

K Scholars Career Development Award Program Letter of Intent Instructions 2025

IMPORTANT DATES:

Accepting letters of Intent:	October 27 th 2025 – November 24 th , 2025
Notification of Invitation to apply:	Week of December 15, 2025
Accepting Full Applications:	December 22 nd 2025-February 18 th , 2026
Finalist Interviews:	Week of March 30 th , 2026
Notification of funding:	Week of April 6 th , 2026
Funding:	June 1, 2026 - May 31, 2028

For questions regarding these instructions, please visit [CCTST K Scholars website](#) or contact [Krista Metz](#)
All deadlines for submissions are firm; extensions will not be granted.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Instructions

All required components **MUST** be combined into one pdf using single-spaced text of 11-point Arial or Helvetica font with a minimum of one-half inch margins.

Required Elements	Instructions/Format-Please compile documents in order as follows:
Face Page	Check all appropriate IBC, IACUC, IRB, or Radiation Safety approvals or indicate pending if submitted. Format: Complete using face page form ; Signatures NOT required
1 Page LOI	Describe 1) Career development objectives and 2) research objectives, in 1 page . Please ensure that it is clear why a career development award is needed, or the LOI will not be accepted.
Mentorship Team	List your potential mentorship team and their expertise, including potential consultants/ collaborators. Please refer to primary mentor requirements below for additional information. Format: Complete using template
Biosketches	Provide a NIH-format Biosketch for the applicant <u>and</u> the Mentor(s). Maximum 5 pages per investigator
Applicant Other Support	*MUST INCLUDE ALL GRANTS SUBMITTED/UNDER REVIEW/ PENDING SUPPORT
Checklist	Format: Complete using checklist form
CCTST Membership	All applicants <u>must</u> be CCTST members. CCTST membership is free and open to all. For online membership registration, go to https://cctst.uc.edu/user/register .
Resource References	Provided for reference for application support
Submit through CCAPS	Applications must be submitted through the CCTST Competition and Awards Program Site (CCAPS) . Log in using your UC ("6+2") or CCHMC username and password. If you do not have a UC or CCHMC username and password, please contact Krista Metz to obtain one.

No other supplemental material will be accepted for the LOI. **The LOI must be received by November 24th 2025. LOIs received after the deadline will not be reviewed.**

Overview of Application & Review Process

The application and review process is performed in 3 phases:

1. LOI/review – top applicants will be invited to submit a full application
2. Full application/review
3. In-person interviews for finalists – Full application critiques provided prior

Background

The University of Cincinnati Center for Clinical and Translational Science and Training (CCTST) K Scholars Program is an institutional K award program supported by the [NIH National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences \(NCATS\)](#) and in alignment with current NIH priorities. Our training mission is to develop the next generation of translational team scientists and academic leaders through formalized cross-disciplinary training in research skills necessary for designing and conducting innovative, programmatic clinical and translational research, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for all people and communities.

Focused on early career MD or PhD faculty, the K Scholars Program serves as a mentored training step leading to NIH career development grants such as K01s, K08s, and K23s or, alternately, R01 awards or their equivalents. The K Scholars Program is made up of two types of scholars for whom programming is generally similar, yet funding source differs. However, as detailed below, there are currently some restrictions from the NIH with regard to supporting clinical trials. (using NIH definition <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/clinical-trials/definition>)

- **K12 Scholars:** 75% salary support (up to \$113,500) and \$26,700 in research support per year for two consecutive years for completion of a mentored research project and associated training and travel. **NOTE: To be appointed to the K12, the Scholar's mentored research project cannot be a clinical trial.**
- **Clinical and Translational Scholars** (herein, "**CT2 Scholars**"): 75% salary support (up to \$113,500) and \$26,700 in research support per year for two consecutive years for completion of a mentored research project and associated training and travel provided by CCTST allocated institutional funds. **NOTE: CT2 Scholar's mentored research project may include a clinical trial.**

The applicant's home division or department must guarantee in writing a 3rd year of 9 calendar months or 75% effort (6-9 calendar-months or 50% effort for surgeons) in the event that the Scholar has applied for, but not yet received, independent research grant support by the end of the 2nd year of support.

