissions when you:

   - Request a team consultation at least 3 months prior to submission (shorter time frames are considered case by case).
   - Complete and return the VPCAT IGS Consultation Request Form.
   - Prepare to discuss the submission prior to your meeting (e.g., review FOA, criteria, etc.).

3. **Research Specific Education, Mentorship, & Training Lead**

   Access to post-award tools encouraging better communication, goal setting, and post-award management can reduce administrative burden, improve overall project outcomes, and limit post-award errors. To meet this need, the VPCAT Research Manager leads a majority of the curriculum courses focused on grant writing and management, as well as maintains multiple resources via the **VPCAT Pulse Team Site**. Through these educational opportunities, you receive instructions to
prepare you to submit and manage your grant applications and awards at all stages of the grant life cycle.

4. **Information and Resources Facilitator**

An attribute of a successful independent investigator is one who is well informed. Via the Pulse [VPCAT Research Newsfeed](#) organized and managed by the VPCAT Research Manager, you will receive up-to-date information on funding opportunity announcements (FOAs), policy updates, early-stage investigator applicable resources, access to the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences Education Unit [Grant Repository](#), and more.

6. **“Paying It Forward” Initiative**

**What We Mean By “Paying It Forward”**

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.

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

- Serve as Peer Mentor support for current scholars through involvement in curricular courses
- Be available to network with current scholars who may have similar research interests
- Participate in panels during the VPCAT Orientation, as well as facilitating other curricular or event sessions
- Participate on the VPCAT Alumni Advisory Committee

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!

“Remember, once a VPCAT Scholar, always a VPCAT Scholar!”

--Michael Rubin, MD, PhD, MS Director, VPCAT Program
7. Program Contacts

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B. VPCAT Senior Mentor E-Mails

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