K Awards Checklist

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Selected NIH K Award Mechanisms

Mentored	Independent	Mid-career
K01	K02	K02
K07/08	K43	K18
K12 *institutions only	R00	K24
K22/23		K26
K25		
K99		

https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/career-development

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Key features of Mentored K Awards

- 3-5 years in length
- Substantial salary support, limited research funding
- Research plan *and* training plan
- Takes a village – requires team of mentors, co-mentors, collaborators…
- GOAL: transition to research "independence" (faculty position)

How does NIH define mentored vs independent?

Mentored / dependent	Independent
Candidate's research funded entirely by another investigator's grants	Received start-up package for support of his/her independent research
Candidate's research conducted entirely in another investigator's assigned space	Allocated research space in support of independent research
Cannot hire postdocs / tech staff; cannot supervise graduate students	Can hire postdocs / tech staff; can supervise graduate students
Cannot be granted PI status for an R01	Eligible to apply for NIH research grant
Limited / lacks rights/privileges of faculty	Rights / privileges of faculty

K99 / R00: Pathway to Independence

- Provides an opportunity for postdocs to receive **both** mentored and independent research support in one award mechanism

- **No more than four years** of postdoc research experience at time of submission / re-submission

- **No citizenship requirement** (unlike F awards)

2 years postdoc	3 years faculty position
Allowable costs varies by awarding Institute or Center – fringe capped at 8% http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/contacts/parent_K99_R00.html	Total costs cannot exceed $249,000 per year: includes salary, fringe, research costs, and indirect costs.

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Due dates – K series

New	Renewal, Resubmission, Revision
February 12	March 12
June 12	July 12
October 12	November 12

General tips – Mentored K awards

- **Start early – map out a plan**
- Understand intent of K award – building toward R01
- Why you? Make a compelling argument
- Career development training plan = **must be specific to you**
  - ➢ Concrete examples of areas to improve, goals for future training / research experience
  - ➢ Courses / existing workshops (like those offered by PDPA!) or degree-granting programs (e.g. MPH) can be used, but still must be related to you and your plan specifically
  - ➢ Mix of training / research opportunities
- **CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT**

Develop a Task List!

- Develop a list of all components of your grant application package, including those required by OPD / OSP

- Indicate who is responsible for completing each component and set deadlines **(PRO TIP: For faculty, set deadlines well in advance!)**

- Develop this list in collaboration with your RA, who will help you compile the grant application for submission to OSP and NIH.

Main components of K Award

- Candidate
  - Background
  - Career Goals and Objectives
  - Candidate's Plan for Career Development / Training Activities
  - Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Statements by Mentors, Co-Mentors, and Collaborators
- Environment & Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
- Research Plan
- Letters of reference

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You as a candidate – what are the common review criteria?

- Quality of your academic and/or clinical record and prior training

- Fit between current training and your background

- Potential for independence

- Likelihood that career development plan will contribute to your scientific development

- Consistency of the career development plan with your prior experience and current / future goals

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Candidate part 1 - Background

- Suggested length: less than one page
- Use your NIH Biosketch as a roadmap
  - ➤ Describe formal research training
  - ➤ Examples of your commitment to research
  - ➤ Highlight evidence of your productivity
- Why did you make the choices that you made?
- First person narrative = acceptable

PRO TIP: Begin this section with a summary narrative of your long-term research career goals – keep the goal in the forefront of the reviewers' minds.

Candidate part 2 – Career goals and objectives

- Suggested length – 1-2 paragraphs

- What are your challenges... (this section)

- ...how will the proposed training help you succeed? (career development plan section)

- **Be specific!**

Creating and Owning Your IDP

Helping trainees set goals for their development
Streamlining mentoring plan & training plan development for faculty

Why are IDPs important?

- Helps trainees identify goals and work towards them
- Facilitates productive mentoring conversations – setting expectations
- Streamlines the mentoring process (and the required paperwork!)

May 17, 2016 4-6 pm Location to be determined

Example – Career goals / objectives

I have made progress in developing my clinical research skills, but there are three important areas where I require additional training, mentoring, and experience: (1) multi-disciplinary collaboration with clinical and basic scientists, (2) the design and implementation of prospective study design with involvement in the IPFnet, and (3) advanced study design and biostatistical methodology. In the following section, I present a detailed career development plan designed to enable me to acquire the additional training and mentored research experience I need to address these deficiencies and compete successfully for R01 funding, thereby achieving independence as a research investigator.

