Welcome!
VPCAT PROGRAM PERSONNEL

• Michael A. Rubin, MD, PhD, MS
  – VPCAT Director
• Kim Clark
  – Director, SVPHS Education Unit
• Erin Wachs
  – Research Manager
VPCAT RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

• Designed to offer intensive mentorship and support to early-stage faculty members engaged in clinical and translational research in transitioning to accomplished, funded, independent principal investigators
VPCAT RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

• Provides mentorship and training focused around three key themes...

Career Development

Grant Writing

Leadership
VPCAT OBJECTIVES

• Provide scholars with:
  – Formal and informal mentoring
  – Structured curriculum focused on leadership competencies and essential knowledge and practical skills to be an effective clinical and translational researcher
  – Access to resources to facilitate appropriate study design, collection of pilot data, and preparation and submission of competitive grants
VPCAT SCHOLARS RECEIVE

• Structured twice monthly curricular sessions
  – SVPHS Education Unit’s Leadership & Career Development Sessions
• Resources through Utah CCTS
  – Population Health Research Foundation
  – Workforce Development Foundation
• Grant Writing Academy Workshops
• Pre-award and Grant Management Support
WE ROCKED IN 2020!

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

VPCAT Scholars Research Funding Tops $159 Million

Contributing to the overall success of the University’s mission, alumni and current VPCAT scholars have surpassed $159 million in University research funding.

12 Year Impact

- $159M in total awarded new proposals
- 609 total new proposals funded
- $28M in total indirects awarded

Thanks to the efforts and quality of our VPCAT staff, mentors, and faculty, the program continues to provide excellent value to our scholars and our institution.

U of U return on investment from FY2013-21
Matrix Mentoring Model

- A holistic framework that includes 5 levels of mentorship
- These types of mentorship are synergistic
- Create an environment that fosters accountability, communication, and skills development to develop empowered PIs

SENIOR MENTORS

- Support your career success
- Act as an advisor and advocate
  - Help you understand the rules of the game
  - Help understand and set goals and direction
  - Promote you to others, find opportunities
  - Build your network
  - Think strategically
- Facilitate accountability
ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

• Established in 2019 to enhance the program and generate a stronger sense of community

• AAB Members are
  – Nominated due to their excellence in leadership, institutional knowledge, and expanded grantsmanship
  – Alumni VPCAT scholars
  – Funded, mid-career investigators experienced in grant submission and management
  – Familiar with institutional resources
  – Near peers who have firsthand knowledge of junior faculty experiences, demands, and responsibilities
The Application
GETTING STARTED

• Review the information located on the VPCAT How to Apply web page

• Verify that:
  – You meet the eligibility criteria
  – You, your mentor(s), and institution can fulfill the program requirements

2022 VPCAT Scholar Cohort RFA Documents
• Applicant Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements
• Scientific Mentor(s) Requirements and Expectations
• Request for Application (RFA) – Instructions
• VPCAT Senior Mentor Selection Form
• Application Review Criteria
• VPCAT Workshop Presentation (available 9/6/21)

Examples of Funded VPCAT Applications & Summary Statements
• Hediyeh Baradaran, MD [Full Application | Summary Statement]
• Michelle P. Debbink, MD, PhD [Full Application | Summary Statement]
• Skyler B. Johnson, MD [Full Application | Summary Statement]
• Sabrina Malone-Jenkins, MD [Full Application | Summary Statement]
• Lorissa A. McGarrity, PhD [Full Application | Summary Statement]
• Kevin S. Shah, MD [Full Application | Summary Statement]

Associated VPCAT Program Documents
• VPCAT Scholar Handbook
• VPCAT Research Scholars Program Overview
• VPCAT Scholar Career Development Plan (Y6-CDP)
• Scholar Self Assessment Form
• Mid-Program Report Instructions
• Mid-Program Evaluation Form
• Final Program Report Instructions
• Final Program Evaluation Form
--- 2022 Applicant Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements ---

The VPCAT Research Scholars Program is a competitive, 2-year program. To determine your eligibility, we recommend that you review and understand the outlined eligibility criteria and program requirements below. If you answer NO to any of the questions below, you may not be eligible to apply.

