



Clinical and Translational Science (CATS) Scholars Program

2019 CATS Scholars Program Request for Applications

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) invites applications for the Clinical and Translational Science (CATS) Scholars Awards to support the research efforts and career development of scientists dedicated to translational research. Awards will support career development for individuals in disciplines and professions such as medicine, dentistry, engineering, social work, nursing, psychology, pharmacy, physical and occupational therapy, and public health. The CATS Scholars Program seeks to develop well-structured and well-recognized career development pathways that lead to the exploration of new approaches in patient-oriented, epidemiological, behavioral, health services, and outcomes research. As a CATS Scholar, individuals will be provided 75 percent release time, which will be funded by the CATS Program. The home department must commit themselves to this release time in writing, enabling the trainee to use the time to take relevant courses and conduct research under the CATS Scholars Program for a period of 2 years, as well as a 3rd year of 50% protected research time. Scholars will receive \$25,000 to support their scholarly activities each appointment year, as well as \$2,500/year for research related travel. Once scholars are appointed, they must propose a budget for how such funds will be used and the budget must be approved by the program Executive Committee.

Goals of the Scholars Program

The CATS Scholars Program is intended to accelerate career progression of scientists who have demonstrated a commitment to clinical or translational research. The CATS Scholars Program allows Scholars a period of time to work with mentors who will provide appropriate guidance in developing individualized curricula and career plans to help them become national leaders in interdisciplinary clinical and translational research. Mentors are expected to provide guidance in all aspects of clinical and translational research including developing a research project, competitively garnering external support, developing and managing a research team, and working with interdisciplinary teams/centers.

UIC is dedicated to increasing the participation of individuals currently underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences. This includes underrepresented racial, ethnic, social, cultural, economic, or educational backgrounds that may have inhibited an individual's ability to pursue a career in health-related research up to this point. UIC acknowledges that diversifying the student and faculty bodies improves the quality of the training and educational environment. Ideal candidates will have completed the majority of their formal research training and require protected time to develop a specific research project that will lead to an external grant proposal by the end of their first year of the program.

Curriculum Overview

In consultation with the CATS Scholars Program Director, Dr. Luisa DiPietro and Associate Director, Dr. Joanna Burdette, scholars will develop a detailed individual career development plan and establish a mentoring group that includes the primary mentor. The career development plan, which will be reviewed regularly, will serve as a guide to ensure that the scholar will develop the skills and knowledge required to succeed in a career in clinical and translational research. A specific curriculum, which may include formal and informal coursework and workshops, will be developed and customized for each scholar.

All scholars will engage in mentored research, and applicants must propose a specific research plan. Research experience may be gained in a range of settings, depending on whether the research is clinical or community-based. Externships and experiences outside of UIC are also encouraged as relevant to the career development of the scholar and may be proposed at the time of the application. Candidates must propose a research plan that specifies the research questions, study approach, the expected outcomes of the research (e.g., publications, preliminary data, etc.), and timeline.

Scholars will be assisted in gaining all of the skills needed to secure external funding and are expected to make progress towards an application for extramural funding such as a K award, (e.g., K08 or K23), R03, R21, R01, or participation on a Center or Program Project grant. Ideally, by the end of one year, scholars will generate and submit a research proposal to the NIH or another competitive extramural funding agency.

The Scholar will be encouraged to meet with mentors regularly, e.g., on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to assure that they receive ongoing career guidance. Scholars will also be expected to participate in CATS Scholars monthly career development workshops and in other relevant workshops as offered by the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) and other organizations. All scholars complete an annual self-review of progress and meet annually with the CATS Scholars Executive Committee to review progress.

Qualifications for Application

Applicants must have a research and/or health-professional doctoral degree or its equivalent. It is expected that candidates will have had prior research training, e.g., the MS CTS (through the CCTS), a PhD, or equivalent. Applicants must be United States citizens, non-citizen nationals, or individuals lawfully admitted for permanent residence that possess an Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151 or I-551, or some other verification of legal admission as a permanent resident). Individuals on temporary or student visas are not eligible. Former or current principal investigators on any NIH research project grant (this does not include NIH Small Grants (R03) or Exploratory/ Developmental (R21) grants or their equivalents) or equivalent non-PHS peer-reviewed research grants that are over \$100,000 direct costs per year, or project leaders on sub-projects of program project (P01) or center grants (e.g. a P50 grant) are NOT eligible. Candidates who have a currently pending NIH K series application (e.g. K99, K08, K23, etc) are NOT eligible.

Other Information

Please review <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-RM-09-017.html> for the NIH policies relevant to this program.

Questions?

For questions regarding the program, please contact Melissa Weidman at 312/413-1716 or mzimme5@uic.edu

Applications must be received by 3/15/2019.

Criteria for Selection

All applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

Candidate

- Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher?
- Is the candidate's academic, clinical, and (if relevant) research record of high quality?
- Is there evidence of the candidate's commitment to meeting the program objectives to become an independent investigator in research?
- Do the letters of reference address the above review criteria, and do they demonstrate evidence that the candidate has a high potential for becoming an independent investigator?

Personal Statement/Career Development Plan

- Are the candidate's career goals in line with the KL2 program?
- What is the likelihood that the participation in the KL2 program will contribute substantially to the development of the candidate and lead to scientific independence?
- Are the qualifications of the potential mentors appropriate?

Research Plan

- Are the proposed research question, design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit?
- Is the research plan relevant to the candidate's research career objectives?
- Is the plan for developing/enhancing the candidate's research skills appropriate and adequate?
- If applicable, are there adequate plans for data and safety monitoring of clinical trials?

Departmental/College Commitment to the Candidate

- Is there clear commitment of the department and college to ensure that a minimum of 9 person-months (75% of the candidate's full-time professional effort) will be devoted directly to the research and career development activities described in the application?
- Is there assurance that the department intends for the candidate to be an integral part of its research program?

The project described is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health.