Candidate part 3 – Career Development & Training Activities

- Suggested length: 1-2 pages

- Should build on career goals / objectives and set out a plan to achieve them

- Why is this training important? What will be the impact of each component?

- **Must be specific and detailed - tailored to help YOU and only you succeed**

PRO TIP: Re-read the sentences in this section after drafting. If they can describe anyone else, they are too vague!

Candidate part 4 - RCR

- Format

- Subject matter

- Faculty participation

- Duration of instruction

- Frequency of instruction

PDPA can provide a boilerplate summary for applicants to modify

Statements by Mentors/Co-Mentors/Collaborators

GROUP EXERCISE: 15-20 minutes

- Skim the two examples provided – what is different about them?

- Which one is stronger? Why?

Statements by Mentors/Co-Mentors/Collaborators

- Length: 6 pages maximum
- Assemble a complimentary team
  - ➤ **PRO TIP: Each member must play a role in your training or research plan!**
  - ➤ If you need to add additional members, call them *scientific* or *technical advisors/collaborators*, who have a relatively narrow area of responsibility and focus.
  - ➤ Each member of your team must submit a signed letter.
  - ➤ **PRO TIP: The primary mentor's letter should be at least 2 pages, leaving only 4 pages for all other members**
  - ➤ **PRO TIP: Must contain information consistent with information found throughout the proposal.**

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Environment & Institutional Commitment

- Length: 1 page
- How will the institution play an integral role in your research program?
- What facilities / resources will enable you to achieve your goals?
- Institutional commitment to protect at minimum 75% effort toward proposed research and career development activities
- Must be supported by letter from department chair or division chief

PRO TIP: This letter should state support for your promotion to higher (faculty track) position during K period.

Research Plan

- Specific Aims (1 page)
- Research Strategy (combined with Candidate section = 12 pages)
  - Significance
  - Innovation
  - Approach
- **PRO TIPS:**
  - **Address a clearly defined problem**
  - **Extend knowledge in the field by proposing *interesting*, *important*, and *testable* hypotheses that build on previous research.**
  - **Propose a scope of work that is appropriate to the track record of the principal investigator.**

Specific Aims

- Length: 1 page
- Style: Non-technical – all study section members will read this!
- Strong flow of logic – should be very easy to follow

PRO TIP: State your hypothesis and your long-term goal(s)
- **Relevant to public health**
- **Reflect your research niche**
- **Realistic – clearly achievable in the timeframe**
- **Emphasis on outcome(s), not the process(es)**

Strategies for describing your research plans

Sequence – use the past to set the stage, create narrative

Novelty – how are you unique and how will your research impact your field?

Big problem + Specific Challenge + Your Approach

Designing Your Research Plan – key things

1. The research plan is a **training vehicle**
   - Integrated with career goals and training plan
   - Spell it out – don't expect reviewers to connect the dots!

2. The research plan is a **means to achieving independence**
   - Is the scope and scale of work enough to lead to an R01 application?

3. Mentored K awards provide **limited funding for research costs**
   - Is the K portion of the plan feasible within the bounds of the funding restrictions?

Letters of recommendation

- 3 - 5 letters are required
- Select senior investigators who have competed successfully for NIH funding and have been involved in the training of junior investigators
- Can be from any period in your career, but should know you well
- **Cannot be from your primary mentor or co-mentors**

Letters of recommendation should address…

- Potential for conducting research **(productivity)**

- Evidence of innovative, creative thinking **(originality)**

- Quality of research projects / publications to date **(merit)**

- Need for further research training **(career development)**

Other components

- Cover letter - request assignment, list your letters of reference
- Human subjects / animal research (if applicable)
- Budget **(PRO TIP: Must include justification for BOTH K99 and R00!)**
- Biosketches
- Facilities and Other Resources (PI and PDPA can help with this!)
- Abstract and Project Narrative

Developing an Effective NIH Biosketch

co-sponsored by BU's BEST

Friday, June 12, 2016

2:00 – 3:30 pm

Location TBD – Medical Campus

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Contact - PDPA

Research: 1 Silber Way, room 909

Graduate Medical Sciences: 72 East Concord Street, L306

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