

CATS AFFILIATE SCHOLAR AWARD APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

The CATS Affiliate Scholar Program is intended to accelerate the career progression of scientists who have demonstrated a commitment to clinical and/or translational research. This institutionally supported program provides a vigorous mentoring and career development program for clinical and translational scholars in disciplines and professions such as medicine, dentistry, engineering, social work, nursing, and pharmacy.

Ideal candidates are junior faculty who will have completed the majority of their formal research training and now require protected time to develop a specific research project that will lead to external funding.

DUE DATE:

Friday, February 28, 2025, at 5:00pm CST, through the CCTS Awards site:

<https://awards.ccts.uic.edu/>

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Applications will **ONLY** be accepted via electronic submission in the Awards system from January 23, 2025 through February 28, 2025 at 5:00pm CST. To submit your CATS Affiliate Scholars Program Application navigate to the CCTS Awards site homepage:

- If you are a first time user click the “Register” button in the top right corner of the page.
 - On the next page, enter your UIC NetID and select the “Register” button below your NetID.
 - After successfully registering your account, log back into the system by clicking “Proceed to log in”.
- For registered users, log into the training portal using your UIC credentials (via Shibboleth).
 - Upon login, on your “My Projects” homepage, you will see Available Funding Opportunities: CATS Affiliate Scholars Program 2025.
 - Select this option to access the application forms and submit your full application to the program.
- You will receive a confirmation email upon submission.

APPLICATION FORMAT:

Applications should adhere to the following formatting specifications:

- 11-point Arial font
- Single-spaced
- 0.5 inch margins on all sides
- 8 1/2" x 11" (i.e. standard size) paper
- Pages numbered
- PDF files

APPLICATION DATA FIELDS:

The following information will be completed in the data fields in the electronic application system in addition to demographic information:

1. Three (3) keywords describing your research
2. Research category
3. Translational spectrum category
4. Previous CCTS funding
5. IRB and ACUC Approvals
 - a. If the research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals and there is an approved IRB or IACUC approval document, upload the approved document.
 - b. *All CATS Scholars whose research involved human or animal subjects will be required to provide documentation related to their protocols for prior approval by the NIH. Scholars cannot initiate proposed human or animal subject research until approval is received.*

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

The below documents will be uploaded in the electronic application system in their respective fields under the "Uploads" section. The documents can be uploaded as pdf or MS Word.

1. **Personal Statement:** Provide a statement detailing your accomplishments to date, career goals and plans. Provide background information relevant to your interest and experience in clinical/translational research and indicate how the CATS Affiliate Scholars Program will help you achieve future goals. This statement should be no longer than 1 page.
2. **Career Development Needs and Plans:** Provide a description of your needs for career development. Identify activities and external enrichment experiences that might be beneficial to your career development. Include a timeline for your career development with intermediate and final goals. Provide information on prior completion or recent acceptance into any advanced didactic programs in clinical research or equivalent training (e.g., current degree candidates at a UIC health sciences program). This section should be no longer than 1 page.
3. **Research Plan:** Describe your planned research while in the program, providing a 3-page vision of your research program. The research plan should represent a

2-year research program. The plan should be formatted according to the NIH-format for R03 applications (*one page of Specific Aims and up to two additional pages for the Research Strategy*). The Research Strategy should include Significance, Innovation, and Approach sections. In addition, include a timeline that includes expected submission of applications for extramural funding.

4. **Letter of Support - Nomination Letter Written/Signed by the Applicant's Department Chair AND Signed by the College Dean:** Provide a letter endorsing your application to the CATS Affiliate Scholars Program. The letter must provide:
 - a. Explicit release time commitments (i.e., 50%) and the duration of the commitment for the two year period of the award.
 - b. Commitment of at least \$10,000 for research expenses provided by your department or college.
 - c. The Department Chair will need to confirm there's a high level of commitment from the Department and College. This letter will serve as an important part of the application review and must indicate that there is substantial institutional commitment.
 - d. Information about how the applicant's career development fits into the mission of the department.
 - e. The commitment to the applicant's career development after the completion of the program.
 - f. The applicant's potential for a successful academic career in clinical/translational research.
 - g. Current availability of mentoring, space, and other support for the applicant.
5. **Biosketch:** Provide a current NIH formatted biosketch. Instructions can be found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>
6. **Potential Mentor(s):** Within the online application, you will enter the netid of your primary mentor and up to four other (4) potential mentors. Upload a single merged PDF document that describes the mentor(s) and how they will enhance your career development. Applicants who need assistance in identifying mentors prior to application should contact the CATS Scholars Program Director (Dr. Shane Phillips – shanep@uic.edu). **The primary mentor must be a UIC faculty member.** Other mentors can be internal or external. *Note: All CATS primary mentors will be required to participate in the annual assessment of the scholar and be invited and encouraged to participate in a formal mentor training program.*

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION OVERVIEW:

Within the online application system under "Key Information," applicants should identify two (2) individuals from whom they will request a letter of recommendation (LOR). These LORs should be from past clinical/research mentors or other individuals who can attest to your ability as a clinical-translational research professional. One of the letters must be from the proposed primary mentor (UIC faculty). The second LOR will be accepted from UIC faculty or an external source. The letters should address:

1. The applicant's previous achievements in research, clinical care, and/or academics
2. The applicant's potential for a successful academic career in clinical/translational research.
3. Analysis of the applicant's career development plans, commitment to research, and how this award will advance these plans.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION UPLOAD PROCESS:

Letters of Recommendation will be submitted confidentially. Applicants must pre-identify potential faculty contacts within the submission system (awards.ccts.uic.edu). These individuals will be sent upload instructions in a separate, system generated e-mail.

Note: Applications cannot be submitted until both LORs are received. Therefore, we recommend that you identify these individuals early in your application process.

QUESTIONS

Elli Resnick, CATS Scholar Program Coordinator, Center for Clinical and Translational Science, at eresnick@uic.edu.