Please address any specific questions to the VPCAT Research Manager, Erin Wachs.

**Applicant Eligibility Criteria**

- Are you a faculty member from an approved participating School, College, or Institution, which includes the Colleges of Health, Mines & Earth Sciences, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Social & Behavioral Science; Schools of Dentistry and Medicine; and Intermountain Healthcare? If not, review the Overview of Formal Participation in the VPCAT Program and email questions about how your School, College, or Institution can participate to Erin Wachs.

- Yes □ No □

- Does your research fall within the clinical & translational science research spectrum (ID-T4)?

- Yes □ No □

- Do you have a commitment from your Dean and/or Chair that you will be able to dedicate a minimum of 30% FTE (3.60 person months) to the development of your career and research program during the 2-year program period?

- Yes □ No □

- Have you earned a MD, PhD, DO, PharmD, DNP, DNS, an equivalent doctoral level health science degree, or an equivalent doctoral level degree in a field that interacts with healthcare from an accredited domestic or foreign institution?

- Yes □ No □

- By the program start date, will you hold a junior faculty position (typically instructor or assistant professor) at the University of Utah or an equivalent rank at a VPCAT Program affiliated health institution?

- Yes □ No □

- Can you confirm that you have never been a principal investigator on an NIH R01 or R01-equivalent research award (i.e., R00, DP1, DP2, DP5, U01, R35, etc.)**: an NIH career development award (i.e., K23, K08, K76, K99, DP2, etc.); an equivalent Public Health Service or VA research grants/career awards; or a project lead of a subproject of a program (P01) or center grant (U54)?

- Yes □ No □

- Do you have at least one scientific mentor with: a) aligned research expertise, extramural funding, and a mentorship track record; b) a strong commitment to guide and support your proposed career development and research program goals; and c) a commitment to assist you in achieving independence and extramural funding (e.g., K, R, and other equivalent awards)?

- Yes □ No □

**As per NIH standards, current and former PIs of an R03, R21, R36, R41, R42, R43, or R44 are eligible to apply.**
WHO ARE WE REALLY LOOKING FOR?

- Somebody who:
  - Is early in their research career
  - Is looking for their first major grant award
  - Has a sound and promising research project
  - Has a scientific mentor with whom they are working
  - Has a publication/abstract with their mentor
  - Intends to apply for a grant within 2 years
  - Wants to achieve research independence
  - Wants to be a well-rounded principal investigator
WHO ARE WE REALLY LOOKING FOR?

• Will we consider applicants who don't meet that description perfectly?
  – Of course
  – Don't avoid addressing any differences in your application; reviewers will notice and pick up on them
FOLLOW THE RFA INSTRUCTIONS

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

-- Request for Application (RFA) Instructions --
2022 VPCAT Scholar Cohort
(Due: Friday, September 24, 2021 by 5:00 pm MST)

Formatting Instructions

- **File type**: Documents must be in Adobe PDF format only
- **Font size**: 11-point, not condensed
- **Font type**: Arial or Times New Roman
- **Spacing**: Single space (no more than six lines of type within a vertical inch)
- **Margins**: At least 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) in all directions
- **Tables, graphs, figures, etc.**: All tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts must be included within the overall page limit
- **Application questions**: Please direct any questions to the VPCAT Research Manager, Erin Wachs, either by phone (801-587-8559) or erin.wachs@hsc.utah.edu, or see the VPCAT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
- **Application organization**: The content of the application and requested narrative is required to be structured as outlined below. Each section should be clearly labeled with the provided headers. Please organize the application into a single PDF as outlined in the checklist at the end of the document.
APPLICATION COMPONENTS