Program Details

The K Scholar Program supports Scholars for 2 consecutive 12-month appointments via the award mechanism, with a 3rd year supported by the Division/Department. At the end of each grant year, Scholars must submit a "Progress to Date" report demonstrating sufficient progress and need for continued support. **Throughout the award period, 9 calendar months, equivalent to 75% of the K Scholars' full-time professional effort (surgeons, effort can be reduced, if preferred to 6-9 calendar months, equivalent to 50%) must be devoted to research and career development activities proposed in the Scholars application,** including attending the **required** biweekly K Scholars meeting (currently held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10:00-11:30 am). The remainder of the K Scholar's time may be devoted to other clinical or academic pursuits aligning with the objectives of the award. K Scholars are expected to apply for external research grant support (e.g. an NIH K or R01 award) during the program.

K Scholar Program Eligibility

- Applicants must have a full-time faculty appointment at the rank of instructor or assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, or the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center.
 - Post-doctoral fellows (MD or PhD) may apply, however they will need to submit a letter at the LOI submission phase from their department or division stating when they are expected to be faculty and that the appointment is prior to and not contingent upon the receipt of this award.
- Applicants must have a research or health-professional doctoral degree or its equivalent.
- Applicants must be a United States Citizen or non-citizen national or have legal admission into the United States as a permanent citizen at the time of LOI submission.

NOTE: Currently, applicants who are proposing a clinical trial for their K Scholar project (using NIH definition <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/clinical-trials/definition>) are only eligible to be appointed as a CT2 (institutionally funded) Scholar. They cannot be given a K12 spot.

- However, any applicant may propose a future clinical trial as part of their "next step" application (e.g. NIH K, R01) and incorporate trainings and mentorship as part of their K Scholar career development plan to inform that future clinical trial.

Selection Restrictions/ Important Considerations

- Per our NIH program announcement (see PAR-25-196) K Scholar candidates should be later-stage postdoctoral fellows or early career faculty who can take full advantage of and benefit from the described research-focused career development program in clinical and translational science. Consistent with the type of mentoring and career development being provided by this mechanism, a scholar candidate who is already in the process of applying for an individual mentored career development grant, Program Project Grants/Center Grants or equivalent grant is likely "too senior" for this award. Please consult with the [K Scholars Program Directors](#) before applying if you are unsure.
- Former or current PDs/PIs on any NIH research project grant or equivalent non-PHS peer-reviewed grants that are over \$100,000 direct costs per year, or project leaders on sub-projects of Program project (P01) or center grants (P50) are **NOT** eligible to participate as scholars. **Exceptions:** NIH small grants (R03), exploratory Developmental (R21) or SBIR, STTR (R43, R44 grants) are allowed if they do not duplicate any of the aims of the proposed K Scholars application.
- Applicants must not have a pending application for any other PHS mentored career development award (e.g., K07, K08, K22, K23, F99/K00) or that duplicates any of the aims of the proposed K Scholar application at any stage of our process (LOI, Full Application, Interview, Appointment to award (June 1, 2026)). See our definition of "pending" below. For the K Scholar program *pending* is defined a submitted grant that may not yet have been reviewed, scored, or approved for funding. Essentially, the grant is in the hands of the external funding agency/foundation and is at some stage of consideration for funding.
 - *May* be ineligible if have any internal award pending which duplicates any of the aims of the proposed K Scholars application. Please consult with the K Scholars Program Directors if you may have an internal award pending.
- After appointment, appointed K Scholars are expected to apply for individual mentored K awards (e.g., K07, K08, K22, K23) and/or independent awards (R01, R03, R21, R34, or equivalent application from another Federal agency)
 - **When successful:** K Scholars *may* be required to reduce effort on the mentored career award to a minimum of six-person months and hold concurrent support from their mentored career award and a competing PHS research grant on which they are the PD/PI or component lead or terminate their K Scholars award depending on Program requirements (See [NOT-OD-08-065](#)).

