

Writing a Successful Career Development Grant (K Award)

Primary Mentor Letter of Support – Checklist

Paragraph Components

Introduction

- Introduce mentee and primary mentor's commitment to mentee's research and success
- Introduce primary mentor, co-mentor, and advisory committee
- Lay out the structure of the letter

Qualification of Primary Mentor

- Short Bio: name, credentials, title and affiliations, post-doc training, research expertise
- Current PI on # of grants, and have received NIH funding for # of years
- Approximate number of published research articles
- List prestigious awards; highlight awards or participation in programs related to mentoring
- Experience supervising and mentoring fellows and junior faculty for # years
- Approximate number of trainees who have received independent funding such as R01s and are successful and independent investigators
- High level overview of research lab and team members
- Mentee's involvement in the lab
- Commitment to collaborative, financial, and scientific infrastructure
 - Include the source of anticipated support for the candidate's research project for each year of the award period.
- Lab space (square footage, accessibility, close collaborations, office/lab space for mentee)
- Reference Appendix: NIH biosketch and other support

History of the Project

- History of the project

Recommendation and Detailed Mentoring Plan

Recommendation of Mentee

- Qualifications, educational and scientific training, personal characteristics for a successful and independent career
- Background on relationship and mentee's involvement and development in research

Training Plan

- New techniques and skills – be specific!
- Infrastructure and intellectual environment
- Lab meetings: frequency, topics, opportunities for mentee to present, insights gained
- Coursework, professional development workshops, and conferences
- Other commitments: clinical responsibilities and research effort breakdowns
- Mentoring: Mentee's proximity to mentor; relationship and established check-in meetings

- Expectations and Benchmarks including:
 - # of abstracts and manuscripts published
 - # of reviews on relevant publications
 - Presentations at conferences
 - Participation in relevant retreats
- Transition Plan
 - Will support the mentee to first R01 application
 - Will provide support to learn advanced skills during duration of award
 - Will support mentee's goal to become an independent investigator and compete for an R01 grant in 3-4 years after obtaining a Career Development Award
 - Define what aspects of the proposed research project the candidate will be allowed to continue to pursue as part of their independent research program
 - Restate commitment to support and confidence that if given this opportunity the mentee will develop towards goal of becoming a scientist or physician-scientist qualified to compete for independent funding

Mentoring Committee

- Short paragraph explaining an established Advisory Committee and relationship with mentee
- Provide bio of each member of the Advisory Committee including the following details:
 - Name, degree, title and affiliation, number of peer-reviewed publications, research expertise, mentoring experience, relationship with mentee, experience in area of science, any additional details that are relevant

Statement of Support by Co-Mentor

- Bio of Co-Mentor including the following details:
 - Name, credentials, title and affiliation, research expertise, number of published scientific papers, how mentor will guide mentee during the duration of the career development award (process of study design, execution, data analysis, etc.)
- Training and Mentoring Plan
 - List mentor experience; # of mentees and those who successfully received an R01
 - Provide any additional roles relevant to mentoring
 - Proximity to primary mentor, mentee, and research space
 - Relationship to mentee and clear support infrastructure (similar to primary mentor)
 - Specific focus on scientific guidance
 - State characteristics and impressiveness of mentee

Attachments

NIH Biosketch and Other Support

- Required: Primary Mentor, Co-Mentor, Advisory Committee