• Cover Letter
• Curriculum Vitae
• Application Narrative
  – Career Plan
  – Scientific Mentoring Plan
  – Research Plan
    • Specific Aims
    • Significance & Rigor of Prior Research
    • Prior Research Efforts
    • Future Research Plan
  – References
• Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator
• Mentor Letter(s)
• Institutional Letter of Commitment
• Mentor(s) NIH Biosketch
  (new NIH format)
• Mentor(s) Other Support
  (new NIH format)
# 2022 VPCAT Application Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Submission Method</th>
<th>Length/Limit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>** Candidate and Project Information **</td>
<td>** Candidate &amp; Contact Information ** Enter into Competition Space Online System</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate Demographic Information</strong></td>
<td>Enter into Competition Space Online System</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Scientific Mentor</strong></td>
<td>Enter into Competition Space Online System</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VPCAT Senior Mentor Selection Form</strong></td>
<td>Save file as &quot;VPCATSelection_PI Last Name.pdf&quot; and upload as a single file</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">here</a></td>
<td><strong>VPCAT Application</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cover Letter</strong></td>
<td>Save file as &quot;VPCATApplication_PI Last Name.pdf&quot; and upload as a single file</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate’s Curriculum Vitae</strong></td>
<td>2-page limit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Application Narrative</strong></td>
<td>No page limit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Plan</strong></td>
<td>5-page limit (total)</td>
<td>1-1 ½ page(s) recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Mentoring Plan</strong></td>
<td>½ - 1-page recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Plan</strong></td>
<td>3 pages recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>No page limit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator</strong></td>
<td>1-page limit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor(s) Letter of Support</strong> (if more than 1, include primary mentor’s first)</td>
<td>No page limit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Letter of Commitment</strong></td>
<td>No page limit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor(s) NIH Biographical Sketch</strong> (if more than 1, include primary mentor’s first)</td>
<td>5-page limit per bio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentor(s) NIH Other Support Form</strong> (if more than 1, include primary mentor’s first)</td>
<td>No page limit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
COMPLETE THE MENTOR SELECTION FORM

• Helps inform our mentor assignment decision
• Read about current mentors on our [website](#)
APPLICATION COMPONENTS

• Cover Letter
• Curriculum Vitae
• Application Narrative
  – Career Plan
  – Scientific Mentoring Plan
  – Research Plan
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    • Significance & Rigor of Prior Research
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  (new NIH format)
NEW APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

• Mentor(s) NIH Biosketch (new NIH format)
• Mentor(s) Other Support Form (new NIH format)

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

Mentor(s) NIH Other Support Form (no page limit)
- Other Support Form must follow the new NIH format (here)
- If more than one mentor, the identified primary mentor’s other support form must be included first, followed by proposed co-mentor(s)’ form(s)
b. Significance & Rigor of Prior Research (1 page recommended)

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that your proposed research plan addresses
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research (both published and unpublished) that serves as the key support for your proposed research plan (see NIH Guidance: Rigor and Reproducibility in Grant Applications; NIH Reviewer Guidance on Rigor and Transparency; and Open Mike: Resources for Rigorous Research websites)
- Explain how your proposed research plan will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in your research field
- Describe how your concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive your field will be changed if your proposed aims are achieved
SIGNIFICANCE & RIGOR OF PRIOR RESEARCH

VPCATs advice:

• Reviewers, especially those not in your related field, need to be able to understand:
  – How and why your research is important/impactful
  – The gap your research fills

• Provide evidence your proposed research is based on sound and rigorous work
PLAN FOR TRANSITION INTO AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR

Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator (1 page limit)

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

VPCATs advice:

• Format content similar to that of a MOU
• Make sure that your plan is consistent with your Future Research Plan content
• Show you have a sense of how your career and research goals will impact your professional roles and responsibilities, and that you have or will have support to work towards your goals
WHAT MAKES A STRONG APPLICATION?