Primary Mentor Requirements

K Scholars must identify a primary mentor who is approved by the K Scholars program. See the following link for a list of previously approved [primary mentors](#). *Please note your primary mentor cannot have a mentee currently in the program cohort.*

Proposed primary mentors not appearing on this list must be pre-approved at least one week (Week of November 17th) BEFORE the applicant submits their LOI. To qualify, **primary mentors not appearing on the list** must send an email or compose a letter to the [K Scholars Program Directors](#) with NIH Biosketch and CV attached (must include current/past funding with direct costs) stating that they:

- Currently are externally funded (generally, at least \$300,000 of external grant funding per year) and recognized as independent investigators who are actively involved in clinical or translational research
- Have a track record in their CV as a successful mentor (e.g., include a table of past/present trainees)
- Have adequate protected time (generally at least 5% effort) for mentoring
- Have participated in **all** sessions of the 8-hour Mentor Training Workshop offered at CCHMC and UC or agree to participate by the end of the first year of the Scholar's time in the Program if they have not.
 - The Mentor Training Workshop is facilitated by the faculty development offices at CCHMC and the UC

K Scholar Program Requirements

To ensure that all K Scholars have, or develop, competency in key areas of translational research, we require that K Scholars complete the following courses, either prior to or during their K Scholars Award period. [UC graduate courses are listed here](#):

Required Training Content/Courses

K Scholars Required Core Curriculum		
Required Content/Courses	Course (Credits)	Semester
Clinical and Translational Science Core Concepts		Provided via Program Orientation
CCTST Foundation		Provided via Program Orientation
Collaboration & Team Science	BE-7040 (2)	Spring
Scientific Integrity *Must take 2 hour credit course to meet NIH requirements * Course <u>must</u> be taken within the year prior to appointment or during appointment to count towards program	BE-7067 (2)	Summer
Enhancing Rigor & Reproducibility	NIH online modules	Self-paced Year 1

Budget Guidelines

The following guidance is provided for applicants to follow when creating a budget for a K Scholar application (box 10 on facepage). 75% salary support up to \$113,500 + fringe (6-9 calendar months or 50% effort for surgeons) and \$26,700 in research funds per year to be supported by the NIH K12 Scholars Grant or CCTST institutional funds for up to 2 years are allowed. The second year of support is contingent on adequate progress in Year 1. In addition, a commitment for divisional or departmental funding for a 3rd year of salary support is required, if needed. Facilities and Admin (F&A) rate should be no more than 8% of direct costs.

If a NIH K12-funded Scholar leaves the program early because they obtain external grant support, a CT2 Scholar may be appointed to the NIH K12 Scholar spot in their place.

Research funds for research and career development support may include the following expenses

- Tuition and fees related to career development (e.g., in the UC Master of Science in Clinical and Translational Research or the Certificate in Clinical and Translational Research programs or other needed trainings).
- Research expenses, such as supplies, equipment, participant compensation, and technical personnel/research coordinators.
- Travel to research meetings, workshops, or training.
- Applicants must include a separate line item of \$1,700 for travel to the Translational Science annual meeting each April.
- Externships do not need to be included in the Scholar's budget. The K Scholar program pays for these opportunities upon request and approval. Please list without a budget any potential or planned externships
- It is encouraged K Scholars utilize the methodological support (statistics and study design) that is provided to K scholars through the CCTST. REDCap (data capture) is provided free for all CCTST members, and additional data management support is available to K scholars through the CCTST. Applicants are encouraged to meet with Hub Navigator through a [Research Central Request](#) to determine how to best support the analytic needs of the scholar's research.
- Note: Salaries for mentors, and administrative staff, etc. are **not** allowed as part of the K Scholars Program.

The K Scholar's home division/department may supplement the NIH salary contribution up to a level that is consistent with the institution's salary scale from non-federal sources; however, supplementation may not come from federal funds unless specifically authorized by the federal program from which such funds are derived. ***Departmental supplementation of salary must not require extra duties or responsibilities that would interfere with the protected time of the K Scholars Program.***

Next Steps

LOI applicants will receive an email notifying them if they have been selected to submit a Full Application. This email will include a Full Application RFA outlining the additional information that will be needed to submit a successful Full Application. For more information about clinical and translational science [click here](#).

Below is a simplified list of some of the components required in a full application:

- Face Page
- Translational Science Benefits Model (TSBM)- See [TSBM Model](#) and [TSBM Article](#) for reference
- Mentor Team Document
- Specific Aims
- Detailed Budget and Budget Justification
- Biosketches and Other Support
- Career Development Plan
- Research Strategy
- Plan to Acquire Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Plans and Statements of Mentor(s) and Co-Mentor(s)
- Environment and Institutional Commitment to Candidate
- Protection of Human Subjects (if applicable)
- Vertebrate Animals (if applicable)
- Select Agent Research (if applicable)
- Bibliography and References Cited
- Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, Consultants and Department or Division Chair
- Individual Development Plan
- Checklist