• Of course, the usuals:
  – Follow the instructions
  – Make sure all components are included
  – Make sure all information is up to date
  – Editing (no typos or other mistakes)

• But for everything else...
  – Review the **Scoring Guidelines** and **Scoring Criteria** on our web site
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1-2 | **Excellent**
*Have no reservations accepting* | - Career plan is *clearly* defined, demonstrates an appropriate career vision, and an important research niche.
- Scientific mentor plan is *strong, methodical*, and includes a *concise* plan for monitoring and evaluating progress.
- Scientific mentor’s qualifications are *wholly* appropriate to the proposed research.
- Demonstrates an *established* working relationship with the scientific mentor.
- Research plan *clearly* supports and is appropriate to career/research objectives, as well as addresses a *significant* barrier in their field and *strong* evidence of prior research.
- Demonstrates *strong* department/college commitment; *importantly*, includes 1) statement committing a minimum of 30% dedicated time for the development of their research project and full participation in the program; 2) detailed outline of responsibilities/activities with associated % FTE; 3) a clear plan describing steps to prevent reduction/fluctuations of committed protected research time; and 4) a detailed, feasible plan to transition into independence.
- Exhibits a *strong* likelihood to contribute to clinical or translational research over the long-term; understanding of future steps to take in order to achieve long-term goals; and potential to develop into an independent researcher. |
Scoring Criteria

Career Plan

- Does the applicant have a clearly defined career vision and an important research niche?
- Are there adequate plans for evaluating the applicant’s career development progress?
- What is the likelihood that the applicant’s career plan will contribute to their success in submitting extramural grant applications as a Principal Investigator and becoming an independent researcher?
- Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career plan appropriate in the context of prior experience and the stated training and research objectives for the VPCAT Program?
- Does the applicant articulate an appropriate long-term transition to independence plan that will positively contribute to achieving their goals?

Scientific Mentoring Plan

- Are the scientific mentor’s qualifications in the area of proposed research appropriate?
- Does the mentor(s) adequately address the applicant’s potential and his/her strengths and areas for improvement?
- Is the mentor’s role in the applicant’s research described adequately in their letter of support?
- Does the applicant’s publication record demonstrate an existing relationship with the mentor?
- Is active/pending support for the proposed research project adequate and appropriate?
- Are there adequate plans for evaluating the applicant’s research progress?
- Does the mentor acknowledge the applicant has the necessary commitment from their department/college to devote a minimum of 30% FTE to their career and research program?
- Is there an anticipated plan to address issues of inadequate devoted time provided?
- Does the mentor agree with and commits to implementing the applicant’s Transition to Independence Plan?
WHAT MAKES A STRONG APPLICATION?

• As mentioned before:
  – Don't avoid mentioning and addressing any potential concerns in your application; reviewers will pick up on them
  – Have an answer for their concerns
Advice
START EARLY

• Begin your **Competition Space** application now
  – Avoid submission delays and/or last minute access errors
ADDITIONAL ADVICE

• Letters should be on official letterhead
• Clearly represent your department’s commitment to you and your career and research success
• Expand on your department’s investment in you (i.e., start up funds, etc.)
• Clean-up and nicely format your CV
ADDITIONAL ADVICE

• Do not make a reviewer’s job harder; be clear and concise

• Because your application will be reviewed by a panel with broad expertise, use a clear and concise writing style avoiding jargon a non-expert may not understand
ADDITIONAL ADVICE

• It is okay to have multiple scientific mentors *IF* there is a clear plan and purpose for them.
• Make sure mentor(s) personalizes their biosketch’s personal statement and select applicable research support.
• Avoid inconsistencies in different sections.
VPCAT’S ADVICE

• Use a **gap-based approach** to prepare a realistic training plan
  – Consider the VPCAT offered resources outlined in the [VPCAT Scholar Handbook](#) and how they could be incorporated into your plan
We HIGHLY advise you to read the Scoring Criteria
VPCAT’S ADVICE

• Review the example applications on our web site

• For that matter, get to know everything on our web site
VPCAT’S ADVICE

- Email Erin Wachs to request access to the SVPHS Education Unit’s Grant Repository
  - Though the VPCAT application is not an NIH K Career Development Award, it is very similar
  - Considering funded K applications my spark your inspiration
ANY QUESTIONS?

Check out the VPCAT Application FAQs web site, too!